

Number 36

Как слышать без проповедующего?

How Shall They Hear ...?

Siberia Letter of Rev. Alan Ludwig

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Lutherans Old, Lutherans New

A new thing has begun! Two Lutheran churches in the Russian Federation, both partner churches of the LCMS, are taking steps toward mutual work. Having common connections, these two churches have quietly coexisted since the 1990s in fellowship with one another, working independently. Now, however, there is beginning an effort toward active cooperation between the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Ingria and the Siberian Evangelical Lutheran Church.

Ingria and Siberia

The Ingrian Church has a long history on Russian soil. The Siberian Church is a post-Soviet phenomenon. Ingria has a Finnish background, Siberia, a Russian one. Despite the differences of origin, age, and ethnicity, these two churches have common connections through the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Estonia. Most important, they share the Lutheran confession of faith.

The Evangelical Lutheran Church of Ingria traces its history to the early 17th century (1600s), when Finnish immigrants settled in Russia. Before the Russian revolution of 1917 it was large indeed. Suppressed in the 1930s, in the 1970s this church regained limited operation and has blossomed since the end of the Soviet era. Today it is still the larger of the two churches. It became a partner church of the LCMS in the early 1990s; the LCMS initially conducted all its work in Russia

through this church. Its center is St. Petersburg and vicinity, but it has other congregations in the European part of Russia, and has even reached Siberia.

The Siberian Evangelical Lutheran Church, with which I work, came into being in the early 1990s. First it was part of the Estonian Lutheran Church. Then in 2003 it became independent. Since 2007 the SELC has had its own bishop, Vsevolod Lytkin. In 2010 the LCMS approved fellowship between the LCMS and the SELC.

For various and complicated reasons, the two Russian churches have not until now sought active cooperation. I have been privileged to step into this new effort on the ground floor. This spring I was the major presenter at a joint seminar held for the clergy of the two churches. Shortly after this, on behalf of the Siberian seminary, I taught a course at the Theological Institute of the Ingrian Church.



Seminar Participants

The Seminar

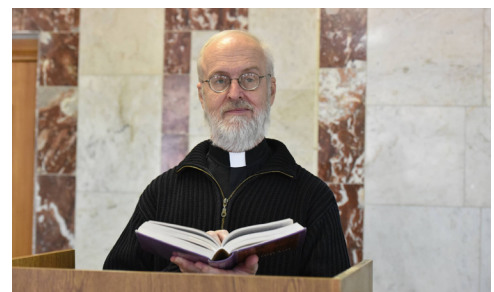
The joint seminar between the clergy of the two churches took place in Novosibirsk, February 29 to March 4. Although others presented as well, I was the chief act. During those five days I gave over ten hours of lectures—fourteen academic hours—on various topics in the Lutheran Book of Concord. These ranged from original sin and free will to the doctrine of Christ, the church, and worship. My lectures were well received.

Also presenting were Rev. Daniel Johnson, an LCMS missionary to Eurasia, Rev. Ivan Laptev, Rector of the Theological Institute of the Ingrian Church, and Rev. Pavel Khramov, instructor at LTS in Novosibirsk. The two bishops, Vsevolod Lytkin and Arri Kugappi, also addressed the conference.



Rev. Pavel Khramov Presenting

This conference culminated with the divine service of Holy Communion, at which Bishop Lytkin presided and Bishop Kugappi preached. The divine service was an excellent way to rejoice in what binds us together and to strengthen those ties through mutual confession of the faith in Word and Sacrament.



Rev. Ludwig presenting at the Seminar

The Institute

Just days later I traveled to Koltushi, a town not far from St. Petersburg, to teach a two-week course on the Psalms to students of the Theological Institute of the Lutheran Church of Ingria. The "campus" is almost a self-contained village, with a church, residences, including the bishop's,



Bishop Kugappi and Bishop Lytkin



Ingrian Institute Classroom Building

and living quarters, study facilities, and cafeteria for the students and instructors. It was my first time there. I was struck by the Finnish flavor of the place. Signs are written in Finnish and Russian. There are both Finnish- and Russian-language services at the church. The architectural plan is similar to that of a Finnish village. The classroom facilities are quite impressive.



Ingrian Institute Campus

In my first few days of teaching I was privileged to have some beginning theological students in my class. They had many penetrating questions. One of the many highlights was working with a young man from Poland, whose parents moved there from Russia. He spoke fluent Russian and Polish and quite good English. Though blind, he managed to keep up with the rest, and had an impressive grasp of the subject matter, including a knowledge of Hebrew.

For me at least, by far the most interesting sight in that place was Pavlov's Institute—yes, *that* Pavlov, the one who did experiments with salivating dogs (classical conditioning). He remained a staunch



Institute Cafeteria



Pavlov's Park

Russian Orthodox believer until his death in 1936. As someone told me, the Bolsheviks, out of respect for his person, waited to destroy the Orthodox church there until after his death.



Pavlov Institute

My course was well received, and I was asked to return next year. If all works out, I may teach a course on the prophets.



Ingrian Institute Class



Pavlov Memorial

Other LCMS pastors and professors have taught at the Theological Institute in Koltushi over the years. One of their instructors has come to Novosibirsk periodically to teach for us. This is the first year, however, that our instructors have been invited to teach there. Rev. Aleksey Streltsov, the rector of our seminary, traveled there to teach after I did.



Ingrian Institute Class

Seminars and seminaries: what better way to increase cooperation between two LCMS partner churches on Russian soil? Thanks be to God, He has let me be part of this!

Please Pray

- ✚ For our graduate and newly-ordained Deacon Ruslan Zinnurov as he begins his ministry
- ✚ For our graduate Vladimir, for continued restoration of health
- ✚ For safe travels for me and all our students as they return to their homes around this large country

Lord, have mercy.



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