



**MARCH 31, 2017**

**SYRIAN FAMILY ACCEPTED ON CANADA ATLANTIC DISTRICT**

*“ I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to eat, I was a stranger and you invited me in, I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and in prison and you came to visit me... then the righteous will answer Him, ‘Lord when did we see you (like this)’ ... Then the King will reply, ‘I tell you the truth, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did it for me.” Matthew 25: 35 -37, 40*

On March 29, 2017, a young Syrian family was presented to us, in desperate need of resettlement. It is with great joy and praise to God that we can share the news that we have accepted sponsorship of this young Syrian family, a husband 29, his wife 23 and their 2-year-old daughter. Both adults have some formal education and the husband has some construction skills. All speak Kurdish primarily; none speak English (yet).

This family fled Syria due to the obvious safety concerns we see every night on the news. They want what we all want, a better life. *“Unto the least of these...”* Jesus said.

Our journey of helping a Syrian refugee family began over a year ago. Formal meetings to establish a community-based resettlement committee began in February 2016. From these meetings, the Oxford Resettlement Committee was established to sponsor a Syrian family to come to our community through the BVOR (Blended Visa program) with Federal government assistance. Community members are made up of various representatives from local churches, community groups, businesses and town councillors. This is a community project, and without wanting to leave anyone out, it's important to acknowledge those having an active role: Oxford Church of the Nazarene, Oxford Baptist Church, Oxford Frozen Foods, Town of Oxford Councillors, Oxford and area Lions Club, Oxford Music Society, Maggie's Place and interested members of the community.

There are two ways of sponsoring a refugee family.

The first way is through private sponsorship, which involves taking full responsibility for the family or individual. This responsibility includes all financial, housing, community integration and security screening prior to entering Canada.

The second path to sponsoring is partnering with the federal government through the BVOR program. Through the BVOR program, the Federal government takes responsibility for security screening prior to entering Canada, provides guidelines for financial budgeting, giving an established deadline when financial aid ends (the infamous Month 13) and finally, provides a small amount of money towards the resettlement costs.

The Oxford Resettlement Committee chose to operate under an established Sponsorship Agreement Holder Agency instead of creating and signing with the federal Government for its own agency. The Sponsorship Agreement Holder Agency chosen by the committee is the Convention of Atlantic Baptist Churches.

The Oxford Resettlement Committee is made up of various sub committees:

- Steering
- Financial/Fundraising
- Documentation
- Medical
- Welcome/Orientation,
- Housing,
- Language/Education,
- Communications/Public Relations
- Transportation

Although a year has passed since the journey of sponsorship began, a new stage is just beginning for our group here in Oxford. The arrival of the family will take place within a 4–12 week time frame after having the agreement signed. In the meantime, there is much work to be done in preparing for the family's needs: living accommodations, household items, clothing, etc. This is an exciting opportunity to minister to this family in need, as well as be a witness in our community, demonstrating the love of Christ. We desperately covet your prayers. We hear so much about the trauma of the refugee crises, and we wonder what the future will hold. As a church, we have decided to take the risk; anything is better than nothing. I pray we will be too generous, too forgiving and that we love too much, even as Christ has loved us and gave Himself for us.

Finally, it is important to note the National Board for Church of the Nazarene Canada has stepped up to the plate and supported this initiative generously. Without their support and encouragement, this project would look significantly different today. And so we want to thank the National Board for their financial contribution and support in this project.

Pastor Paula Rideout  
Administrative Pastor, Oxford Church of the Nazarene

## **EASTER OFFERING FOR THE WORLD EVANGELISM FUND**

We trust you are looking forward to the Easter Offering for the World Evangelism Fund on 16 April 2017 (or the alternate date specified by your region, field or district). On Easter, thousands of Nazarenes will offer up their praise to God as one global body. They will give of their time, talent and money *to make Christlike disciples in the nations*.

I encourage you to talk to your congregation or churches about participating in this offering. Ask individuals about their stories of salvation and encourage them to share the good news of Christ worldwide through their gifts.

We can't keep the gospel to ourselves, waiting for others to spread the hope we enjoy. When we join our gifts and prayers together, God uses our humble offerings, and new voices call on the **Lord of All**.

As always, to make it easier for you to spread the word about this offering, please take advantage of the resources available at [www.nazarene.org/generosity](http://www.nazarene.org/generosity). We are excited to see what God will do in the days leading up to and following this offering.

Blessings,



Mark E. Lail  
Director, Stewardship Ministries

## **USA/CANADA NYI LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE**

Each year, youth workers from around North America gather to come together as a community, to be challenged in our youth ministry strategies and to learn together. This year, NYI Leadership Conference (LC) was in Kansas City, Missouri, and focused on the new research by the Fuller Youth Institute – ‘Growing Young’ – centering on how our churches can grow involving and retaining young people. Fifteen Canadians, including three District Superintendents, our National Director, District NYI Presidents, district NYI leaders and three School of Ministry students from Ambrose attended, as together we discussed this important and relevant topic. Dr. Joel Thiessen, Associate Professor of Sociology at Ambrose University, also presented and facilitated our Canadian discussion.

*“The 2017 NYI Leadership Conference was encouraging and challenging for me on a couple different levels. I am encouraged that my Nazarene family is willing to take a*

*hard and close look at what the current state of the Church is. Discussions like those sparked at NYILC are vital if we, as the Church, are going to remain important in the future”* says Caleb Susuras (BTh, California).



Mo Hickman (BTh, Nova Scotia) was one of three students chosen to participate. *“My main takeaway is that in order for a ministry or church to be successful and healthy, young people must play an active, central role. It is the young people that keep a church growing. And young people are not just looking for a fun, hip worship service with hundreds of lights and new technology. They are looking for Jesus. They want a church that will love them and be real with them. This is the type of ministry and church I want to lead. Wherever I end up in ministry, I hope to keep young people involved in leadership roles and make them a priority. A quote that was presented during the conference that I feel summarizes this thinking well is, “Growing young isn’t about changing youth ministry. It’s about changing church culture.” This is why I think we, as ministry students, were sent to this event. Because ‘Growing Young’ is not just a youth issue, it’s a church issue. And it will take leaders from all ministries to grow the Church.”*

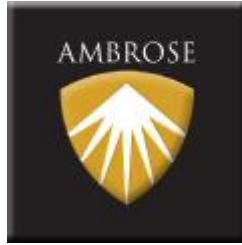
*“I think the simplicity of their strategy for ‘growing young’ challenged me the most. It would be one thing if they presented a highly complex set of ideas for how a church is to thrive, but what they presented was so simple that any congregation could do it. There is no good excuse to not start implementing some of the core principals found by the ‘growing young’ study. I think that was really my main takeaway. It is comforting to me to know that many of my peers are not looking for answers about religion, but*

*simply an authentic conversation. It is somewhat humorous to me that it took a conference to make that perspective (that conversations without definitive answers are still good) seem legitimate to me”* says Mark Herbert (BTh, Alberta).



Investing in our future pastoral leaders, the convergence of our Canadian youth leadership and our District and National leadership was an excellent example of how we can empower our youth, take seriously the issues our churches are facing, and educate ourselves on how we can bring change. Along with the formal sessions – the fun antics, the casual conversations, the laughter and even the tornado watch – this all brings together a community of people who are passionate to see our Canadian churches grow – and our youth play a vital part in that growth.

Helen A. Thiessen, MA  
Canada Field Youth Coordinator



## VOCATION AT AMBROSE SEMINARY

When Amit Nade came to Ambrose Seminary, he was facing the unique challenges that come with being an international student. *“I felt a lot of pressure to survive in Canada,”* he recalls. *“I needed to study diligently, earn money for my tuition and support my family back home.”*

Because he was supported by his classmates and professors, Amit not only overcame these challenges, but also began to thrive as a [Master of Divinity](#) student. *“The incredible support I received in this community has taught me that God is with me,”* he says, adding that he has come away from this experience with the conviction that he *“should engage in the lives of others in the same way.”*

Today, Amit serves some of Calgary’s most vulnerable people as a Housing Case Worker at [The Mustard Seed Calgary](#) and an Associate Pastor at [Yeshu Mandali](#). Both of these jobs fuel his passion for connecting cultures and communities.

Through Ambrose Seminary’s emphasis on discerning vocation – our belief that the purpose of a theological education is to open our hearts and minds to the ways that God is calling us to lead and serve – Amit grew to understand and embrace God’s call on his life: *“to be a bridge wherever I go.”*

### An Open Door

Amit's career began at a [Nazarene](#) church in Mumbai, India, where he served in administration and youth ministry. He knew he could benefit from more training and a deeper understanding of his calling, so when he was approached by Ambrose recruiters at an international youth conference, he was eager to learn more. Ambrose Seminary sounded like a good fit, and he sought the advice of leaders and colleagues in his church.

One-by-one, they each encouraged him to prepare for his next step at Ambrose. *“Coming to Ambrose was completely a God-led decision,”* he recalls as he recounts the smoothness of his application to live in Canada and the support he experienced – even across several oceans – from university staff. *“God opened this door for me.”*

### Discovering God's Provision At Ambrose

Dealing with the demands of graduate studies and the financial pressures that come with living as an international student felt like a rollercoaster at times. But through all of the challenges Amit realized that God was shaping him.

"I am really thankful to the Lord for this journey," he says. "Looking back, I can see that through the ups and downs he never left me. He was with me in person through spirit, and he was with me through my friends, through my professors and through the finance office: they stepped in many times and supported me with my scholarships."

In particular, staff and faculty encouraged Amit to apply for the [Finish Free](#) scholarship that fully funded his final year of study.

### Belonging To A Supportive Community

As he looks back on his time at Ambrose, Amit reflects on how it was the relationships he built that made this experience life-changing. ***"I thank God for giving me an opportunity to be a part of this amazing Christian community,"*** he says. ***"Being a student here is great. There is unity in diversity."***

In the classroom Amit felt strengthened ***"academically and practically,"*** but he adds that it's the way that fellowship continues beyond the classroom through ***"chapel services, seminary luncheons, retreats, and ongoing student-teacher interactions"*** that truly makes Ambrose a place of belonging.

### Living His Calling Today

Amit graduated in the Spring of 2016 and since then he's been working in the social services sector and pastoring at a local church. ***"As a Housing Case Worker at The Mustard Seed, I help people from the street find homes,"*** he explains. ***"I work with them for two years after they move in, supporting and connecting them with different resources in the community, and helping them grow holistically."***

And as he serves others, Amit grows as well. ***"This job is excellent; it shapes me, guides me, and helps me engage in the community. I love teamwork and the Mustard Seed is a great Christian organization where I'm part of a good team."***

***"And at the church where I pastor, Yeshu Mandali (Hindi for Jesus's People), I get to use my gifts as a multicultural and multilingual person. Because our service is in Hindi, we serve many refugees and newcomers to Canada. I love serving those who are in a vulnerable place socially because I have experienced God's love through His people and know what a difference it makes. I'm very at home in this setting and it's great to be involved in ministry that inspires me and aligns with my gifts."***

### A Broader Perspective

Amit notes that he has a passion to continue ministering among South Asians, but studying at Ambrose Seminary has also broadened his perspective and equipped him with new skills for ministry. *“After studying at Ambrose I can serve confidently in any group of people,”* he says, *“and I also see the importance of partnering with organizations outside of my own congregation to help the church be the hands and feet of Jesus in the world.”*

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