

# Norway & Latvia

## Discipleship Programme 2009

**The Gospel of Jesus and His Kingdom  
advancing into the Nations...**



What an incredible and faithful God we have! It has been another great year and another amazing trip to Norway & Latvia with a fantastic team of approximately 20 students and recent graduates from the UK, USA and Latvia. We are so grateful to God for all He has done in us and through us as we have journeyed to what are becoming very familiar destinations for us all. This year was Benjamin's first trip (now aged 9 months) and he proved to be a real blessing to us, to the team and to all those that we spent time with. We wanted to say a huge thank you for your support; we were so grateful for your prayers and are thrilled to say that once again God provided every penny needed for each of the team to be able to come on this trip. We hope that this report gives you a little glimpse of what we have

seen God doing both amongst the team and among the young people who we met along the way.

Once again, we observed first hand that cross-cultural mission work is a breathtaking, incredible and faith-stretching training ground to learn about God, about ourselves and about ministry. As team leaders our main roles are in planning the trip (esp. in Latvia) and walking alongside the team members as they are stretched spiritually, emotionally, mentally and physically through a vast array of locations, circumstances, opportunities, tasks and responsibilities. What a privilege it is to walk alongside people with such a desire to serve God and see His Gospel advance into the nations.

**Through spiritual generations of labourers...**

The focus of our time in Norway was again centred on the team, helping us to 'be disciples' before heading off to Latvia to make disciples. During the Discipleship week we studied topics from 1 Peter together, we worshiped together and we spent some extended time preparing for our time in Latvia. There were also opportunities to spend time alone with God developing our relationship with and dependence in Him. Another element of our time in Norway are the activities we do to develop team-work and provide opportunities to work together and draw alongside one another. These activities included hiking, camping and glacier walking.

In Latvia the emphasis changes significantly and after a few days to adjust to the new environment, we welcomed approximately 80 young people to a youth camp near Rezekne. Each day we met as a team to worship, pray, work our way through Paul's letters to the Thessalonians and check in with how each person was doing as a way of encouraging one another and helping each other to focus on God before the start of a busy daily schedule.



At the camp (Zosna Camp), our primary responsibility is to look after the team, investing in this generation of students and graduates as they live and make disciples amongst the lost. We help them to deal with the challenging living conditions, equip them to lead their Bible study groups and seminars; we give them opportunities to share their testimonies and help them in making disciples of others. We were so grateful to all of them and especially for their willingness and servant heartedness as they worked and served others tirelessly throughout the trip. Please join us in praying that the lessons learned by these dear friends would transform their attitude and perspective towards helping others not just in Norway and Latvia but back home in their every day contexts as well.

# ...Living and discipling amongst the lost

Zosna Camp has been running now for almost a decade and it is so exciting to see the fruit of the investment that so many students and young graduates have now made. This year we have again been praising God for five young people (Philippe, Misha, Nastia, Kate & Vlada) who gave their lives to Christ this summer. It was exciting to see how God was at work in the lives of many of the Latvian young people, some who are growing quickly in their faith and others who God was challenging after a difficult year. Approximately two thirds of the young people at Camp are not Christians and this is probably even higher amongst the children from the orphanage.

The impact of the team on these young people is significant and the highlight of many of the younger (and some of the older) kids year. Every year there are endless discussions at meal tables, walking around the camp and sitting around campfires about everything from relationships, guidance, suffering and of course what it means to be a Christian. By the end of camp lifelong friendships have been formed and we know of many team members from previous years who are still writing or even visiting friends in Latvia. Once again, it is a huge privilege to be part of the team and to help them live and disciple amongst these young people, people desperately in need of Jesus. There are many sad tales of hardship, neglect and abuse amongst these young people. We too are thrilled to have ever-deepening relationships especially with the older young people in Latvia. There are plans in the making for a new Navigator Student Ministry in Riga and we are praying that the Lord of the Harvest would send out workers into His harvest field.



The final week of the trip was also full of highlights as we spent a couple of days following up the young people in Rezekne, staying 4 days at a resort in Lilaste evaluating the trip and then finishing off with a few days in Riga saying farewell to our friends there. This was a great time for us as a team as we spent time with them, studied the Bible with them and challenged them to put into practice what they had learned at the camp. It was staggering to see many of these young people from camp turning up in these different places to say farewell and spend time with us one last time. We are struck again by the need for support, fellowship and people to walk alongside them in all that they are involved in.

## Ongoing prayers for Latvia:

- We are still praying that God would raise up leaders from among these young people who would be willing to invest their lives in others and continue the ministry. We are grateful in particular for our friends Inna and Lidija who are considering how they could be involved in Student Ministry in Riga
- Pray too for two of the American team who are seriously considering future ministry in Latvia in the years to come. Pray that they would know God's clear call and leading upon their lives.
- We have again invited our Latvian friends to our student weekend in November in the UK and three have already booked tickets to come. Pray that a few more would also come and that it would be a time of genuine growth and encouragement for them.
- We are also praying about opportunities to return to Latvia and have plans to return for a weekend before the end of the year and also to help our Latvian friends run a student weekend in the Spring.

Thanks again for your partnership in this ministry

Steve & Debs