



Number 37

Как слышать без проповедующего?

How Shall They Hear ...?

Siberia Letter of Rev. Alan Ludwig

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On the Reformation Trail

Next year will mark the 500th anniversary of the Reformation. What better place than Wittenberg, then, for missionaries to meet, work, study, and pray? Oh, and do a little sight-seeing? That's what happened this past August, when missionaries from the Eurasia Region met for our annual retreat.



Where It All Began

The town of Wittenberg, more exactly known as Lutherstadt-Wittenberg, was the site of the university where Luther taught. There in 1517 he posted his 95 Theses on the door of the Castle Church, where he and his colleague Philip Melancthon are buried. The rest is history. St. Mary's Church, where Luther regularly preached, still stands. The Luther residence, where Luther delivered his famous Table Talks, is now a museum. Although much has changed, one gets a sense of what life in this town was like 500 years ago.



I was in Wittenberg about 10 years ago, and the change from then to now is striking. The town is preparing for next year's giant celebration, with lots of remodeling and facelifting. This year one can still hope to get a reservation. Next year, likely not. That's how grand it will be.



A Little Tour

Although this was a work-retreat, the team did get a little time on one day for a tour. Our guide, Thomas, is a wonderfully learned man and a gifted teacher. Even Reformation history buffs might learn something from him. For instance, he rejected the be-

lief common to American Reformation scholars that Luther didn't actually post the 95 Theses. Thomas said that his father, also a tour guide and historian, researched the matter thoroughly, and there's no reason to doubt the traditional story. Only the hammer and nails may be romanticized fiction.



Work, Study, Prayer

Our days were mostly spent meeting and working. The Eurasia mission team strove to construct a unified approach to mission in the region. (This area includes western and eastern European countries, as well as the republics of the former Soviet Union.) Working in post-Christian Europe has many unique features as compared to, say, bringing the Gospel to Africa. But it is no less urgent. Today there are cultured Europeans who are just as ignorant of Christ and His salvation as are the most remote tribes in South America.





The study sessions were highly profitable. For me and for many others the highlight of the retreat was the presentation of the Rev. Dr. Kenneth Wieting on the Lord's Supper. He combined deep knowledge of the subject with a keen eye for pastoral care. The best single word I can think of to describe it is *edifying*.

The Rev. Mark Barz joined us specially as our chaplain. He conducted morning and even prayer liturgies from LSB. Rev. Barz also made himself available for private confession. On the final day of the conference we met in Luther's beloved St. Mary's for the divine service. What better way to end the retreat in preparation for the 500th year of the anniversary of the posting of the 95 Theses?



Please Pray

- ✚ for our new class of students in Novosibirsk as they begin their challenging program of study;
- ✚ for the furtherance of the Gospel in Russia and Europe;
- ✚ for peaceful times and normal relations between our nations.

Lord, have mercy.



Lasting Impression

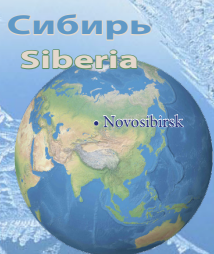
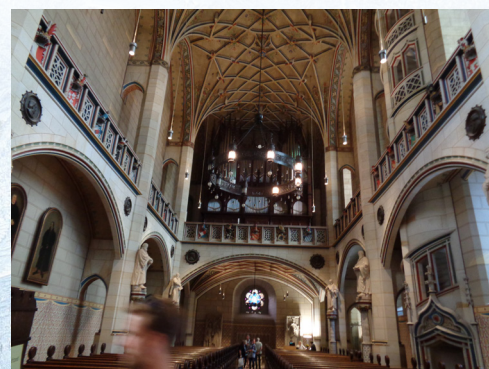
Wittenberg is a lovely German city, especially with all the remodeling. Everywhere we saw the marks of Reformation history. The town is geared toward tourism: you can stay at the Luther Hotel, drink Luther beer, eat Luther sausage, and who knows what else. Yet for all the Lutheran consciousness, few people in Wittenberg are be-



voice, but that for generations now have not heeded it.



lievers in Christ, let alone Lutherans. They honor Luther in every way but the one way he would have wanted: by heeding the Gospel he taught, the Gospel of salvation by grace through faith in Jesus Christ. The "isms" of the 18th through 20th centuries have taken a great toll on the faith, not only there, but also in the rest of Europe and the former Soviet Union. It's more crucial than ever that we make Christ known in these places that long ago heard His



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