

THE SIBERIAN LUTHERAN  
MISSION SOCIETY



# Farewell and Godspeed to Professor Alan Ludwig



*The Revs. Pavel Khramov, Alexey Streltsov, Alan Ludwig, and Andrey Lipnitsky*

## By The Rev. Alexey Streltsov

At St. Andrew's parish following the service, we honored the Rev. Dr. Alan Ludwig, who has given twenty years of his life to ensure the formation of a confessional Lutheran Seminary of high academic standards in the middle of Siberia. Bishop Vsevolod says (and I fully concur with him here) that without Fr. Alan, our Siberian Evangelical Lutheran Church would not have gotten to the point where she is now.

He set the bar extremely high, and it will be our privilege to follow in his footsteps in the matter of pastoral training. A unique combination of skills and personal qualities contributed to Fr. Alan making Akademgorodok, and our church there, his second home. We also remember fondly his wife Patricia, who shared with him a good part of his Siberian experience.

The people of St Andrew's had a chance to say words of farewell today. Personally, it makes me very sad thinking that I will no longer see Dr. Ludwig worshipping at the front pew of the church. Every time I saw him there I knew I had to do a good job preaching, because he was listening. We will certainly stay in touch, but it will be different not having his company around.

Fr. Alan had a unique experience of profound immersion in the middle of real Russian life (which is different from visiting the country for a short period of time, and also different from being in only the well-known showcase areas of Russia).

This is what true mission work is all about.✠

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# Rebuilding the Church in Tuim

**By The Rev. Vitaly Gavrilov**

*In the December 2017 issue, we reported about the November fire at Transfiguration of our Lord parish in Tuim. Many of you responded in love to help our brothers and sisters there. This is a recent update of the ongoing repairs and renovations.—Ed.*



**T**he Church is the Body of Christ, and separately we are members. Members do not exist by themselves, but they represent united, inseparable construction.

And our parish of the Transfiguration of Our Lord (Tuim, Khakassia) is not autonomous and independent, but we are part of the Church. When we suffered fire damage, it became a problem for the whole Church, and no one was indifferent. You, beloved brothers and sisters, did not leave us in our trouble, but very soon responded and helped us to repair the very old premises of our parish (this house was built in the fifties of the last century).

Yes, more than sixty years ago this house was built for the Soviet administration of the village. But already for twenty years now, the Lord Himself dwells here, supporting His children with the Word and feeding them with the salvific sacraments.

Please look at the new photographs. We have not finished the repairs yet, because we are trying to do everything neatly and reliably. Now the church building is warm and cozy. Here we thank God for the redeeming Sacrifice of Christ, here we pray for all of you who helped us during a difficult time for us.

And we again ask you for help. Our parish of Saint Luke the Evangelist in Abakan is also in a difficult situation right now. The church building is dilapidated and requires considerable efforts and money for repairs. The foundation sagged and cracked, it needs

to be repaired, because the water from outside is poured into the basement. The heating system becomes unsuitable, our self-made coal-fired furnace is already poorly fulfilling its purpose, very old heating pipes are clogged with rust and scum and heating very poorly. We really need to change the oven to a more modern and efficient one, because during winter it is very difficult to heat the room. The temperature does not hold, it becomes very cold very quickly. We ask you, brothers and sisters to help us, please!

We ask you to pray for the Lutherans pastors and parishioners in Khakassia.✠

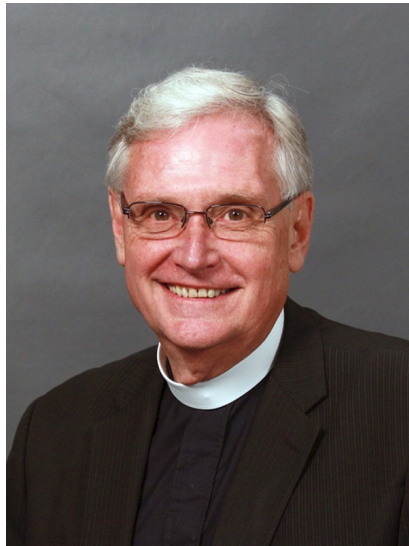




# An Interview with a Pioneer of Russian Missions: The Rev. Dr. Tim Quill

By the Rev. Larry Beane

**T**he Rev. Dr. Timothy Quill recently retired after twenty years of service as a professor at Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne, Indiana, teaching Liturgy, Homiletics, and Missions. He also served as Dean of International Students from 2002 to 2018, and headed up the precursor to SLMS: the Russian



Project. This massive educational and missionary undertaking was unprecedented in the history of the LCMS and of its seminaries, overseeing nearly forty students from the former USSR shortly after its breakup. The students who came to the US as part of the Russian Project then became native missionaries in their own countries. From this seed, the Siberian Evangelical Lutheran Church would blossom and flourish as an independent confessional Lutheran church body, with its own Lutheran Theological Seminary in Novosibirsk. Dr. Quill's importance in this work of the Holy Spirit cannot be emphasized enough. He is loved by his many students all over the world, and continues to serve the church in many ways, including service on our SLMS board. He graciously answered a few questions for us.—Ed.

## What were your first impressions upon hearing about the Russian Project and your role in it?

Surprised! Joyfully perplexed! Excited! And I might add flabbergasted and flummoxed but I don't know if these words have linguistic equivalents in Russian.

## When was your first trip to Russia, and what are your recollections about it?

My first journey to the former USSR was actually an exploratory trip to Kazakhstan in April of 1993 with my wife Annette and two others on behalf of the newly formed Concordia Mission Society. Our itinerary included a quick three day transit through Moscow. I think we were more anxious about leaving our four year old daughter Kathryn

for three weeks than traveling into parts of the former Soviet Union. As a teenager I lived in Los Angeles during the Cuban Missile Crisis of 1962 and visited East Berlin in 1963 on the way to Nigeria with my missionary parents. Between Los Angeles, East Berlin, and the West African rainforest, I don't think I experienced any "cultural shock" on our trip to Moscow and Kazakhstan. What I did experience in 1963 and again in 1993 (which was only 16 months after the end of the USSR in December of 1991) was what it was like to live in a repressive socialist society. Freedom in daily life was replaced with a sense of heaviness, fear and suspicion.

My first trip to post-Soviet Russia as part of the Russian Project was a three week trip in the Spring of 1996 to establish ties with Lutherans in view of recruiting students to study at CTSFW. I was called to Concordia Theological Seminary in May of 1996 to develop a program on the Fort Wayne campus for the preparation of Russian-speaking men for the Holy Ministry. The task required a recruitment trip which I took with the Rev. Bob Rahn of the Lutheran Heritage Society. The trip took us to Ukraine, Latvia, Lithuania, and into Russia. After reaching Novosibirsk, I continued traveling east on my own until I reached Khabarovsk on the Pacific Coast. I returned to Russia again in July of 1996 to work with the Rev. Vsevolod Lytkin to organize theological seminars in Novosibirsk, Russia. I also worked with Gennadij Khonin to organize seminars and recruit students in Almaty, Kazakhstan.

The difference between Russia today and what I first saw in 1996 is the striking change of attitudes among many Russians. In 1996 there was an enthusiastic openness to western ideas, including religion and an eagerness to learn and adopt them, especially among the college students and recent graduates. This was true all across the former Soviet Union, i.e. in Russia, Central Asia and "Eastern Block" (e.g. Baltics, Belarus, Ukraine.)

## Who were the first students in the Russian Project? Can you tell us a bit about them?

The first students who came to study in Fort Wayne under the Russian Project were Russian-speaking men and a few women translators, musicians, and deaconesses. They came not only from Siberia, but also from the Russian German Lutheran Church (ELKRAS), the Finnish Lutheran (Ingria) Church, and from the Baltics, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Moldova and Ukraine. The first two students were Alexey and Lena Streltsov. The Rev. Streltsov is now the Rector of Lutheran Theological Seminary in Novosibirsk, and Lena a mother of two sons and a daughter. She still translates for visiting professors.

(Continued on page 5)

2010



*LCMS Church Relations*

Posing for a group photo outside the Lutheran Center at Novosibirsk, in Siberia, Russia, are representatives of the Missouri Synod and the Siberian Evangelical Lutheran Church (SELC), during discussions they held there Oct. 29. They are, from left, Dr. Timothy Quill of the LCMS; Rev. Pavel Khromev of the SELC; SELC Bishop Vsevolod Lytkin; Dr. Albert B. Collver, LCMS; Rev. Alexei Streltsov, SELC; and Dr. Joel Lehenbauer, LCMS.



Professor Alan Ludwig, June, 24, 2018



Professor Alan Ludwig, July 4, 2016



Professor Alan Ludwig, December, 2014



Alexey earned both an MA and STM at CTS. The Rev. Andre Ivolga (MA) now serves as a parish pastor in Western Russia. The Rev. Pavel Khramov earned an MA and STM at CTS, and currently serves as a professor and pastor. The Rev. Pavel Butakov has an MA from CTS and PhD from The University of Novosibirsk, and teaches at the Seminary. The Gennadij Artiom completed his Masters of Theology at CTS and was assigned to serve the new mission station in Tomsk. Prior to ordination, he was murdered in front of his altar by a drug addict seeking money for his addiction.

### **What similarities and differences are there between American and Russian Lutheranism?**

Russian and American Lutheranism are the same in that the Lutherans found in each country are not the same. The same diverse doctrine and practice found in Europe since the Reformation are found in the east and west today. In both countries there are those who are committed to a high view of Holy Scriptures and the Lutheran Confessions which in turn shape practice. For example, they cherish the historic liturgy which is built on Lutheran theology. They hold to biblical moral teaching on issues of gender, marriage, the sanctity of life, etc. Lutherans in both countries also experience the same unrelenting assaults from liberal theologies promoting the marriage and ordination of homosexuals, transgenderism, abortion, euthanasia and so forth.

Both America and Russia consist of several Lutheran church bodies.

### **About the Siberian Evangelical Lutheran Church specifically, what are her greatest strengths and weaknesses today?**

Among the greatest strengths of the SELC, several immediately come to mind. The Lutheran Church is a minority church in a country dominated by Russian Orthodoxy and a post-Soviet era secularism. To become Lutheran and to remain Lutheran requires a conscious commitment often lacking in many western nations. There is a strong emphasis on thorough catechesis of children, youth, and adults. Furthermore the pastors and laity greatly value the liturgy, which puts doctrine into practice and gives the members a clear Lutheran identity over and against the Orthodox Church and non-Lutheran Protestants (Baptists, Pentecostals and low church missionary groups). The Lutheran Liturgy makes them Lutheran and keeps them Lutheran. Another strength is that they put a very high value on thoroughly educated pastors. In this they are following the historic practice of the Lutheran Church in Russia going back centuries prior to the communist revolution. Thoroughly trained pastors are also a necessity today with congregations scattered across Siberia and isolated from one another. The commitment to visitation

under such demanding conditions should be both admired and emulated. Pastors spend a huge amount of time visiting small congregations, mission stations, and individuals.

### **What are the biggest changes that you have seen in Russia over the years?**

When the Soviet Union collapsed, there was a great thirst to learn more about Christianity. It was easy to attract large numbers to religious events, especially if it included speakers from the West. Many people have now embraced materialistic and secularistic attitudes and have little or no time for or interest in things spiritual. Nevertheless, the SELC continues to seek the lost, but growing apathy makes evangelism more difficult.

### **If you could dream big, what would you envision for the future relationship between the SELC and the LCMS?**

On the one hand, the current relationship between the SELC and LCMS is very strong. Immediately after his election as Synod President in 2010, the Rev. Matthew Harrison strongly supported the official fellowship process between the two churches. Altar and pulpit fellowship was ratified by the LCMS at the 2013 Synod Convention. There are very close personal relationships between the pastors and laity of our churches. These friendships have grown deep over the past two decades and are founded upon our mutual commitment to Lutheran doctrine and practice. This was made possible because of the vision and financial support of the Marvin Schwann Foundation, which worked with Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne, to create what became known as the Russian Project. The nearly forty pastors who were trained on the Fort Wayne campus returned to serve in Siberia and other Russian speaking regions. With the support of the Schwan Foundation, CTS and the young Siberian Lutherans established a Lutheran Seminary in Novosibirsk. The faculty is now fully staffed with Russian professors who are highly educated in Lutheran theology. (Three have advanced Master of Sacred Theology degrees, one a PhD and a fourth, Rector Alexey Streltsov has an STM and will finish his doctorate very soon. My big dream is that LCMS congregations and individuals will open up their hearts and wallets to support the new Siberian Lutheran Mission Society endowment fund which is raising money to support the SELC Seminary into perpetuity. ✕



# A Baptism on the Feast of the Baptizer

**E**xcerpts from Bishop Vsevolod Lytkin's June 24, 2018 sermon at St. James, Novokuznetsk:

“What shall this baby be?” (Luke 1: 66).

God made humans free. We can talk about this a lot and for a long time, but the fact remains: we can choose between good and evil. We have a choice.

But there is also that area of life where God decides for us. Where God has already decided for us and instead of us. God did not check with us when He created the world. He did not check with us when He sent His Son Jesus Christ into this world “for us men and for our salvation.”

And God decided how to save us; and in this we must see the miraculous grace: to be saved you do not need to run to the end of the earth or mock yourself, as medieval ascetics did. For our salvation, the Lord created the Church in which He accepts us and our children through holy baptism, and forgives our sins, and feeds us with the Eucharist, and keeps us on the way to the Heavenly Kingdom.

You know, I continuously meet people who say: “I do not want to put pressure on my child. Faith is a matter of personal choice. Let him (or, her) grow up and decide whether to be baptized or not. Let him grow up and decide: whether to be baptized or not, whether to be a Christian, or, let's say, a Buddhist.”

Strange logic! We adults decide what our child will wear, and what he will eat. We choose for him (or her) a school to study in. We shield our children from vicious street influence. We give them

tasteless medicines. But at the same time, seemingly intelligent people can say: “Let him grow up and decide to be baptized or not to be.”

Then also you must not talk with the child in Russian: let him grow up and decide himself which language to speak. And you should not care for a child when he is sick: let him grow and decide whether to take medicines or not.

You know, recently in one of our parishes, I baptized an infant, it was after his relatives entreated the infant's father more than for six months. It is good that they managed to persuade him! I really do not understand how fathers (and mothers) can think that they give their children freedom, depriving in fact these children of eternal life.

“What shall this baby be?” (Luke 1: 66). We have no options: to baptize children, or not to baptize, to teach them Catechism, or not to teach, to educate them how to be Christians, or not to educate. There is no option, because God has already decided everything: He decided that He wants to give Christian names to our children. He decided that following us our children should be Christians too.✠

*During the liturgy in the parish of Saint James (Novokuznetsk) a baby girl Elvira was baptized by the Bishop. But there was a problem with photographs of this baptism. The fact was that the baby girl's dad fought two days ago (he protected a teenager from street criminals), and his whole face was bruised. Therefore, no one took pictures.*

*Please pray for the mission of the Church in Siberia, that new people come to holy baptism and bring their children.*

*From Faith and Hope Newsletter #262*

From the Editor: The Siberian Evangelical Lutheran Church (SELC) continues to grow and be a place where the Gospel of Jesus Christ is preached and the Holy Sacraments provided for sinners seeking forgiveness and healing of body and soul. In the newsletters of **The Siberian Lutheran Mission Society (SLMS)** the members of the SELC reveal their faith and hopes. They are Russians seeking an answer to challenges and problems in their lives. They are a people who have been called by Christ in the healing waters of Holy Baptism and fed by the holy precious food of His body and blood. They may speak a different language but they are all baptized in the name of the same LORD and eat and drink the same Jesus. These are a people who know the mission of the Church – a mission which begins and finds its conclusion in the Word and Sacraments properly administered. We invite you to read this newsletter with a prayer of divine grace for our Lutheran brothers and sisters in Siberia. Their challenges in a land of pagan Buddhism, shamanism, and atheism is great. Your prayers and continuing support is appreciated.

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