

## Share the Story: Stories of God's Kingdom Work Word for the Year 2026

**Thesis:** We are a people who want to grow in our capacity to share the story of what God is doing. Our sharing includes what we have seen, heard, and experienced of the Lord. Today, we want to highlight some of the ways we are partnering with the Lord in extending the kingdom of God in the earth. And, we want to celebrate what the Lord is doing in and through our partnerships.

**Text:** 1 John 1:1-4

Today, we heard the story about our partnership with **New Generation Church** in Ventspils, Latvia. It was such a blessing to hear from **Andrejs and Edwards Rubins** share about the impact of Calvary's partnership in Latvia and beyond. It is an honor to partner with **Pastor Inese** Rubine.

**Word for the year 2026: Share the Story.**

*1 John 1:1–4 (NIV84) 1 That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked at, and our hands have touched—this we proclaim concerning the Word of life. 2 The life appeared; we have seen it and testify to it, and we proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and has appeared to us. 3 We proclaim to you what we have seen and heard, so that you also may have fellowship with us. And our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son, Jesus Christ. 4 We write this to make our joy complete.*

**We live in 3 interconnected stories**, and we get to share what we have heard, seen, and experienced in regards to all 3 stories: THE Story, Our Story, and My Story.

- **Outcome:** Here is one outcome of living into this word for the year. The challenge for us as a congregation is learning to share the story. **We need to catch the vision of what God is saying and doing, get equipped to share the story, practice sharing the story, reflect on our practice, and incorporate the learning into the process all over again.** **Our desired outcome for the year to is live intentionally into sharing the story of what God is doing in THE Story, Our Story, and My Story.**

- **Opportunity:** Here is our opportunity. **We are all in this learning together...** share the story in 2026... share THE Story, share Our Story, and share My Story.

**Our vision as a church is about intimacy, community, and kingdom.**

1. **Our vision:**
  - a. Our vision expresses who the Lord has called us to be in this world.
  - b. Other congregations have other assignments.
  - c. **We want to stay true to what the Lord is saying to us.**
2. **We want to make progress of living into our vision as individuals and as a congregation.**
  - a. **Establishing people in intimacy with God.** My Story.
    - i. We practice a reflective life where we learn to hear the voice of the Lord and co-create with God.
    - ii. Core outcome: awareness.
  - b. **Expressing true Christian community.** Our Story.
    - i. We engage in authentic community where we are open and honest.
    - ii. Core outcome: authenticity.
  - c. **Extending the kingdom of God in the earth.** THE Story.
    - i. We join Jesus on his mission in our spheres of influence, together with others.
    - ii. Core outcomes: alignment with the way of Jesus and action around what God is doing.
3. **The Lord has given us an awesome vision.** We **celebrate** and **embrace** the vision which God has given to us: intimacy, community, and kingdom.

**As we shared today about our ministry in Latvia with New Generation Church in Ventspils, we were encouraged by THE Story, of what God is doing in the earth.**

In the late 1980's, God began to engage us with his Kingdom Story—THE Story.

From 1983 – 1989, Calvary was involved in missions locally and globally in 3 ways:

1. **Reaching our neighbors** with the good news of the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. We saw a lot of people come to Christ in those years.
2. **Taking our youth group on mission trips** each summer to the Valley of Texas each summer. Those mission trips helped First Baptist Church of Mercedes to reach their community with the love of God. And, those trips changed our lives.
3. **Giving funds** to support global missions.

## **Testimony and background about our ministry in Latvia.**

During a staff retreat in 1987, we believe the Lord communicated with us that we were to do more than just giving our money to world missions. Rather, we were called to pastor and send missionaries to the nations.

So, we began to pray and ask the Lord for where God wanted us to partner with him.

Through a series of divine appointments, we began to discern that God was calling us to start with the nation of Latvia. We had met Tammy Ross and other people who were trying to get to the former Soviet Union. The Lord paired down the team and directed them to start in Latvia.

Pastor John Foster and I went to Riga, Latvia in December of 1990, to figure out how to do business as missions in Latvia so that we could serve the Lord's purposes there. The Iron Curtain was in the process of coming down and the Soviet Union was breaking up. That 1990 visit opened up the door for us to send our first missionaries to Latvia in 1991.

That was the beginning of a partnership with believers in Latvia that has continued from 1990 until today.

Mary Standley and several others have carried the torch of this first missional assignment for Calvary in Latvia. What a faithful, powerful, and impactful ministry God has given us as we have continued to partner in different ways in Latvia.

**Here is our kingdom vision:** Calvary is seeking to be actively demonstrating kingdom principles beyond our walls to the community and the world. We desire to proclaim and demonstrate God's kingdom through varying arenas including intercession, spiritual warfare, evangelism, missions, and an expression of apostolic and power ministries. Our desire is to know the heart of God, declare his kingdom on earth, and actively prepare for Christ to rule and reign.

The kingdom of God is built on relationships. God has given us relationships with people around the world that are long-term and far reaching. What a privilege to partners with God in the earth.

## **Testimony from Greater Works and Pastors Shawn and Sajah Echols**

## Another testimony from Jay Kelley:

### Summary and call to action:

We are a people who want to grow in our capacity to share the story of what God is doing. Our sharing includes what we have seen, heard, and experienced of the Lord.

Today, we highlighted some of the ways we are partnering with the Lord in extending the kingdom of God in the earth.

And, we celebrate what the Lord is doing in and through our partnerships.

And, God is at work in each of our lives.

May each of us pay attention to what God is doing in and around us.

May each of us partner with others for the sake of the purposes of God in our spheres of influence locally and globally.

May each of us join with the Lord on his mission to extend the kingdom of God in the earth, starting with our home base and reaching nations (Acs 1:8).

And, may each of us take the next step on the Generosity Ladder in spiritual giving so that we sow and reap for the glory of our King as a congregation. **Seek to move up the Generosity Ladder as the Lord gives you grace:**

1. Give
2. Regular
3. Tithe
4. Generous
5. Extravagant