

GLOBAL MISSION Frontline

STORIES AND NEWS FROM OUR PIONEERS | VOLUME 23 • NUMBER 3

Reaching the Post-Christian People of Latvia





Valdis, founder and co-owner of health food store Dabas Stacija, restocking shelves

A “Nature Station” in the City

On the street outside an Adventist church in Riga, Latvia, pedestrians often stop by a book house along the sidewalk. This small “house” contains a variety of free literature. Armands, who once pastored this church and is now retired, makes sure that inventory stays stocked for local residents to enjoy.

About a third of Latvia’s population lives in Riga, the capital city. The historical city

center is a UNESCO World Heritage site noted for its architecture.

In Riga, Adventists aren’t afraid to try creative approaches to ministry, such as this book house. Valdis,

a church member, founded and co-owns a health food store named Dabas Stacija. He uses the store as a place to connect with his community. The name Dabas Stacija means “nature station” in English.

“Our goal for Dabas Stacija is to be a bridge between the street and the church,” Valdis said. “It’s very hard now in this secular country to go on the street and invite people to some events like church or

concerts. But if you have connections with customers and they trust you a little, then they will listen more. . . . They see that you wish them well and good health.”

Each year, Valdis has a booth for the store in a large vegan festival held in Riga.

“I have seen how God uses the shop to bring people closer to church,” Valdis said. “In the last festival, for example, I explained to them that our shop, together with the Adventist church, will be doing an event. The Adventist church will provide the place, and our shop will organize the seminar. ‘Would you be interested?’ ‘Yes, I would be interested,’ they responded. And we got many contacts.”

Once people make contact with the church, they are invited to join a small group. This is an important aspect of growth within this community.

“Small groups can do what big church gatherings can’t do,” Valdis said. “Like in the apostles’ first church in the first century, people met in homes, where they could talk about life, get to know each other

better, and talk about their challenges.

That’s something that doesn’t happen in the service in big worship events. I believe that we need big worship gatherings and small gatherings in homes where people can get to a deeper level with closer relationships.”

One woman who benefited from the small group discussions was Zane.

She and her husband were having marital problems and had decided it was best to separate. Feeling overwhelmed, Zane looked online for a church in Riga and found the Adventist church. The members encouraged her to join a small group.

The first time she attended, Zane sat at a table between total strangers but felt so accepted and loved that after some time, she shared her problems with them, and they lovingly offered to pray for her.

Over time, Zane started to understand her husband better and recognized good qualities in him. This group helped her on her journey to forgiveness.

After much prayer and Bible study, Zane was baptized. Now, her family is back



The Dabas Stacija booth in a large vegan festival held in Riga

together, and they are grateful to the small group that prayed for them.

Thanks to the Adventist church's presence in various forms, others have found community and healing through these small groups.

This quarter, a portion of your Thir-

teenth Sabbath Offering will create a new urban center of influence to work together with the health store in Riga.

Valdis said, "I envision that we could have a place where we could combine a small shop, a small cafe, and a small place with



Zane attending one of the Adventist church's small groups

Our Greatest Mission Challenges

Adventist Mission refers to our three greatest mission challenges as "the three windows": (1) the 10/40 Window, (2) the Post-Christian Window, and (3) the Urban Window. The Global Mission urban center of influence project in Latvia will help address the challenges of windows two and three.

Window two, the Post-Christian Window, refers to Europe, the United States, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, and many

other countries that are rapidly moving away from Christian faith as demonstrated by the decrease in church growth and high rates of apostasy, especially among young people.

Window three, the Urban Window, found worldwide, is growing rapidly. There are 543 cities with 1 million inhabitants or more. In these cities is an average of 1 Adventist for every 89,000 inhabitants. The global average is one Adventist for every 358 inhabitants. Forty-nine cities of a million or more people have fewer than 10 Adventists, and 43 have no Adventist presence.

books and a sofa with a good atmosphere. Also [with] some advertisements of our seminars and health events, it would be much easier to get people to these events.”

Please pray for this urban center of influence project in Latvia. Thank you for supporting this special offering!

Ricky Oliveras,

Office of Adventist Mission



This week I was engaged in two inspiring conversations. The first was with church leaders in the South Pacific Division. They shared with our Adventist Mission communication team some of the amazing upcoming projects in their area to reach unreached people groups for Jesus. The more our team listened, the more excited we became about capturing some of the resulting stories of these projects to share with you.

The second conversation took place in our communication staff meeting. Several of our team members had just returned from story-gathering trips overseas. They shared about the urban centers of influence they had visited, the Global Mission pioneers they had met, the huge challenges Adventists in these countries face in sharing the gospel, and the amazing ways God is blessing their endeavors.

In the upcoming months and years, you'll read some of these stories gathered by our team. It's my prayer that they will fill your heart with joy as you see what your support of Global Mission is doing to gather the harvest for Jesus. I also pray that they will strengthen your resolve to

Please support the ministry of Global Mission urban centers of influence around the world.

Ways to Give

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continue supporting Global Mission so that the millions of people who haven't had an opportunity to know Jesus may be won to His heart of love.



In His service,

Laurie Falvo

Global Mission



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Still reaching the unreached!

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In **2021**, a new Adventist church was planted every

3.6 hours.

And yet . . .



More
than

40%

have never heard
the gospel

33

cities with over a million
residents each **have no**
Adventist congregations

1.1 billion

people identify as **non-religious.**



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