

# WHERE WORLDS MEET

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CHURCH OF THE NAZARENE  
EURASIA

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## Welcome to the Invisible World

*Two regional conferences invite participants to confront the challenges of feeling invisible in their cultures.*

3

## Shock at sight of ruins leads man to start local ministry

*During the 2015 Eurasia Regional Conference, a participant's shock at seeing ruins of ancient church opened him to ministry opportunity.*



5



## Women's Conference planned for India

*Clergywomen and lay leaders attending regional conference invited to stay for encouragement, training.*

8



# Making visible what seems invisible

What we can see is not all there is

*A couple of weeks ago there was an unexpected headline in the Netherlands national news: despite previous reports of sharply declining church attendance, it was discovered many communities of faith were alive, vibrant and growing. Guess where the growth was taking place? Immigrant churches in the Netherlands.*

Tens of thousands of believers and hundreds of churches were never reported on because they were deemed insignificant by the wider society. It is embarrassing that these fellowships, focused primarily on immigrant communities, had not been considered newsworthy or statistically relevant.

“Invisible” does not always mean that something cannot be seen. It may point to what we consider insignificant or without value. People and churches can be ignored.

Jesus often focused his attention on the kinds of people who were “invisible” in their time and culture: children, women, the disabled, lepers, tax collectors, etc. These people were seen, but were devalued and pushed to the fringes. Awareness of their existence didn’t correspond to allowing them a meaningful role in their wider society.

However, Jesus placed high value on those who were excluded from a meaningful place in their society; treating them as significant. Paul states that God reversed the (in) visibility: He passed by those viewed by the culture as wise and strong to place the foolish and the weak as the centrepieces of His salvation work in



Christ.

Let us be Christlike by making visible those whom the Lord identifies with in our schools, our churches, our business interactions, our homes.

Invisibility will only be dispelled by faith – faith that energizes our obedience to Christ until what is hoped for becomes visible. Hebrews 11 speaks to us about a long obedience in the same direction – but that obedience is fuelled by hope, hope that God will make the fulfilment of His promises visible. For decades, Abraham held fast to his hope for the son who had not yet been conceived. He hoped for the land that was promised, but not yet his. He hoped for a place among the nations – a place that lay waiting far in the future.

Many of us have children, and we have sacrificed for them. We deny ourselves joys and privileges in hope that the next generation will be better off than we are now. In the same way, our sacrifices now in obedience to Christ will make visible later what the Spirit of Christ is doing in His often invisible ways.

Years ago, I was in Mozambique

where I was deeply moved by witnessing a church that was alive and growing. I asked the missionary about the roots of this beautiful work of God. He told of how a revival just prior to a very violent and cruel civil war had preserved the faith of the believers through those dark times. Intrigued I asked, “What led to the revival?” He responded that among many things that are only known to our sovereign Lord, the prayers of people for an invisible work of the Spirit yielded a visible fruit much later.

He shared the story of the “lady of tears.” This missionary woman was often so moved by her love for the people that, as she prayed for them, she would weep. The people in the street started to recognize her red, swollen eyes as evidence of her hours of intense intercession.

Hope is the certainty that the Lord will bring to pass what He has promised, the invisible “not yet” becoming visible in the present or in the future.

Welcome to the (in)visible world of Christ.

Arthur Snijders

# WELCOME TO THE INVISIBLE WORLD

INVISIBLE  
WORLD



By Gina Grate Pottenger

## *Have you ever felt invisible? Feelings of invisibility are common to many followers of Jesus.*

Believers may feel invisible in cultures and nations where Christians make up only a very small minority of the population.

They may feel invisible in highly secularized cultures, where Christianity and the church have been pushed to the fringes of society.

They may feel invisible when they attend a small church, miles away from another Christian faith group. Or when they are unable to register with the government as a legitimate church in their society.

Many Christians must choose to be invisible, building God's kingdom underground, in response to the threats of persecution, violence, imprisonment and death by their societies and their governments.

At the same time, followers of Jesus know that the material world we see is not all

there is. There are invisible forces at work all around us, every day, with which we must contend. Invisible forces of evil, as well as forces of good.

Welcome to the Invisible World.

### *Weeklong investment, lasting impact*

At the Eurasia Regional Conferences in Kyrenia, Cyprus, 14-19 November 2019, and Hyderabad, India, 25-29 January 2020, participants will confront the themes of an Invisible World through revitalizing fellowship, renewing worship, invigorating workshops and profound preaching.

For most who have attended regional conferences in the past, they say the most encouraging aspect is fellowship and building relationships with Nazarenes from across dozens of cultures and countries.

"Attending the 2015 Eurasia Regional conference in Antalya, Turkey, had been a lifelong impactful event for me," said Rev. Vijay Bhalerao, of India. "Actually it was my first time to go out of India. Although I was born and brought up in the Nazarene church, it was the first time I got to witness

see "WORLD" • page 4



# WORLD: Relationships are highlight for many

Continued from page 3

the Nazarene family at a regional level. By seeing the members and leaders across the Eurasia Region, I was overwhelmed and filled with awe.”

## *Building lasting relationships*

Small groups that meet throughout the events create space for going deeper with one another in encouragement and discipleship.

“The small group formed from the different parts of the region was a blessed time,” said Rev. Reynold Daniel, of India. “In this group I met a few people from England, Romania, USA, India and Glasgow. We decided to pray for each other and be in contact. Almost once in a week we share our prayer requests with each other through the messenger [app]. This practice we continued since the conference. The love and affection of the people experienced was a great blessing to me. This helped me a lot in my spiritual walk.”

“One of the advantages of being a Nazarene is the high degree of connectivity with the international church,” said Nabil Habiby, from Lebanon. “Being in the conference

and hearing stories from all over the region is a precious experience.”

Among his favorite memories of the 2015 conference in Turkey, Habiby listed, “Staying up late to play board games with other youth, playing football with the youth, the one-day theology conference and doing theology together, worship together.”

Wouter van der Zeijden, of the Netherlands, said a favorite part of attending the regional conference is meeting new people in a relaxing, resort-like environment.

## *Growing*

Speakers from across the region come from many areas where a pervading sense of invisibility is a



challenge for Nazarenes, including South Asia, India, the Middle East, Eastern and Western Europe. The youngest speaker will be Rev. Ganga, a school teacher, pastor and district NYI president in Nepal.

Both conferences offer a one-day theology conference that is open to all, before the main event begins. A range of workshops throughout the main conference that will focus on the Eurasia Region’s five priorities for the next four years:

- prayer and fasting
- pushing our boundaries
- identifying with the poor and the marginalized
- learning to be disciples
- discovering and developing leaders around you.

The conference in India will add a Women’s Conference at the end, giving opportunities for women in ministry, whether clergy or lay persons, to gather for mutual encouragement and learning.

## *Two conferences, more participants*

Past regional conferences have been a single gathering for Nazarenes from all over the region. Typical attendance has been around



see “TWO” • page 5



# TWO: Still space to register for Cyprus

Continued from page 4



600 people. However, as nations around the world tighten their visa requirements, and costs have continued to rise in different places that could serve as possible venues, the decision was made, following the

model of the Africa Region, to have two conferences rather than one, in two separate locations. The objective was for even more people to participate at a location that is economical, and where they could more easily obtain visas.

Registration for the conference in India is already at maximum capacity. There is more space for registrations at the Cyprus location this fall.

Register to attend, and find more information at [www.invisibleconference.org](http://www.invisibleconference.org). □

## Shocking sight of ruins leads man to start local ministry

*Isaac Ingle stood among the ruins of the ancient city of Pergamum, in southern Turkey, shocked to find that the church planted by the Apostle Paul had long since been abandoned, along with the whole city.*

Until 2015, Ingle had never traveled

outside of his home country of India. That year he decided to attend the 2015 Eurasia Regional Conference, held in Antalya, Turkey, so he could experience worship and fellowship with Nazarenes from across Eurasia.

While in country, Ingle joined the group of Nazarenes visiting Pergamum.

"I was expecting it to be a big sanctuary," he recalls. "But when I reached there, all I could see was only some remains; just a few half-destroyed pillars standing. I saw where Paul used to stand and preach, and I saw where the congregation used to sit and listen to Paul's preaching."

Rather than a thriving, vibrant church, Ingle found only dust, the



overgrowth of grass and vines, and the whistling of wind through the collapsed buildings.

"The situation of Pergamum impacted my mind severely," he said. "After seeing this, a thought came into mind: in the surrounding places where I live, there are several places where the Church of the Nazarene

see "RUINS" • page 6





# RUINS: ‘There will be a harvest once again’

Continued from page 5

had started churches, but today, due to migration of the people to cities, the churches are not operational.”

Ingle was deeply shaken by the parallel.

“I became restless. I had just retired from my job, and prior to my job I had done two years of Bible training. But I hadn’t used my training for ministry.

“My pastor and district superintendent, Rev. Rajiv Yangad, had been constantly mentoring me for ministry and I was working towards my district license. I made a commitment to the Lord that I will give the rest of my life for full-time ministry.

“The Lord was talking to me about a place called Yeota where my father had served for several years. I talked with Rev. Yangad about the possibility to minister in the same place. He agreed immediately.



“I started going to the place every Sunday. There aren’t Christian members here, but I have been able to start a worship group with people who were being followed up thus far.

“I am sure that there will be a harvest once again in Yeota. Please pray for my ministry here.” □

WELCOME TO THE  
INVISIBLE WORLD  
REGIONAL CONFERENCE

KYRENIA, CYPRUS  
15-19 November, 2019

HYDERABAD, INDIA  
25-29 January, 2020

INVISIBLE  
WORLD

Register today at [invisibleconference.org](http://invisibleconference.org)



# Have you ever felt invisible?

Every day, followers of Jesus across Eurasia are made to feel invisible ...

... invisible in our secularized cultures.

... invisible as a minority faith group.

... invisible as an underground church.

... invisible as a church not recognized by our governments.

Christians also wrestle an invisible world of spiritual forces.

Yet, our hope is in the invisible, powerful movement of the Holy Spirit, who gives us victory over all that seeks to diminish us.

Welcome to the invisible world!

At the 2019 and 2020 Eurasia Regional Conferences, experience that as, one diverse, international body united in our one, holy God, we are not so invisible as we might think.

[www.invisibleconference.org](http://www.invisibleconference.org)

INV  S  BLE  
— WORLD —





# Women in ministry to gather in India for support, equipping

By Nicole Almeida

## *Women play a prominent role in Nazarene pastoral ministry in India and across South Asia.*

Some are ordained elders; one serves as a district superintendent. Others are local- or district-licensed pastors. Many who pastor have responsibility for more than one local church. Still others support local church ministries alongside their pastoring husbands.

To invest in these women in ministry, the Eurasia Region is hosting a Women's Conference in Hyderabad, India, immediately following the upcoming regional conference in January 2020.

"Many times, being in India or in a South Asian country, women don't share as much," said Shradha Saraf, co-pastor at Chikhli Church of the Nazarene in Central Maharashtra, India. "We [Annemarie Snijders and I] had been thinking that there should be a place where women can be out of their home atmosphere and feel welcome to share. We felt that women needed a place where they can refresh their minds and boost their spirit. We are happy that the conference will be able to offer this."

Saraf and Snijders, who previously was a church planter in the Netherlands before serving as

missional assistant to the Eurasia Region director, are part of a seven-woman planning team organizing the Women's Conference, January 29-30. They hope women already attending the regional conference will stay two more days.

Saraf explained that the conference theme is "Women as History Makers." Speakers and workshops will center on the questions: "What does it mean to be women in ministry?" "What does the Bible say about Women in Ministry?" and "Is ministry for men only, or are we just as much called as the men?"

"Every lady, whether she is in a ministry or in a supporting role as a minister's wife, is making a history by standing firm in the ministry or by standing firm next to their husbands," said Saraf.

Because not every woman's ministry calling takes the same shape, the conference will have workshops that are focused on the different callings. During the two days of the Women's Conference, the participants will be able to attend workshops that best suit their calling.

"Each day, there will be two ministry tracks with regards to the workshops," said Saraf. "One will aim at women in ministry. Those who are – or would like to become – an elder, deacon or missionary in the Church of the Nazarene. The other will be for women who are in a supporting role in ministry. For

example, district superintendents' and pastors' wives, or even for women who support their pastor in the local church through prayer or other roles."

The Women's Conference is just six months away. Shradha and the committee have been praying since the very first day for all the women who will attend.

"We pray that this may be a place that women will come, have a time just for them and be spiritually refreshed," said Saraf. □



Shradha Saraf, co-pastor of the Chikhli Church of the Nazarene, in India, is part of a committee to plan a Women's Conference, which will be held for women in ministry after the 2020 Regional Conference in Hyderabad, India.





# Italy leadership camp focuses on discipleship

By Pastor Matteo Ricciardi

*The Church of the Nazarene in Italy held its annual leadership camp from 1-3 May. Pastors, ministries leaders and members from all churches spent rich days of communion and discipleship together.*

The activities were held by Eurasia Region Education Coordinator Stéphane Tibi on the theme "Living in the Spirit."

Tibi challenged the participants to discern how secularism affects the contemporary world: on one hand the public sphere, ruled by reason and science with no space for religion; on the other, the personal one, in which one seems to do everything to reach individual pleasure and well-being,

even within the spiritual life.

Both are the mirage of control!

Instead, in our Christian journey God invites us to walk with Him, combining rational knowledge with relational knowledge, with the goal of learning how to love Him and our neighbors in a deeper, more creative and significant way. ☐

## Stories Volume 2 - 2019 now available



The Church of the Nazarene's *Stories* series shares how lives are being transformed through ministry efforts around the globe.

These stories are made possible thanks to the prayers, involvement, and support of Nazarenes worldwide through [World Evangelism giving](#).

The *Stories* resource, formerly known as the World Mission DVD, is delivered three times a year through an e-newsletter. The videos are a collaborative effort between regional communications offices and Global Ministry Center communications personnel and are available to view or download online at [nazarene.org/stories](http://nazarene.org/stories).



# 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](http://www.nazarene.org/articles-faith)

*"When the poor and needy seek water, and there is none, and their tongue is parched with thirst, I the Lord will answer them; I the God of Israel will not forsake them." — Isaiah 47:17*

## Prayer requests

Please pray for the upcoming regional conferences in Cyprus and India in November and January. Pray for the planners as they organize workshops, speakers, small group times, and logistics for travelers. Please pray for all participants to receive travel and visa approvals, as well as resources to attend. Pray for Holy Spirit to prepare the hearts of all those who will participate, that they will experience God's work in their lives.

Pray for women who will attend the Women's Conference in India in January. Ask God to bless the preparations, and to encourage, inspire and equip all those who participate.

Pray for the Italy District leaders who attended a discipleship camp, that they would continue to live out what they learned and experienced.

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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