

# PALSROKS' POSTINGS



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## Future Leaders for Eastern Europe

Nestled in the little town of Klaipeda along the Baltic Sea is a small Christian liberal arts college named Lithuania Christian College (LCC) International University. They believe that it is their task to rise up a new generation of leaders for the surrounding countries of Eastern Europe and beyond. Currently they have 618 students from over 26 different countries. 70% of the students come from countries where there are less than 2% evangelical Christians; most of the students who come to LCC are not Christians.

LCC sees its task as exposing these students to Christ and Christian values. The faculty and staff explicitly state to the students that they will be sharing their faith within the various disciplines. They point out the tremendous lack of values and the rampant corruption of the societies and governments of the students' countries. But they make very clear that they will not force any religion on them. In fact, they ask the students to judge Christianity by the fruits of the people that they encounter at the school- the faculty, the staff, other Christian students.

Recently Sherry and I met with about 25 students late one evening. I asked them their names, their home countries, how they got to LCC, and what they thought about it. The students were from Russia, Kazakhstan, Albania, Moldova, Nigeria, Uganda, Lithuania, etc. They arrived at the school through diverse routes; they came knowing no one. But they listed 3 outstanding features of LCC: 1.the tremendous sense of Christian community where they felt loved (many came from extremely broken homes and society where there was little trust or compassion), 2.faculty who genuinely cared about them and who expressly asked them to think for themselves (many came from schools where the teacher was dictatorial and demanded obedience and memorization) and 3. the instruction in a different way of life/values in politics, in business, in church, in education, psychology, etc. Many students do become Christian; all leave with an opportunity to lead their countries down new paths free from corruption and toward a better more compassionate society.

CRWM has been partnering with this school for more than 15 years. We have sent teachers in theology and business; an excellent recruiter who gained many new students from surrounding countries; and currently a person who is Vice President of Human Resources who is assisting the school reorganize and model good values in administration. Most of these are "Partner Missionaries" who raise all their own salary, work directly under national leaders, while consulting and fellowshiping with CRWM.

Now a great new opportunity has been offered to CRWM. The school wants to broaden its ministry to include a Congregational Development Resource Center. This means that they want to go beyond training the current students and offer assistance to pastors, leaders and laity of the churches in all the surrounding Eastern Europe Countries. They are open to a CRWM staff member becoming the director. This means that we could offer education and encouragement to a host of churches. I met with pastors who longed for more theological depth, more spiritual renewal, more pastoral care training, and more discipleship training for their lay members. Such leadership development is our central focus.

But, and this "but" is big, will CRWM have the financial resources to hire a person to meet this need? Currently due to the recession, there is no room for budget expansion. All of us missionaries struggle with trying to find enough financial support for our own ministries; where will more funding come from? I do not know but I do see the vision for assisting hurting leaders from broken societies to build strong churches with increased capacity for ministry. Thank you for your support! We couldn't do it without you.



Russ and Sherry Palsrok