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**LINKING GOD'S PEOPLE TO  
REACH THE UNREACHED**

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website? Click and see!**

## FROM R.K.'S CORNER

This month we are celebrating with Peter and Solvei Stohl their 20th Anniversary as partners with us in the mission field!

I remember in the early 90'ties when they visited us for the first time in Florida. Walking on the beach in Fort Lauderdale, our hearts bonded as they shared their burden for the broken people and shattered families they had encountered while working behind the Iron Curtain, and their desire to make a difference through their gifts and talents. Peter and Solvei gave up the security and comfort of a Stateside life and have lived overseas, predominantly in Lithuania. From there they have traveled and ministered in a number of post-communist countries with their gifts of teaching, prayer and counseling. They can now look back on more than two decades of a successful ministry as individuals, couples, and church leaders under their care in many nations have found liberty and wholeness in Christ, and have embrace life with hope and faith! The one, overriding character trait of the Stohls is: **FAITHFULNESS!**

Please celebrate with us by sending a donation to The Stohls via The Bridge as a token of your appreciation of their labor of love! A contribution envelope is enclosed for your convenience. Please mark your gift: **FAMILY MINISTRIES!**



*... Cont We moved to Lithuania intending to serve here 10 years. We are working on an exit strategy to finish here by 2015, then return to the USA to find work and establish a new home. This will not be an easy task after serving as missionaries for 20+ years. We are very grateful for the prayers and financial gifts we have received from faithful supporters throughout the years. And we are especially thankful for the steady encouragement from The Bridge International with whom we have partnered since 1992.*

**PLEASE JOIN IN CELEBRATING THE 20TH ANNIVERSARY OF PETER AND SOLVEI STOHL'S PARTNERSHIP WITH US - SEND THEM A FINANCIAL GIFT!**

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LINKING GOD'S PEOPLE TO REACH THE UNREACHED

# The Bridge Report

## LITHUANIA: UPDATE ON THE STOHLs



### MINISTRY STATEMENT

Peter and Solvei Stohl are American missionaries who work as Christian family counselors. They currently live in Kaunas, Lithuania and serve with the Lithuanian Family Center. The Stohls are skilled in helping individuals resolve various kinds of normal life problems and misunderstandings in relationships. They also help people overcome specific kinds of character problems that are running out of control. And they sometimes pray with individuals to restore basic human abilities such as trust, self-discipline, and empathy.

### BRIEF MISSION HISTORY

Peter and Solvei met in Minnesota in 1979 and married in 1980. From 1985-1987 they studied at Christ for the Nations Institute in Dallas, TX focusing on children's ministry, family ministry, and Christian missions.

They first became missionaries in 1987 and served in eastern Europe (Romania, Czechoslovakia, and Bulgaria). After the communist governments collapsed in eastern Europe in 1989, they returned to Minnesota 1990-1992. At that time they received more training in Christian counseling.

In 1992 they joined The Bridge International, and moved back to Europe. From this point the Stohls based in western Europe and traveled 6 months of the year, working in Russia, Kazakhstan, Lithuania, and Latvia. For 14 years they traveled and worked as Bible school teachers and Christian family counselors in these countries.

From 1996-2001 they held Christian counseling courses in 5 cities in Lithuania and worked with small groups of people who served as assistants in counseling appointments. This was an experiment to determine if it was possible to train lay counselors in Lithuania or possibly other former Soviet countries in the future. They determined that the majority of Christians whom they worked with were not mature enough to counsel, although they were successful in passing on their skills to several individuals.

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# LITHUANIA — UPDATE ON PETER AND SOLVEI STOHL'S LIFE AND MINISTRY

By 2002 they stopped trying to train people. Since there were so many overwhelming needs in these countries they decided to continue serving as counselors themselves.

In 2005 Peter and Solvei moved to Kaunas, Lithuania where they continue counseling individuals and families. They are partners with the Lithuanian Family Center, a social work organization overseen by the Catholic Church. Lithuania is primarily a Catholic country. Peter and Solvei are Protestant/Evangelical.



## COUNSELING METHOD

We meet regularly with individuals, couples, and families for counseling. Some are referred by the family centers in other cities, others come through Catholic and Protestant churches. Many, including non-Christians, come by word of mouth. We do not mix evangelism with counseling, and we do not charge for our service. Our work fits into the category of discipleship, helping Christians to become normal, loving human beings. In other words, helping people to mature. We believe this is essential to the gospel and one of the primary reasons that Jesus comes to live in us.

*When counseling, we use this simple method to define where the main breakdown or problem in relationship is occurring. Is this problem merely a misunderstanding, a breakdown in communication, or is this something more complicated?*

**Level 1:** refers to normal kinds of human life predicaments such as misunderstandings in relationships, financial burdens, housing and living situations, property disputes, job stress, loss, etc. It can also include the consequences of sin (for example, breaking the 10 commandments), or people trying to live beyond their human limitations.

**Level 2:** We define character structures as childish habits that people build into their character usually as young children. Such habits can be unconscious, but have now become ripe, active, and stronger than a person's will. We see 4 kinds of character structures that are common to people: childhood judgments against parents, inner vows, an irrational drive to be accepted, and an overly serious sense of responsibility. If any of these have become an outstanding problem, we help a person to recognize and bring such



habits to the cross in clear, practical ways.

**Level 3:** Restoring a person's human spirit. This means that we sometimes pray with individuals to be able to take hold of life in areas where they had not received parental nurture or discipline, or where they refused to cooperate with life. We might also pray with victims of abuse at this level (with their permission). We not only pray with these people, we may meet with them several times to talk about what is normal in life, and we strongly affirm them.

## SUMMER 2012

Since moving to Lithuania in 2005 most of our work has been marriage counseling and helping people out of depression. It is a much different experience to live here, rather than to visit here 3-4 months of the year as we did in the past. We live among the needs and the burdens.

There is little marriage counseling available in Lithuania. Kaunas is centrally located, so a lot of people come to us from other cities. Many couples approach us on the verge of divorce and tell us that we are their last chance. We feel that we are successful 70% of the time restoring trust between husbands and wives, and in resolving the sources of their breakdowns.

In the past we were able to keep a lighter counseling load during the summer months, which enabled us to get refreshed. At the beginning of this sum-



mer we have been meeting with six couples in crises. We often get stretched beyond our limits.

In addition to our serving in Lithuania, we were invited to work in the Czech Republic in 2010. Prague Christian Fellowship (part of an indigenous, Evangelical denomination) asked us to

work with a few people in their church network, to equip them to counsel. This has involved our teaching counseling seminars and inviting a few individuals to observe and assist in counseling appointments. We have been traveling to Prague three times per year since 2010, and we intend to complete the final seminar there in October.

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