

Estonia, one of the Baltic countries, is inhabited by 1,4 million and ranking one of the smallest in the world. Since Estonia regained independence in 1991 people have been taking their opportunities for discovering new freedoms. It applies to sharing the gospel in one of the most secularized nations of Europe.

There are 80 churches and ca. 6000 church members, including 12 Russian-speaking congregations. The following statement of the Union of Free Evangelical and Baptist Churches of Estonia defines its mission: “called by God to proclaim the good news about Jesus Christ in the power of the Spirit”.

Church planting – Tallinn Lasnamae happens to be one of several church-planting projects under the supervision of the Estonian BU.

The indigenous church planter Argo (43) is a graduate of the Tartu Theological Seminary & former pastor of a Baptist congregation. In 2005 he started new church plant in Tallinn – Lasnamae. His vision from the beginning was to create an opportunity for the Lasnamae’s Estonian community to hear the Gospel in a contemporary cultural setting.



Missionary Argo



Tallinn Lasnamae - general view and map

Lasnamae, a section of the capital city of Tallinn is inhabited by over 100,000 people & there is not even one Estonian speaking Christian congregation. Argo took his opportunity to reach out to young adults and families who live in this large settlement. Therefore he started to organize evangelical concerts, Jesus-film project (sharing video-cassettes), family and youth seminars, Alpha and Beta courses etc.

Here are some excerpts of Argo’s reports:

December 2005

I found out that several Baptists live in Lasnamäe district and of course invited them to become part of the church planting team. I got positive response from 6 persons. We planned to train our planting team well. Therefore we defined mission and values of new church. I decided to discuss these matters with all group members together since laying solid foundation was crucial. We are still in this process & it has taken more time than I had planned.

The first public event was attended by 17 people, several of them came just from curiosity, some revealed their skepticism. Anyway it was good to start with such an open event for everybody.

From this point we have had our planting team gatherings regularly. About 7 to 12 people met every Tuesday evening. From the beginning we also organized e-mail list for planters who agreed to pray for us. I see the need for training about spiritual gifts – to find out everybody's gifting and capabilities for ministry. In addition to that we plan small groups on topic "Purpose Driven Life". Also we need to find ways to connect with local community of Lasnamäe.



July 2006

We have tried to make as many as possible contacts in Lasnamäe. Our strategy was to do one big event (film, concert or else) a month and then invite people to small group



gatherings. On Good Friday we showed a Mel Gibson's film "The Passion of Christ". About 20 people came. After the film I shared why Christ's death is so important for us and invited people for next week. One person came to the discussion group next week & I also got his e-mail address. Until now there has been only one conversion. Andrei (19) is studying in a school where we had our public events. When I saw his interest I emailed him and we met regularly. One time I saw that he was ready to accept Jesus as his personal Savior. He made his decision! Thanks God! But his parents are not Christians...

After having organized several big events we plan to start the Alpha course in the middle of September. Some time later we will start with regular worship services & invite people personally. In November we should do another big event. And then we should have enough people for regular services and other activities of congregational life.

January 2007

Our new method is an opinion poll in this area where we will hold Alpha course. During recent years there has been hot discussion in Estonia about teaching religion in public schools. Estonians often express their negative opinions about Christianity. So we ask THEIR OPINION showing that it is important for us. When a door is open our team members introduce as being from the Lasnamäe Hope Church that would like to know about Lasnamäe people preferences, opinions and needs in order to better serve them. For this reason we ask them 9 short questions. After that we thank them for taking time, inform about our plans and pass a leaflet and invitation to an Alpha course.

Eventually we discovered that there are very few people who know anything about God, even among those who claimed allegiance to some church. Most common answer was "I

don't know ", some chose "There's no God". Very few chose "Jesus is the savior of humankind" or "God is the creator of the world". One lady came to Alpha course. We continue with our survey/opinion poll also in 2007.

Our first Alpha course started in the end of September 2006 and ended before Christmas. During this period we had 10 people who visited Alpha and 5 of them graduated. They were offered a Beta-course in a home group setting. We will soon start with worship gatherings once a month. It should strengthen our identity as a new church and hopefully draw in some Lasnamäe Christians and unchurched people.

We are thankful to God for our first successful Alpha course with 5 graduates, Christmas concert - about 80 participants and one Christian home that opened to us for Beta course gatherings.

Prayer requests for 2007 are the following:

- 1) We are planning another Alpha course. Pray for participants and a meeting place.
- 2) We need more people on our church planting team. We will start with worship gatherings once a month. Pray for God's guidance how to do it.
- 3) Andrei, a young man who graduated our Alpha course, has encountered opposition in his home. Pray that the Holy Spirit will encourage Andrei in his faith.

**Daniel Trusiewicz
Mission Coordinator
European Baptist Federation**

To help planting reproducing churches!

To help growing healthy churches!

For the glory of God!

For more information about EBF projects and activities visit the web page - www.ebf.org and you can write to IMP coordinator – imp@ebf.org