

REPORTS FROM THE CHURCHES IN THE NORDIC & BALTIC COUNTRIES

24 June 2020

There are six lampstands with over 100 saints in the Nordic countries (Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, and Sweden) and there are eight lampstands with around 150 saints in the Baltic states (Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania). Among the Nordic countries, Iceland does not yet have a lampstand. However, there are a couple of believers in Iceland who are very open to the ministry, and a small group of saints in the US, UK, and Scandinavia have been regularly praying for the Lord's move there.

The churches in the Nordic countries and the Baltic states have two blending conferences a year for all the saints to gather to enjoy the ministry and to be blended for the building up of the Body of Christ. The first one is the Nordic conference held in July every year for the last ten years. The churches in Sweden and Norway take turns to hold the conference in their respective countries. Due to the global pandemic situation, this year the conference will be held online as a virtual conference from July 17-19, 2020. The second blending conference each year takes place at the end of January, and for a number of years, it has been held in Uppsala, Sweden. In 2019 the church in Tallinn, Estonia, received the blessing of hosting the conference and again in January 2020. By having this conference in Tallinn, more saints from the Baltic states were able to participate, and more than two hundred saints attended the conference in 2020. It was a rich time of fellowship and blending.

In addition to the two conferences, about every six months the brothers from the Nordic countries and Baltic states meet for fellowship and prayer. The last brothers' fellowship was held in the last weekend of February 2020 in Copenhagen, Denmark.

REPORT FROM THE CHURCH IN COPENHAGEN, DENMARK

The Lord's table meeting in the church in Copenhagen was formally established in a regional conference in Copenhagen following the 2017 ITERO in Leipzig, Germany, and now the church has about 17 saints, including a few saints from Lund (Sweden) who travel to Copenhagen for weekly church meetings. The saints are mostly expatriates from Asia and other European countries, ranging in age from late 20s to 50s.

Due to the current global pandemic situation, the saints are meeting online for the Lord's table meeting and prayer meeting. An encouraging fact is that there are more people participating in the prayer meeting than before due to the online arrangement. The saints are answering the global call to unceasingly pray, even after the calling period has concluded (from beginning of April to the end of May). In addition, some saints are pursuing life-study messages together with the church in Uppsala, Sweden, in the Wednesday night ministry meetings online.

The meetings in Copenhagen are presently in English. However, a Danish hymn book has been set in an electronic format so that the saints could learn to exercise their spirit in Danish.

Also, in coordination with the nearby localities, we plan to carry out Bible distribution activities in Copenhagen in the coming year. Please pray that the saints will exercise to preach the gospel in one accord and gain local people for the Lord's move in Denmark. Please pray for the growth in life in all the saints.

REPORT FROM THE CHURCH IN HELSINKI, FINLAND

Some saints in Finland came into contact with the ministry in late 1970s and early 1980s through their contacts with the churches in Sweden, California, and Germany, and began to meet as the church in Helsinki. The church was very much affected by the turmoil among the European churches in late 1980s. Nevertheless, a small number of saints stood firm with the ministry and were much supplied through the visits of saints from the US who used Helsinki as a transit point to bring Bibles and Christian literature into the former Soviet Union.

Some saints and families moved to Helsinki from abroad and joined the church life at different times in the 2000s. There were also some exchange students who joined the church life from time to time. Therefore, the church meetings became more and more established. Now, we have five regular meetings every week. We also use extra times to get into the messages of the seven annual feasts. We can tell that the more we spend time in fellowship, prayer, and enjoyment of the ministry, the more we love the Lord Jesus and the Bible, and the more we are saved from ourselves and our situation and become blended and built together.

Some open local ones have begun to meet with us in home meetings or church meetings. In order to take care of them more effectively, we are praying to have a group meeting in the Finnish language. We pray that they would see and enjoy the riches of the ministry and become remaining fruit in the church life. Some seeking believers in other cities in Finland were also contacted by us during these years. We mainly maintain our relationship with them by sharing the enjoyment of the ministry through phone calls and email. We are praying that we would enter into deeper fellowship with them.

Since 2010 the church in Helsinki had more blending and fellowship with the saints in Scandinavia and Baltic states through two regional conferences every year. These conferences have encouraged the saints and strengthened the church life and the Lord's move here. Some local saints took the burden to translate the hymns and the literature available through Rhema (three booklets and four books) into Finnish intermittently over the past years. We are now at the final step of proofreading and editing. We thank the Lord for finally completing this project, and we pray that the Lord will raise up more translators so that more ministry books could be translated into Finnish.

Concerning reaching the open ones, the saints preach the gospel personally and distribute tracts corporately. We also started to distribute free copies of the Recovery Version of the New Testament in English over the last two years. We usually do it around the city center and the universities in the summer and autumn. There is not much positive response so far; yet, we continue the labor by trusting in the Lord and His word. We are praying that the Lord would bring us the open ones and we expect His blessing of increase.

Due to the outbreak of coronavirus pandemic, we have transitioned our meetings to virtual meetings since March 15, 2020. We also received some face masks from the saints overseas. We thank the Lord for the fellowship and support in the Body. We are looking forward to meeting in person again soon.

Praise the Lord that the church in Helsinki follows our dear Lord and His Body. May the Lord bless His testimony and strengthen the lampstand in Helsinki.

REPORT FROM THE CHURCHES IN NORWAY

In Norway there are two lampstands, one in Grimstad in the very south of the country and another in Oslo, the capital of Norway. In addition, there are saints in a few other places who are in fellowship through Skype or phone. The churches in Oslo and Grimstad have intimate fellowship with one another, and the brothers have joint meetings once a month at a location about halfway between the two cities. However, in the recent months, the joint brothers' meetings have been held online.

Church in Grimstad (and Kristiansand)

Grimstad is a small university town located in the southern coast of Norway, a three-hour drive from Oslo. There are about twenty saints and seven children. All the saints are encouraged to practice weekly mutual shepherding using ministry literature and by prayer. We also spend time on the vision and practice of the God-ordained way. Blending is also seen as very important and is much encouraged.

The church is branching out to the nearby city of Kristiansand, a 30-minute drive south of Grimstad. Kristiansand is the main city in this region, having approximately 10,000 university students. Two families, including four children, now live close to the campus. We have started to reach out to the students with tracts and the Recovery Version of the New Testament. Two students have been connected to us weekly for several months now. Our goal is to solidly gain some students who can help with the distribution of Bibles on the campus, where the Lord has opened a door for us.

Concerning our general church life, the focus is to continue or enter into:

1. Prayer: Repeat the recent, universal "30 Days of Prayer" items, and repeat and use the past HWMR "Prayer and the Lord's Move" 2012, both in the Norwegian language.
2. Hymns: Edit and polish already-translated LSM hymns and translate additional hymns (to bring up to standard with rhyme and poetry).
3. HWMR & ministry books: Translate (a weekly labor).
4. Small groups: Establish among the saints, new contacts, and students (getting into the Gospel of John, footnotes, life-study messages, etc.). We see them as crucial meetings to build up one another solidly.
5. Gospel preaching: Prepare and polish new tracts for the purpose of fruit-bearing.
6. Truth pursuit: Weekly ministry meetings for the saints on the crucial points of the truth in the Epistles of Paul.
7. Weekly young people's meetings and children's meetings.

The weekly prayer meeting is now in two locations, one in Grimstad and the other in Kristiansand. The brothers' meeting is jointly together every Monday; in this meeting the Lord is training us on exercising the spirit, experiencing life, and entering into genuine fellowship for His move. May the Lord train us and gain us fully for His move and purpose!

Church in Oslo

The saints in Oslo took the ground as the church in 2011 and the attendance now is about 20 at the Lord's Day morning meeting.

University campus work

A more intense campus work on the main campus in the University of Oslo began in autumn 2019, with the establishment of a Bible Study Group (BSG) on campus. When the students

arrived at the beginning of the autumn semester, we were able to distribute about 150 Bibles along with an invitation to join the BSG, which was held once every three weeks in the autumn and spring semesters.

Six new contacts came to the introductory meeting. We also had seven young saints from the church joining, so that in total we had 13 coming together in a study room at the university. At the next meeting three weeks later ten new ones came. We made a slide show presentation with the Gospel of John, and as they were listening and asking questions, we tried to answer as best as we could. In between the study groups on campus, we had home meetings every Saturday where the students were invited to dinner and fellowship. One result was that these students invited their friends to come to our home meetings as well, and there were four to six new ones every time. We also have shepherded the students one-to-one as best as we could.

With the start of the pandemic, the students under the saints' care have been meeting regularly on Skype, and a webinar was held in June on "The Lord's Return" with very good attendance from the new ones.

Young people's work

The saints in Oslo have had a burden for several years for the work among our own young people. We have now about eight to ten young people coming to the young people's meetings once a week, where a number of young adult saints take up the responsibility to shepherd them. A few families take turns to host this meeting. We also have the burden to enter more into one-to-one shepherding with the young people.

Every half a year, in between the two large conferences for young people in Europe, we invite the young people in the Nordic countries and Baltic states to come to Oslo for a weekend of blending and mutual encouragement. The Lord has been richly blessing these young people gatherings.

Meetings

The responsible brothers have a weekly meeting. The sisters have also recently established their meeting once a week. There is the prayer meeting on Tuesdays, and on the Lord's day there is a table meeting and prophesying meeting. We have been meeting on Zoom during the last few months; however, from the beginning of June, we have started to meet physically again after the reopening of the country. The prayer meetings on Tuesdays are still on Zoom.

Burden for spreading

The saints in Oslo, together with the saints in Grimstad, are very burdened for the spread of the Lord's recovery to two cities in the near future (Bergen and Kristiansand) and we are led by the Lord also to pray for ten other cities in Norway.

Please pray for the Lord's move in Norway, especially for His gaining many university students and young people for the building up of His Body.

REPORT FROM THE CHURCHES IN SWEDEN

In Sweden, there are two lampstands, one in Stockholm, the capital of Sweden, and the other in Uppsala, a university city, an hour's drive from Stockholm. In addition, there are saints in Boden up in the north and in Lund down in the south of Sweden, who are in regular fellowship with the saints in Uppsala and Stockholm.

A number of Swedish saints have labored over the years to translate the ministry into Swedish. There are 15 books and 27 booklets now available in Swedish. Some of them are marketed to the general public for purchase through our online bookstore and others are distributed freely by Rhema. We believe everything is in place for the Lord to bring this ministry in Swedish to all His people in Sweden. But this needs our cooperation in prayer.

The saints in Sweden are burdened for blending with all the churches. In addition to participating in the seven yearly feasts and the European-wide conferences and trainings, we actively support the two annual regional conferences among the churches in the Nordic and Baltic states and the additional fellowship times among the responsible brothers in our region.

Church in Stockholm

The church life in Stockholm started in 1980 when the saints took the ground in the country's capital. In a small church life with about 20 saints, everyone's portion and function are vitally crucial. For many years, we have had the burden that the Lord would add new ones to us. This has led to much desperate prayer among the saints. We pray that the light of the gospel will shine in the hearts of people so that they would come to know the true God.

We are regularly carrying out Bible distributions in different locations throughout the city. Although we distribute on the average 10 Bibles each time, it is difficult to establish contact with the recipients for follow-up appointments. We are looking to the Lord for His guiding us on how to shepherd these people and how to bring them into the church life.

Recently, brothers have started to meet online for prayer, fellowship, and coordination on a weekly basis. We praise the Lord for this positive development.

Because of the coronavirus pandemic, the church has continued to have virtual meetings and as well as participating in the other virtual conferences arranged by other churches. It has been a vital lifeline for our going on in the Lord.

Church in Uppsala

Blending with other churches

In addition to participating in the seven annual feasts, European-wide conferences, and Nordic-Baltic conferences, the saints in Uppsala have picked up the particular burden to blend with the saints in Copenhagen. They take turns with the saints in Norway to visit the church in Copenhagen every four or five weeks.

Every month, the saints in Uppsala and Stockholm come together to have a corporate Lord's table meeting. The brothers in Uppsala and Stockholm also come together once a month for ministry reading, prayer, and fellowship for the advancement of the Lord's move in Sweden. Since the pandemic restrictions were advised by the government health authorities, we have temporarily suspended the joint Lord's table meeting; however, the monthly joint Stockholm-Uppsala brothers' meetings have continued on the Zoom conferencing platform.

Bible distribution and caring for new ones

The saints in Uppsala enjoy the distribution of the Recovery Version of New Testament in English and are distributing it twice a week, except for the first two weeks at the beginning of a new university semester when we go out more often. We are learning to care for the open Bible recipients through one-to-one contact, home meetings, Bible studies, and Bible seminars. We use the Rhema books and the Recovery Version in the weekly fellowship with the new ones. This has led to some of the new ones beginning to come to the church ministry meetings and Lord's table meetings. Since the recommended restrictions due to the pandemic were announced in Sweden, we have not been going out physically for Bible distribution, but we have arranged to participate in social-media advertisement of Bibles for Europe targeted at four major Swedish cities. We look to the Lord for new open ones that He will bring to us this way. We have continued the one-to-one shepherding of new ones that we have by Skype or phone.

The saints are also in close fellowship with a few saints who live in Lund in the south and in Boden in the north of Sweden. We continue to pray for the spreading of the gospel of the kingdom in Sweden and for the shepherding of the new ones that they may become remaining fruit.

Brothers' and sisters' meetings

Every Saturday morning over the past eight years, the saints in Uppsala have a brothers' and a sisters' meeting. They fellowship, pray, and read the ministry together for mutual shepherding and building. In addition to prayer and fellowship, the brothers also take the time to fellowship about the direction and current focus of the church life and practical church affairs. These meetings are now taking place by Skype, because of the global pandemic situation. Nevertheless, the enjoyment of the spirit and the reality of the kingdom has been the same every week. All the saints feel that this practice over the years has helped with the growth of the saints unto the building up in love.

Ministry meeting

On Wednesdays the saints in Sweden hold a ministry meeting in Uppsala that is streamed through internet to other parts of Sweden. Because of the pandemic, the Wednesday meetings in Sweden have changed. Instead of having two brothers share a life-study message in Swedish, the saints are now gathering in small groups on Skype and reading the material together. In Uppsala we have three groups, and we are incredibly happy that we have been able to include the new ones in these meetings where we have mutual questions and answers. We feel that the Lord has blessed us with this way since we are now able to shepherd and care for the new ones online from anywhere in Sweden in a more intimate way.

We need much prayer that the Lord would continue to strengthen and energize the saints in Sweden for His interest and His move on earth!