



MINUTE FOR MISSION

October 1, 2006

Witnessing with Our Lives



A student dance group at Lithuania Christian College seeks to preserve cultural traditions and its identity in an ever-changing, fast-paced global economy.

Lithuania joined the European Union in May 2004. The country now sits on a new border between east and west, an economic divide in Europe that The Economist magazine dubbed the "crystal curtain." The prosperity of the West gleams as it beckons residents of the former Soviet states. Lithuania Christian College, in Klaipeda, was founded in 1991 as a Christian witness for students seeking a university education grounded in values. Today the college has 560 students from 18 countries. One-third of the students who entered the college in fall 2005 were from Belarus, Ukraine, and other former Soviet states to the east. The college has become an international school, where people come from east and west.



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As teachers at the college, Becky and I are challenged to witness with our lives. Students watch how we act, how treat each other, and especially how we spend our money. To students it's not what we say that matters, but how we live. Our students have so many questions about the global economy: How can they find jobs? What is their place in the global economy? They ask how they can remain uniquely Lithuanian or Ukrainian with global economic forces pushing them in what looks like a common direction. In this cross-cultural setting we must remember that we embody the gospel for these students. Students don't want to be set adrift with their culture devalued because it does not produce the prosperity we enjoy. We need to take care that we don't just become models of some high level of living, prompting only questions like, "How can I be rich, like you?" We must affirm their lives, their traditions, and their value within a heritage they understand. Jesus was very careful to affirm as well as to challenge those he encountered.

Eric and Becky Hinderliter
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For more information on the Witness Season mission education emphasis contact Billie Healy, Associate for Mission Education Resources (888) 728-7228, ext. 5689, or Bhealy@ctr.pcusa.org.

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