

WHERE WORLDS MEET

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CHURCH OF THE NAZARENE
EURASIA

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Something from nothing

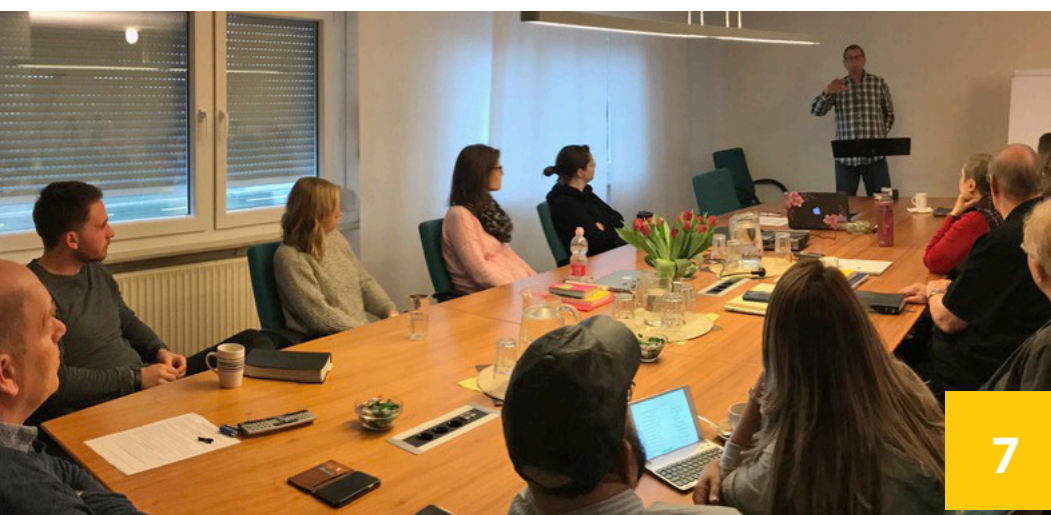
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Seeing what others don't see

God blesses the church with pioneers

Pioneering is ...

seeing the opportunities that others don't see, even when you are looking at the very same thing. I believe that pioneers have a special God-given gift, they have eyes that see different things than others.

The following short story bears a lot of wisdom about the pioneering spirit that the Lord puts in the hearts of some of His children.

A salesman was sent to a faraway place to sell shoes. When he arrived, he looked around. Everywhere, he saw people walking on bare feet. Immediately he booked his return ticket and headed home. When asked by his boss what happened, he answered: "It was pointless. Nobody was wearing shoes. We will never sell anything over there."

However, another salesman was sent to the same place. Upon arriving and looking around, he immediately phoned his company and shouted with excitement: "Send at least 10 containers of shoes! This is the perfect market for us, nobody is wearing shoes! Everybody will need our products."

Many church planters, missionaries, social justice advocates, community workers, and so on, have this special ability to get going and find a niche. They use it to make something for the Kingdom out of nothing. It is the Creator of all speaking something of His new creation into being.

Pioneering is ...

having the courage to fail and try again. How often do we attempt something, it doesn't work out so well and we let go of it? Maybe even muttering to ourselves, "Probably it was not the Lord's will anyway."

Paul encountered some very violent and disheartening situations. Acts 14



tells us that on at least one occasion, he was stoned and left for dead. In fact, he travelled from Antioch to Lystra, and to Derbe, and in all three cities he had to flee because of threats or violence (Acts 13-14). But he did not give up. In fact, he decided to revisit each one of these places immediately afterward, to strengthen the disciples, telling them that the normal pathway in the Kingdom is called "tribulation." Bouncing back and again living our calling is part of pioneering. It is the risen Christ breathing into people and getting them back on their feet again.

Pioneering is ...

a stretching gift for our church that needs to be nourished. One of our regional priorities is "pushing our boundaries – personally, as church, as district and as field." If pioneers minister in a Christlike manner and step outside the comfort zone, they draw others with them and inspire them to live courageously for Christ.

As I live with a couple of innovators in my own life, I need to confess that I often scratch my head at the new ideas and initiatives that come my way. But I am convinced that we, the church, cannot do without pioneers. In pioneers, the Lord gives us His treasure. They are the way to learn how surprising our God is, what it

means to live by faith, and be daring in our obedience.

But pioneers need to be nourished by the community of the church. One missionary returned from a visit to a very innovative urban ministry. When I asked him what he had learned, he answered: "They work in teams! What they would not do or dare by themselves, or what they would give up doing, they do together. They encourage one another; they complement each other. They have maximized being part of the team."

I am not a pioneer myself, but I can hear the Spirit speaking through them, and I want to do my part to nourish and to be part of the team. We live in a fast-changing world with outrageous developments. The pioneers among us are an important part of the Spirit of Christ, enabling the church to respond in a Christlike and prophetic way to those developments.

Find out more about pushing boundaries by attending a Eurasia Regional Conference. Go to invisibleconference.org to register, or for more information.

-- Arthur Snijders, Eurasia Regional Director



Pioneering

Something from nothing

Pioneering a new work in a new land



By Kaitlyn Haley Deisher

Luca and Elena* told God, “Lord, whatever you want to do, you will have to do out of nothing.”*

That is what happened.

After years of ministry in Russia, the couple had just moved to another former Soviet country in early 2017 with the objective of meeting unmet needs in their new city when a young adult ministry team in Germany, called “paXan,” reached out. The team asked if they could come in the summer of 2018 to help with a ministry project. But having been there for just six months, Luca and Elena had not yet made the connections within the community that would be necessary to create projects for an entire group. Despite this challenge, the German team still wanted to come.

So they all agreed to pray and fast, asking God to provide projects He wanted the team to do.

And God did.

Shortly after, Luca and Elena began developing relationships with leaders of several social service agencies.

Although the agencies are associated with the government, they unexpectedly welcomed the couple with open arms and eagerly provided projects for the team.

The paXan ministry team was in country for 10 days. Through partnerships in the city, they were able to create a woodworking shop in the social center for people with disabilities to be able to work with their hands by building birdhouses. The birdhouse project has been a long-term success.

“They started producing these birdhouses, and the Minister of Social Services happened to be at an exposition here where all those social services brought their things. She saw the birdhouses and she bought one.... That was a huge boost [for them],” Luca said. “They’re continuing to do it. They’re actually making enough money to buy the wood and all the necessary stuff.”

In another building, the team created a room for the care of small children. Single mothers who are students, or who need childcare while they’re at work, now bring their kids to this safe environment for care. To kick off this program, the paXan team hosted a distinctly Christian Vacation Bible School

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NEW: German team gives work a big boost

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in the social center.

"Because of this really good relationship we have with social services, they provide the space for free and they even helped us recruit the kids for VBS."

These projects – designed to support needs of the local community – allowed the couple to develop positive relationships with the social services center, and even attracted media attention across the city, and nationally.

"We were on national TV at that point because this was so brand new, having the Germans come in," Luca said. "Nobody had ever done anything like that in [this country]. It was local and national news, plus a couple of articles on Internet newspapers. The journalist came back and said, 'I'd like to do a story on you because this is just so unusual.' They did a full article on the two of us, as to why we would do that. It was an interview about faith."

"Because of this really good relationship we have with social services, they provide the space for free and they even helped us recruit the kids for VBS."

-- *Luca

Thanks to the positive experience of working with Luca and Elena and the ministry team from Germany, the social services center continues to partner with the couple in providing a faith-based Kids Club. The bi-weekly program has attracted involvement from other parents and adults who love the lessons and activities. First, the team hosts a program for deaf and hearing-impaired children. Afterward they work with hearing children.

A woman named Mary has become an enthusiastic, key partner in leading and planning the deaf children's Kids Club, although she has not personally professed a relationship with Jesus.

"We do a story. Then we go back and ask questions and



make sure the children understood the story. Mary is leading a lot of those discussions," Luca said. "We prepare the questions beforehand. She's been asking questions of herself about some of those things in the lessons."

God has continued to provide new ministry opportunities for Luca and Elena. These opportunities truly came out of nothing, as the contact at the social center was not a connection the couple had when they agreed to host the ministry team. And it helps move them toward their vision of establishing a community center that will be "salt and light" to the whole city.

"We want to connect all the people here, making better neighbors, better homes. A community center where people can come and explore what it means to be in the image of God." □

**Names changed and location omitted for security reasons.*



Called from Russia to Latvia

A couple's call to mission, and the Church of the Nazarene's desire to establish its presence in a new country, align in Riga, Latvia.



Photos courtesy Olga Druzhinina

By Nicole Almeida

Olga and Aleksei Druzhinina have long served the Church of the Nazarene from their home in Saint Petersburg, Russia. But two years ago, they began to feel drawn toward cross-cultural missions.

The couple has been working in European

Nazarene College's theological education, and Alexei was also involved in their local church as a Sunday School teacher.

As they prayed for a place to serve, they sensed God pointing them toward Latvia, specifically its capital city, Riga, as church planters.

"At first, we thought it was strange and that it was all in our head, but we decided to speak with our pastor," Olga said. "During the same time, an M+Power training was happening in Moscow, and we went. While we were there we spoke with Scott Rainey, the CIS Field Strategy Coordinator at the time. He told us that God had told him to send someone to Riga, Latvia. And that was when we knew it was definitely God."

M+Power is an opportunity for short-term, cross-cultural volunteer service in the Eurasia Region of the Church of the Nazarene Global Missions. After they spoke with Rainey, the Druzhininas applied for residency documents in Latvia. For Russians, receiving a Schengen residency, which permits travel to all European Union Member Countries, is not always easy. But God can open any closed door.

"People told us that it was impossible to get



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LATVIA: Couple partners with Salvation Army

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the residency, but God showed that with Him everything is possible,” said Olga. “After receiving the official invitation letter from a Christian organization and sending it to the government, we received a religious residency in February for one year. This residency allows us to talk about Jesus to everyone and tell what we are doing with no fear. Something we didn’t have in Saint Petersburg.”

A northern Baltic state and former member of the Soviet Union, Latvia is a country that shares much in common with Russia. It’s easy to believe that the cultures would be similar. But when the Druzhininas arrived in Riga, and they started talking with Latvians and Russians who have lived in Latvia for a long time, they soon found that the culture is not as similar as they expected.

“Even though we have a common language and a common background, the culture is very different,” Olga said. “We thought that it would be easier to communicate with the Russians living in Latvia, but what we have found is that it is much easier to communicate with Latvians. Local Russians have a different mentality than the one we have, which makes it hard for us to reach them.”

Olga and Aleksei have reached out to various church organizations and made contact with Latvian churches, asking how they can serve, and meet local needs. Since their arrival, Aleksei has been invited to preach.

“We have been working with the Salvation Army since we arrived,” Olga said. “We’ve been leading a Bible Study on Thursday, and we are helping at their soup kitchen once a week through a worship time.”

Aleksei said, “I’ve been invited to preach twice this month [May] at the Salvation Army’s Sunday Service. We have also visited different non-denominational churches, including



a small Latvian church. This church usually finds a way to translate the service [from Latvian into Russian] so we can understand.”

This small church has kept in contact with Olga and Aleksei, and is examining the Nazarene denomination’s Articles of Faith. (Read the Articles of Faith at: <http://nazarene.org/articles-faith>) They may translate them to Latvian.

The Druzhininas are also reaching many non-believers. Through these contacts, Olga has been invited to be part of a very selective women’s club.

“It’s interesting because it’s part of a special society. It’s about 100 women, all business ladies or wives of business men. And they all know what I’m doing in Latvia, which is great!”

After their one-year residency permit expires, they remain open to what God wants to do through them in Latvia, or beyond.

“This is all God’s timing,” said Olga, “but our hope is to open a Bible study until February of 2020”.

As their calling to Latvia becomes clearer, Olga and Aleksei hope and pray that, in the next years, doors will open for them to help plant churches in several Balkan countries, including neighboring Lithuania and Estonia. □

Find out more about M+Power, or attend an M+Power training and assessment at www.eurasiaregion.org/volunteers.



Eurasia Region 'launches' missionaries with new training

By Gina Grate Pottenger

In April, the Eurasia Region held its first three-day Launch event to provide orientation on practical tools and resources, as well as special training in resilience, for new and existing Nazarene missionaries serving on the region.

The event is designed to build on, and follow, a similar preparatory event called Launch, held at the Church of the Nazarene denomination's Global Ministry Center (GMC) in Lenexa, Kansas, USA. The GMC's Launch prepares and sends out new and returning missionaries into cross-cultural assignments around the world. The Eurasia Region's Launch event is more narrowly focused on serving in the region, and meets missionaries as they move onto, or are already serving, on the region.

"As regional director, I feel that new missionaries need to hear, in a warm and practical way, 'Welcome to our team, we are glad you are here! Please join us at the table,'" said Arthur Snijders. "In order to feel welcome, somebody needs to show us around, introduce us to other people, give explanation of what is expected in the setting so that we do not feel out of place. With this in mind we developed Eurasia Launch. Together with Global Missions, we worked hard to give our missionaries the best possible start here in Eurasia."

Eleven missionaries participated, including two who joined via video conference, at the regional office

in Büsingen, Germany. Office personnel provided information and training.

"The goal was to introduce them to the region and promote missionary growth and resilience," said Melanie Eaton, Eurasia Region Member Care coordinator. "Throughout the program we stressed the importance of continued cross-cultural adjustment and development of ministry skills, all within a culture of care."

Workshops focused on finances and fundraising, essentials of being a Nazarene, Nazarene and Eurasia Region ministries, support and resources available from the regional office, developing greater intimacy with God through prayer, considering the ministry model called APEST (Apostle, Pastor, Evangelist, Shepherd and Teacher), and developing skills for successful cultural adjustment.

For Rebecca Moisio, who is entering her fourth cross-cultural ministry assignment, Launch gave her new tools and perspective, including the book, *The Culture Map*, that are enabling her to thrive more fully in the Republic of Georgia.

"It was refreshing for me to be able to get into that mindset of understanding the culture that I'm in, rather than just surviving the culture that I'm in," Moisio said. "I've been in cultures where I've just had to survive things. Things were coming at me and I was reacting and surviving. Culture Maps helps you approach a culture and understand it at a deeper level."

"The major focus was on 'resilience,' it is absolutely helpful for new missionaries," said Bill Grigory, on a new missionary assignment in Bulgaria with his wife, Theresa. "The

material covered was very practical. For returning missionaries there were sections of updated policies and procedures that are a good review. This also made us all feel like we were a part of a larger team."

Although Moisio has served in Nazarene missions in three countries over several years, and a year ago attended the GMC Launch event, the overview on policies and the denominational structure still provided new insights and equipping.

"When I went to the GMC Launch, it was great but I still had months of preparation to do after that. After this Launch [held a few weeks before arriving in Georgia] I felt affirmed in what I was doing. I felt ready; I was excited. It felt like I was being launched. That was the emotional difference."

The participants also had time over meals and informal gatherings to become more acquainted with one another and regional office leaders, share stories and challenges from their areas of ministry and assignments, helping to develop a mutually supportive camaraderie.

"It was very helpful, inspirational and encouraging to meet the ministry directors and hear their personal stories of situations and circumstances where they were greatly tested and how God faithfully brought them through," said Grigory. "It was a sobering reminder that the idealistic or romantic idea of missions can actually set unrealistic expectations."

Eaton said that the event will be a regular part of a "multi-year development plan for Eurasia missionaries." □

India: Giving something out of nothing

The taxi bumped and bounced along the rutted, unpaved roads of an economically deprived Indian city to carry Eurasia Regional Director Arthur Snijders and Annemarie Snijders to a small Nazarene church for Sunday worship.

The Snijders would be guests at the service, and Annemarie was asked to preach. On the same day, the region's field strategy coordinators (FSCs), each of whom lead the church in one of the region's seven fields, also visited a different church in India to preach and spend time with a local congregation.

The Snijders and the FSCs were in India in May for annual strategy meetings. They organized the church visits so all the strategy leaders could experience a different cultural context from their own, and see the diverse ways Nazarenes worship and participate in God's mission. The Snijders were guests at the service, and Annemarie would preach God's word to the congregation.

On the same day, the region's six field strategy coordinators (FSCs), each of whom lead the church in one of the region's seven fields, also visited a different church in India to preach and spend time with a local congregation. The Snijders and the FSCs were in India in May for annual strategy meetings. Visiting a local church and actively participating in local churches on a different field has become part of the program for FSC couples in order to gain a fresh perspective on how God is working in other areas, and to represent the global mission of the Church of the Nazarene. Sarah D (FSC wife) organized the church visits.



Annemarie shared about her experience:

"When we were in the area, we sensed the deprivation of the people ... a certain heaviness in the air. It looked like addiction was quite common, and the pastor told us it was a real issue.

"We came together in a very small rented space, which belonged to a primary school. Around 30 people, including children, were crammed together, and I met with a 15-year-old young girl (the daughter of the pastor), who was going to be my interpreter from English into the local language.

"I preached on 2 Timothy 3:10-12, in which Paul admonishes Timothy to follow him in his teaching and conduct, with love (all positive qualities), but then he continues saying that Timothy needs to follow Paul in the persecutions and sufferings that are part and parcel of following Christ. We need to learn to persevere also with regards the aspect of suffering.

"The people were listening

attentively to the message, and sang and prayed with much devotion. But the real surprise came at the end of the service.

"The pastor came to us, with all the people standing around us, and handed us an envelope with the offerings that had been given during the service. He announced proudly that the money would go to Nazarene missions.

"Now this was a poor church, and it felt like a sacred moment, reminding us of the poor widow in Mark 12:41-44, who put her two coins into the temple offering, and whom Jesus described as giving more than all the others.

"We promised the pastor and the church that the money would be sent to one of our creative access areas near India. And we asked this local church to pray for this particular area.

"It was a wonderful moment in which we experienced the local church participating in missions." □

Who are Nazarenes?

We are a Christian people

As members of the Church Universal, we join with all true believers in proclaiming the Lordship of Jesus Christ and in affirming the historic Trinitarian creeds and beliefs of the Christian faith. We value our Wesleyan-Holiness heritage and believe it to be a way of understanding the faith that is true to Scripture, reason, tradition, and experience.

We are a holiness people

God, who is holy, calls us to a life of holiness. We believe that the Holy Spirit seeks to do in us a second work of grace, called by various terms including "entire sanctification" and "baptism with the Holy Spirit"-cleansing us from all sin, renewing us in the image of God, empowering us to love God with our whole heart, soul, mind, and strength, and our neighbors as ourselves, and producing in us the character of Christ. Holiness in the life of believers is most clearly understood as Christlikeness.

We are a missional people

We are a sent people, responding to the call of Christ and empowered by the Holy Spirit to go into all the world, witnessing to the Lordship of Christ and participating with God in the building of the Church and the extension of His kingdom (Matthew 28:19-20; 2 Corinthians 6:1). Our mission (a) begins in worship, (b) ministers to the world in evangelism and compassion, (c) encourages believers toward Christian maturity through discipleship, and (d) prepares women and men for Christian service through Christian higher education.

Learn more at: www.nazarene.org/articles-faith

"Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer."

— Romans 12

Prayer requests

Please pray for missionaries who are pioneering work in areas including Latvia and another Eastern European nation, where they serve, often, in isolation, as the extension and representatives of Christ and the Church of the Nazarene. Ask God to give them friendship, support, as well as ministry creativity, persistence, cultural adaptation and favor with communities and governments. Ask God to use them to reach those who are seeking Him, and that together they can forge healthy worship communities that will be salt and light.

Pray for the missionaries who participated in the region's Launch training, that the information, stories and relationships that were shared will be a source of encouragement and equipping as they go forward in their service.

Pray for our thousands of churches across the region, small, medium, and large, to be ignited with passion for God's mission, moving them to action in fervent prayer, sacrificial giving, and wise, Christlike action to reach the lost and disciple the found in their own communities.

Where Worlds Meet

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