



# The LCC Update (April 2014)

*Tom preaching on 2 Cor 1:15-20 at City Church; Joy and Ni having tea*

## Reflections on the year

As our first year on the field draws to a close, we want to leave you with some of many testimonies from the students we have come to know through classes, the tennis program, and over tea in our apartment.

*"I am happy, happier than I have been before."*

*"I am excited to learn that God is working all the time around me. I never realized this before. Because you are here I know that now."*

*"I am a marginalized person to others, but not to God. I never knew that God was interested in me."*

*"We showed God's love to children who did not know it before" - concluding statement by a tennis leader*

## And then there are testimonies beyond words...

Ni, one of my Buddhist students, is now talking about God in a personal way, and wants to begin coming to church. She has befriended Joy.

Arunas' mother (the young man I wrote about last month) attended the church where he goes and we met her just today. This was a big step for her.

Several of my students are now privately expressing to me that their fears are beginning to diminish because of what they have learned from the Bible.

On their own, students have begun to pray for people on the streets of Klaipeda. Reaction: people are crying and thankful. This has never happened before at LCC.

*"God is doing something different now,"* someone told us. We can't say for sure, but we have come to believe people here need to be reminded that God loves them. Whether it is through words, work, or sports, the relationships we developed give voice to the fact that God has not forgotten this land. Your prayers and partnership in our labor have, in part, enabled this to happen. Praise God!

## Church planting initiative developing

One of the surprises for us this year occurred when I was asked to be the new chair of Theology. Beyond the administrative "fun," I am now in dialogue with

pastors, church leaders, and a Lithuanian Bible institute about strategic plans for church growth in Lithuania and how LCC can be a part of this. The pastors trust me because I am one of them. The academy trusts me because I work in this world, too. So, an exciting opportunity has surfaced. In the words of our Academic Dean, "God brings stuff like this only once in a generation and this is that time. We just have to choose to obey." Here it is...

At the invitation of some indigenous evangelical pastors in Lithuania, I am working with them to develop a church planting program, starting 2015-16. This will involve a one-year Diploma of Christian Studies at LCC followed by a one-year period of mentorship in churches. The training will be in English and Lithuanian, and with full cooperation of church leaders who will themselves identify potential candidates. Rather than costing \$120,000 for a student to attend a three-year seminary with the family transplanted, this experience will cost about \$7,000 per student and **keep young leaders here.**

## Heading home!

Joy returns April 24, I return May 4 to a busy summer. We will finalize our process to join with *The Antioch Partners* as our sending agency. We will both prepare class lectures and I will do networking for the church planting initiative and LCC. We are available to meet with mission committees and speak to churches, classes, and individuals to share what God is doing in Eastern Europe even as you hear daily news of political conflict.

## Please keep in prayer

1. The church planting initiative will continue to take shape and partners abroad will arise to support and come alongside future leaders here
2. Students who have begun their faith journeys will be strengthened during their summer living and working
3. The girls who work abroad during the summer often face exploitation. Surround them with prayer.
4. Our safe trip home.

*In His service, Tom and Joy*