

## MYANMAR

Last year, each week in Myanmar over 1,000 people gathered for worship in Churches of the Nazarene. Myanmar is on the Southeast Asia field of the Asia-Pacific region.



Attendees of the Southern District in Myanmar at their first NMI convention



## HELPING OTHERS AND SHARING THE GOSPEL

A pastor started an Arabic Church of the Nazarene among refugees in California, USA. The church helped the refugees to settle in and furnish their homes, provided personal care items, and spread the message of love among families in need of help and care. This year, the pastor received several boxes of literature and Bibles in the Arabic language to distribute, most of which was developed or translated by the Arabic Literature Committee for the Church of the Nazarene. The church provides worship services and a number of small group meetings—all in Arabic. Give thanks to God that the gospel is being shared through the Church of the Nazarene, providing that the good news of the gospel and the deep truths of holiness are being thoughtfully translated and generously shared from region to region, providing people with hope, love, and community.

Pray for this congregation and others like it around the world.

## HEALED TO SERVE

Thirty years ago in Papua New Guinea, 11-year-old Masa was in the middle of a fight between enemy families. Although he did not belong to either group, he was severely injured. A Christian man carried Masa to Kudjip Nazarene Hospital. In addition to saving Masa's life, the hospital chaplains and staff shared the Good News of God's love with Masa. The young man made the decision to follow Christ and, as he got older, began lay preaching. In October of last year, after years of study, Masa was ordained as a pastor in the Church of the Nazarene. Today, Masa pastors a church in an area known for heavy tribal fighting. Give thanks that the young boy, who was at the wrong place at the wrong time, is now a man with hope for the future and a new purpose: to help guide others toward salvation.

**There are now 30,875 Churches of the Nazarene around the world.**

**This is an increase of over 47% over the past 10 years. Thank you for giving to the WORLD EVANGELISM FUND.**

**Your prayers, sacrifice and efforts are changing our world.**

## PRAY FOR OUR MISSIONARIES

- As they learn the language of the world area where they serve and those helping them learn.
- Healthy relationships between missionaries within their context and strong partnerships with church leaders with whom they serve.
- Moments of encouragement from Nazarenes around the world, relaxation when rest is needed, and intimacy with God through time spent alone with Him.

## PRAY FOR OUR KANSAS DISTRICT WORK & WITNESS TEAM AS THEY TRAVEL TO EL SALVADOR FROM JUNE 1-JUNE 14.

**Derby:** Pastor Jeffery Jewett

**Dillon, Colorado:** David Fowler

**Elkhart:** Eddie Fowler

**Emporia:** Autumn Washington

**Garden City:** Edgar Hinojos, Lorina Hinojos, Anissa Hinojos, Elissa Hinojos, Doug Weippert

**Great Bend:** Eldred Maresch

**Newton:** Raymond Kurtz, Susan Kurtz

**Ozona, Texas:** Myron Maresch

**Scott City:** Ben Catron

**Winfield:** Rosalie Gorton

## SWAZILAND OR SWITZERLAND?

The King of Swaziland announced last month that he is renaming Swaziland to the Kingdom of eSwatini, meaning land of the Swazis. The king explained, "Whenever we go abroad, people refer to us as Switzerland."

Many NMI leaders have had their heart moved by stories of the early work in Swaziland by missionaries Harmon and Lula Schmelzenbach.

Last year, almost 17,000 people gathered for worship each week in 142 organized and 21 yet to be organized Churches of the Nazarene across Swaziland.

## BANGLADESH

More than 500 Nazarenes celebrated the 25th anniversary of the Church of the Nazarene in Bangladesh in February.

As one shared, **"Today I thank God because many years ago I received Jesus Christ through the Nazarenes, today is a day to thank God for his blessings to us."**

He is one of the thousands whose life was changed forever thanks to the Nazarene global church bringing the gospel to Bangladesh.

**OVER 12,000 PEOPLE BECAME MEMBERS OF THE CHURCH OF THE NAZARENE IN BANGLADESH LAST YEAR.**

# CHURCH PLANTING

By Jeremiah Wood

Lead Pastor of PAX City Church



## STUCK

The pastor sat quietly, pondering the reality of the report he held in his hand. More members had left the church in recent weeks and giving was at an all-time low. The board was demanding an impromptu meeting with him and he sat blankly with no answers. The pastor couldn't quite figure it out, while it was nearly 20 years ago, it seemed like just yesterday that the church was alive and thriving. He remembered when the Holy Spirit would move mightily through the services, when people were getting saved, and when baptisms were a regular occurrence. The pastor wondered, "How can you have so much life in one season and in the next feel so...STUCK?"

That seems to be the question many people are asking these days; "Why do so many churches get stuck?" I believe churches often get stuck for several reasons, but there are three that I find to be the most critical.

**CONFUSION OF VISION & STRATEGY:** Vision is simply having a destination for the church. Once a destination is set, then the strategy by which the church gets there is developed. This is no small task, it takes great work to seek a vision from the Lord and even greater effort to gain unity with everyone on board. The lack of vision causes the church to wander around in circles frustrated and quarreling about direction until ultimately everything just stops. It makes sense when the Proverb says, "Without vision, the people perish" (Proverbs 29:18).

**IDENTITY CRISIS:** As followers of Christ, our identity is found in being children of God (1 John 3:1). From our identity flows our purpose as the Holy Spirit gifts us and leads us in His will. The church experiences a type of identity crisis when what we do has become the identifier of who we are rather than knowing who we are determining everything we do. When we spend more energy defending our traditions rather than seeking obedience to the movement of God, we will be sure to find ourselves in a crisis soon after.

**LOSS OF MISSION:** On the foundation that He is the son of the Living God and the Savior of the world, Jesus said, "I will build my church!" With this truth as the bedrock of our faith, He commissioned His followers to continue the mission and make disciples of all nations. As followers of Christ, the commission is still true for us today. There is no task that supersedes the call to evangelize the world, while continually and progressively making disciples. The loss of this mission causes the church to lose its focus and ultimately lose its way as the body of Jesus.

As peculiar as it may sound, the remedy to all three of these issues are found in one single answer: Church Planting.

Planting a new church focuses the vision and strategy of the existing church. It causes us to remember that more churches was God's plan all along and if our identity really is as God's children, it will lead us to obedience to God's plan. Planting a new church also keeps us on mission, because new churches are the greatest means of evangelism and discipleship that exists in the world today.

So, take a quick evaluation of your church. Are you stuck? It might be because of confusion, crisis, and loss of mission, but the fastest way to get unstuck is to plant a new church. Statistically speaking, nothing brings greater health and life to the existing church faster than planting a new church. Make plans to get unstuck today!

