

Talk About Transformation! from the ministry desk of Steve Macchia

A PUBLICATION OF LEADERSHIP TRANSFORMATIONS, INC.

LTi E-Newsletter—May 2007 Latvia Report

www.LeadershipTransformations.org



MISSION TO LATVIA: PRAYER DAYS 2007

On Saturday, April 21, we landed safely in Riga, Latvia for our first international missions experience. Greeting us at the airport was Mr. Chuck Kelley, president of Bridge Builders International (BBI) and host of “Prayer Days 2007.”

After getting settled and staying ahead of our pending jetlag, we enjoyed an afternoon tour of the ‘old city’ of Riga. We were struck by the history of this former Soviet-occupied nation, today enjoying a life-giving season of freedom. Their “Occupation Museum” graphically depicts the horror of living under Russian and German domination, oppression and manipulation which has left permanent scars on the people of this land. The stark contrast between Riga and our respective USA communities was startling.

The following morning came quickly (jetlag now officially setting in!) and included my (Steve’s) preaching at the three Sunday morning and afternoon services at Matthews Baptist Church, one of the largest churches in the country. My sermon focused on inviting members into a deeper, more intimate relationship with the Lord, preaching on Luke 7:36-50. By the time the third, mid-afternoon worship service came to completion, we were genuinely pleased and humbled by this unique opportunity to serve. Many kind words and firm handshakes were extended by these gracious people.

After church, the BBI staff team caravanned together to our retreat location, “Valguma Pasaule,” in Smarde, Latvia. After everyone got settled, we enjoyed a leisurely dinner with the team. They were very interested to learn more about LTi, but more importantly, they sought our counsel on a variety of team and ministry development issues. They are all delightful leaders who are a fabulous team, committed to advancing the Kingdom of God throughout Latvia.



Matthews Baptist Church, Riga, Latvia



Soul Care Retreat—Steve teaching through a translator

We spent the next three days facilitating “Prayer Days” for nearly 80 leaders from across Latvia and a handful from Russia. During this event, I spoke during six plenary sessions, Rick and I both met one on one for spiritual conversations with several key leaders, and facilitated those present into experiencing a Soul Care Retreat designed specifically for them. Several of our retreat handouts were translated into Latvian and Russian to ensure that all had equal access to the materials. Most had never experienced anything like this and were effusive in their gratitude.

Each time we gathered in the larger group we encouraged people to share from their hearts about what the Lord was doing in our midst. Several opened up and we were overwhelmed by how powerful God was at work among us in so many life-transforming ways. Many who were present recommitted themselves to a deeper prayer life and a more reflective way of approaching Scripture. All seemed to understand that the depth of their soul impacts their vitality in service!

At the final session we were moved to tears by their desire to take an offering for LTi – a first for our ministry. They also laid hands on us, prayed for us in four different languages (Russian, Latvian, Swedish and English), and sent us off with their love and blessings. We had come to serve them...they reciprocated beyond our greatest expectations.

As we drove out of the conference center we found ourselves profoundly thankful for this wonderful opportunity. The memories of this mission will forever be etched in our hearts. We thank God for the privilege, our donors for your support, and the LTi family for your ongoing love and prayers.

With grateful hearts,



Steve Macchia
President



Rick Anderson
Vice President



Rick (far left), Steve (far right) and the Bridge Builders International Team



Soul Care Retreat—Small Group Reflections



Soul Care Retreat-Prayerful Reflection



Old Riga