

PROVIDENCE CHURCH Prayer for the Nations

Latvia

General Information

- Population: about 2 million.
- Latvia is a country in the Baltic region of Northern Europe. It is bordered by Estonia, Lithuania, Russia, and Belarus and by a maritime border to the west with Sweden.
- The capital is Riga (pronounced: Ree* ga), a medieval city.
- It was in Riga the first Christmas tree was put up in the town square to celebrate the new year.
- The main religion traditionally practiced in Latvia is Christianity.
- Lutheranism is the main Christian denomination among ethnic Latvians due to strong historical links with the Nordic countries and Northern Germany, while Roman Catholicism is most prevalent in Eastern Latvia (Latgale) mostly due to Polish influence.
- The Latvian Orthodox Church is the third largest Christian church in Latvia, with an overwhelming majority of the members being Russian-speaking Soviet-era immigrants.
- The Reformed Church in Latvia is a small Reformed denomination with 2 congregations in Riga.

Challenges

- Because of the state policy of atheism during the Soviet era and the general European trend of secularization a growing percentage of Latvians claim to follow no religion.
- About 30% of the country is agnostic or atheist.
- Because of secularism the birth rate has been going down.
- People tend to be slow to build friendships among Latvians.

Prayer

- There are several Reformed churches in Latvia and a Reformed seminary.
- Baptists in Latvia hope to respond to their nation's spiritual hunger and disaffection with organized religion by planting unconventional churches and nurturing a new generation of leaders, said Peteris Sprogis, bishop of the Latvian Baptist Union. And they seek global partners to undergird those initiatives. Sprogis, founder of the Baltic Pastoral Institute for Church Planting, told a group of Texas Baptist church planters and missions leaders about the challenge his country faces as it continues to recover from 50 years of Soviet domination.

Reference

- http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Reformed_Church_in_Latvia
- <http://www.abpnews.com/faith/missions/item/8210-latvian-baptists-plant-churches#.UyUXE42YbIU>