

LITHUANIA REPORT

May 12, 2008



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Bruce Hudson visits Lithuania

Bruce has been [preaching in Bangor, Maine](#) for nearly 20 years. In addition, he works with Steve Wilsher to support many Russian preachers in their labor. It was in that context I became acquainted with Bruce. In the past several years I have been blessed with the opportunity to at-

tend the Bible lectures in Tula, Russia. He is no stranger to the Baltic lands, for he visited Lithuania fourteen years ago to support the new work in Vilnius. We happily arranged a return visit for him to encourage the saints here.

ics aside, I must add that Bruce rejoiced far more to see the familiar and new faces of those who have called on to Jesus as their Lord and Saviour. Bruce spent ten days in Lithuania and met with the Christians in Vilnius, Kaunas and Jonava.



Many things in Lithuania have changed and Bruce was very pleased to see the evident progress throughout the cities. Nevertheless, Bruce waxed nostalgic for the older, familiar days in Vilnius. Buildings and streets have new faces. Modern, western-style malls and chains replaced unwanted, Soviet-era stores. Urban renewal and econom-

Meetings with the Vilnius church: Bruce, my family and I traveled to Vilnius on the first Sunday to worship with the saints. They rejoiced to see Bruce again and invited him to preach a message from the Bible. After services we ate lunch together in the city center and Bruce, Kestutis and Irena did their best to recall memories from four-

teen years past. Details such as brethren, translators and meeting place for the church were recalled in this collective effort.

The following Friday, Bruce and I travelled to Vilnius and met with Kestutis, his wife and their grandson, Dovydas at their garden home after visiting the dreary KGB museum. The "curators" at the museum recently added a new KGB surveillance exhibit. One room was reconstructed with desk, audio equipment and telephones. Audible recordings of KGB agents eavesdropping on tapped telephone lines played through a loudspeaker. Anyhow, it was far better to be with friends. Once we arrived at Kestutis' garden home we ate a light dinner and afterwards I hung a sheet on the wall, set up the projector and Bruce shared his experience with the churches in Ethiopia.

On the final Sunday we met with Kestutis and his family as I returned to Vilnius to drop Bruce off at a hotel for his Monday morning departure. Irena made a light dinner for us and we continued to discuss the past years



and review Kestutis' pictures of past preachers in Lithuania.

Meeting with the Jonava church: Saturday, the day after Bruce arrived to Lithuania, we arranged a meeting with Albinas and the Gypsy converts in the town of Jonava. The Gypsy family has recently moved into a government-given flat in Rukla which lies about five miles away Jonava. About half of the 14 member family was gone so it was a rather peaceful meeting. We spoke for a short bit about Bruce's gospel efforts in Maine and Russia before he pulled out his computer and went through a photo presentation of his trip to Ethiopia. Earlier I suggested to Bruce that such a presentation of Lord's work in Ethiopia would

be of great benefit to the Lithuanian churches. Being able to see how other Christians live and fellowship in the Lord especially in more difficult circumstances would give our isolated Lithuanian brethren a healthy perspective.

Meetings with Kaunas church: Bruce preached for the Kaunas church for the two Sundays he was in Lithuania. Furthermore, I was pleased to see Gediminas and his family further set aside three separate occasions to study the Bible with Bruce throughout the week. He used those opportunities to discuss "Love" and also share his gospel work in Ethiopia. Bruce also did much to encourage Sondra and I. May the Lord bless him, his family and his labor.





Christians in Lithuania

Vilnius church update: Eugenijus and his family left Kestutis and his family for the [Reformed Evangelical church](#) this past January. Kestutis is no longer meeting in the "Teacher's Home." They now worship in his home. I spoke with both Kestutis and Julius about the details of this matter. Eugenijus and Julius' interest in the Reformed church began with the Reformed church's daily evening radio program (Gediminas and his family listen to the same show.). Impressed with the content, they obtained the entire series in CD format from a Reformed church organization. After five months they received a phone call from the director of the organization which led to an invitation to a four-part Bible lecture on the Holy Spirit. Julius states that he liked the Bible studies very much and was provoked to much prayer with the Lord. Julius was also in low spirits for he stated that their Sunday worship was empty. Thus, Julius affirms that their eventual departure to the Reformed church is God's will.

Eugenijus and Julius then invited Kestutis and the others to start worshiping with the Reformed church. Kestutis refused and Eugenijus and Julius continued their fellowship with the Reformed Evangelical church.

Julius clarified to me that there is both a larger liberal element in the Lithuanian Reformed church and a much smaller conservative element. He and his father belong to the latter. The Vilnius conservative congregation has 20-25 members.

Doctrinally, the Reformed churches teach and preach Calvinism and Julius and his father are now engaged in learning the [Heidelberg catechism](#).

Due to health reasons, Kestutis was forced to leave his previous occupation. He was without work for half a year before finding more labor. He and his family are

suffering financial hardship and for those who know him you may contact him at:

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Jonava church update:

Nine months ago I first shared the news of the harvesting Albinas was doing in Jonava. Since that time the devil been sifting the Jonava church unceasingly. I regret to announce that no tangible church remains.

One, Albinas is spiritually worn out. He has always been willing to help them emotionally, spiritually and financially but unceasing sacrifice has defeated the man. Regarding the activity of the church nothing happens unless he initiates it. The young ladies are going through trials in the gypsy culture and it is evident that very little spiritual zeal remains in their hearts (they admitted this to Sondra and I). Thus, Albinas is worn out. He is tired of pushing that which isn't moving.

Two, Nastia lost her job and thus she and Olga lost their apartment which served as the central meeting place for the group. They have returned to their mother's apartment in Rukla (a small town outside of Jonava). Apparently that apartment is not a suitable place for them to habitually gather for fellowship.

Three, the gypsy culture is overwhelming the girls. Over time that have been losing in their struggle to maintain their new identity in Christ while living in a culture that is demonstrably antagonistic to discipleship to the Lord.



PHOTO KEY:

page 1: <BL> Bruce worships with the church in Vilnius.

page 2: <TR> Snowmen in early March **<BL>** Three eras of Kaunas architecture **
** Lee and Fiona busy with birthday activities

page 3: <TL> Kestutis and Irena **<TR>** Bruce meets with the saints in Jonava **<TR>** Home Bible study with the Kaunas church

page 4: <TM> Gediminas and Indrė **<TM>** I often take the kids with bike and buggy

Four, Albinas has already left abroad to work in Norway for the summer. Sondra and I still communicate with the young ladies over the phone but I do not suspect that they will be inviting Sondra and I to help them out in Albinas' absence.

Parting words...

In March Sondra and I travelled to Warsaw, Poland by bus. We spent two days in Warsaw completing the green card process. My fellow Americans working in the embassy were very welcoming and so they ensured that we completed this final step in the bureaucratic process on a pleasant note.

Click on the links below for MORE photos and commentary at my FLICKR account:
[Bruce's 2008 Trip](#) (46 photos)
[Fiona's 2nd b-day party](#) (48 photos)



We continue to rely on your prayers and support, brethren. God bless you for your zeal and may God bless all our efforts to His glory.

Peace be to you,

Lee and Sondra

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