



Name _____

Address _____

Postcode _____

Email _____

Church _____ Date _____

Financial support

- ☐ I pledge to give a regular monthly/quarterly/annual gift of £..... to GBM for the support of Phil and Lydia.
- ☐ I will set up a standing order for my regular gift, to HSBC a/c 71100335 sort code: 40-08-10. The purpose of the donation will be stated in the payment reference.
- ☐ I wish GBM to claim gift aid on all donations I make to Phil and Lydia's support. I confirm I have paid or will pay an amount of Income Tax and/or Capital Gains Tax for each year (6 April to 5 April) that is at least equal to the amount of tax that will be reclaimed on my gifts for that tax year. I understand that other taxes such as VAT and Council Tax do not qualify. I understand the charity will reclaim 25p of tax on every £1 that I give.

Signed _____ Date _____

Please notify Grace Baptist Mission if you:

- Want to cancel this declaration
- Change your name or home address
- No longer pay sufficient tax on your income and/or capital gains

Please return to:

Grace Baptist Mission, 12 Abbey Close, Abingdon-on-Thames, Oxon, OX14 3JD

Phil and Lydia Evans



Phil and Lydia Evans are being sent by their home Church, Penzance Baptist Church, to serve in Riga, Latvia. GBM Council has approved them to serve alongside Malcolm and Ruth Firth in Mežciems International Baptist Church.





Why go?

We live in an increasingly global world, with technology and transport allowing for a greater movement of people around the world. Many of the major cities in Europe are now filling with students and young professionals who are looking for a different experience from that of staying in their home country. This has created an amazing opportunity for the gospel. As people move, they leave behind their cultural norms and ways of living, and begin to ask questions about life, wondering what is important and what they are living for. This creates a greater openness to discuss and reason about the Christian faith. Many come from countries that are closed to the gospel, and when they hear it for the first time they come to know the Saviour.

Why us?

Phil has been working with international students in Nottingham with Friends International for the past two years. He has seen the effect the gospel can have on those who are out of their comfort zone and looking for the answers to life's big questions. He has had the joy of reading the Bible with Chinese students individually or in groups and helping them to see, for the first time, the amazing truth the Bible contains. It's also been great to reason with many from Arab countries about the uniqueness of the gospel and see them

eager to understand God's word.

Lydia has been working as an accountant. Having read many books by Elisabeth Elliot, Isobel Kuhn and others, she has always had a desire to be willing to serve God in various ways. She has been part of a Young Life group involved in open air ministry, has served on United Beach Missions and has been a leader on youth camps. She has particularly enjoyed taking Bible studies and helping to disciple the young Christians.

Both of us have had the joy of leading an Envision team for ten days in Riga and seen the effect it's had in contacting many internationals with the gospel. As well as this, we have seen how the international Christians, as we helped in their evangelism, have been encouraged to be more active with the gospel themselves. We therefore desire to be able to disciple and equip students to be able to reach out to their fellow classmates and provide opportunities for evangelism.

Why Latvia?

Latvia has had a troubled past, but since gaining its independence from the Soviet Union in 1991 it has joined the EU and its position on the Baltic Sea has made it a crossroads between east and west. It has worked hard to recreate its image, with Riga becoming the European Capital of Culture in 2014. It is a country that

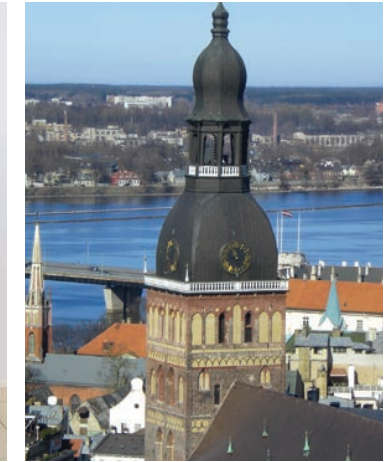


is keen to grow, with a population of only 2 million, and they have therefore sought to attract internationals across their borders by, for example, offering university courses in English.

Riga has a population of 660,000, many of whom are young students coming to its higher education institutions. Three of the larger universities offer courses such as medicine and engineering in English. The number of international students alone has trebled in the last three years. In 2016 there were 6,500 international students in Latvia. This makes international student work in the city a great opportunity with students coming from all over Europe, South Asia and North Africa. Interestingly, the Chinese are also coming to Riga to buy property and settle as residents. These factors have led to the International Church growing into a diverse group of people; one third are Chinese and one third are international students.

Why now?

Malcolm and Ruth Firth have been working in Riga for over twenty years now. In recent years they have been leading a church in their local district of Riga, Mežciems. They originally started the church with the desire to reach the surrounding area but God had other plans. The church they planted started with four people



in their living room but grew when they began to meet asylum seekers who wanted to be part of the church. They were then joined by international students and others working in the city. In 2014, when the church had grown to twenty people, they rented a room, and since then the church has grown to around eighty people meeting with them on a Sunday. They have recently become a registered church. Malcolm's time is taken up with the paperwork for that, producing literature, lecturing, and preparing to preach each Sunday. Ruth is still involved with asylum seekers, translation and ministry amongst the women of the church. They have recognised the need for others to join them and have been praying for others to help in the work of the church, particularly with the students and young people, discipling and reaching out to the local area and international community.

We feel the Lord's leading in bringing us together as a couple and equipping us for the work of serving God in the International Church in Riga. We want to help Malcolm and Ruth to carry out their vision to see internationals from whatever background, believer or not, come to know the gospel, to grow in God's Word, to live it out in Riga and then to be equipped to go back to their home countries, passionate about God's Word and eager to share it with others.