



(DaVinci's "Mona Lisa")

SEEING THREAD

Wherever you live, you meet or hear about people who do amazing things. We were recently taken to a little library in Pinki, Latvia to see a one-woman show of cross-stitch art. The "Mona Lisa" above is one of her works.

The artist is the mother of Mara Jensore who also does amazing things. Mara works in the administration office of the Ev. Lutheran Church of Latvia as Archbishop Vanags' secretary. We know her as our "guardian angel" who has helped us in our transition to Rīga and Latvia from showing us how to use the trains, to obtaining our visa, negotiating the tricky business of getting a bank—you name it, Mara has helped us with it.

Mara explained that her mother's art is a way that she expresses her gratitude to God for His goodness and gifts. Mara does the same with her cheerfulness and the gift of her time and thoughtfulness to new-comers and strangers like us.

Thank God for His gift of people who glorify Him by their lives of love and service!



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Shuttle Theology



Rīga, Latvia

Koltushi, Russia

Dear friends and partners in mission,

I am about as close to being two places at once as I think one can be!

As I write this, I am back in Russia at the Theological Institute of the Ev. Lutheran Church of Ingria in Russia (ELCIR) teaching a course on the exegesis of the Psalms for nine days.

Next Tuesday (March 17 🍀) I'll fly back to Latvia to teach the next installment of 1 Corinthians at the Luther Academy of the Ev. Lutheran Church of Latvia (ELCL).

Why the "shuttle theology"?

The full answer is historical and complicated, but the short answer is that we are helping our partner churches here in the Eurasia region meet their needs for the theological education of future pastors and church workers.

In this part of the world, confessional Lutheranism was largely suppressed during the communist era of the USSR. Sadder still, much of the Lutheran world in northern Europe has not remained faithful to the Scriptures

and the Lutheran Confessions so that seminaries providing faithful formation of pastors are few. These small confessional churches struggle to maintain their seminary programs, especially in terms of instructors.

So, we send theological educators to help.

By serving our partners to train pastors and workers to serve in their homeland in their mother tongue, we are able to assist much more in renewal of the Lutheran Church and the spread of the Gospel than by other strategies.

I'm excited personally about this strategy because we are about to welcome another educator to our region, Rev. Dr. John Bombaro. He will also live in Rīga, but will likewise take up "shuttle theology" in the service of the Gospel. Dr. Bombaro joins Rev. Jerry Lawson (St. Petersburg) and me in northern Europe/Russia to offer his expertise and experience to our efforts in helping Lutheran pastors bring Jesus to this corner of Christ's Church.

-Pr. Charles Cortright



Dr. Bombaro teaching at our regional retreat last August, Odessa, Ukraine



*Lamb of God, pure and holy,
Who on the cross didst suffer,
Ever patient and lowly,
Thyself to scorn didst offer.
All sins Thou borest for us,
Else had despair reigned o'er*

us:

*Thy peace be with us,
O Jesus! O Jesus!*

-LSB 434

Dear friend and supporter,

Lent leads us each year to remember the sacrifice of our Lord for us, to be renewed in our Baptism into Him, and to find joy at its close in the celebration of His victory at Easter.

Our prayer for all of our partners in our work is that the full measure of Jesus' peace and grace will be with you during Lent and that you will come in health and joy to Easter.

THANK-YOU.

*Chuck & Connie
Cortright*



This and that...

OUR VISA for staying in Latvia was approved! We have our new identity cards and our individual registry number. This functions much like a social security number in the USA; without this number it is hard to do every-day tasks. Want to sign up for a telephone number? You need this number! Want to use a bank? You need to have this number. Register as a patient with a doctor? (You get the idea!) THANK-YOU for your prayers in this (something we don't need a number for!).



PLEASE PRAY...

...for the health and safety of all people affected, threatened, or quarantined because of the Covid-19 virus. In the Eurasia Region, we have workers in Italy which has seen many cases so that travel to and from these families is restricted. Please add our work to your prayers that we might not see it adversely affected by travel restrictions or other consequences because of the virus' spread.

...in thanksgiving for God's blessing of the Bombaro family's arrival to our region. Please ask God to grant a good transition and settling in.

...in thanks, also, for the approval of our visas and that we are settling in well to our new situation. We are thankful for finding a good apartment and for all our new colleagues in the Latvian Lutheran Church.

...with us in thanks for the prayers and gifts that have allowed us to be in the field. Our new location involves higher costs-of-living and we ask Him to bless as He has in the past in sustaining our work.

Lord, in your mercy: hear our prayers!



Speaking of "shuttle theology," Dr. Bombaro and I will be traveling to Palanga, Lithuania in April to present at the semi-annual Lithuanian pastors' conference there. I'll be presenting on the Book of Job; Dr. Bombaro will be speaking on the theology of the Nicene Creed.



In May, we will travel and present at a conference in Brno, Czech Republic on the mission of the church.

I DON'T THINK I WENT VIRAL...

The Wuhan virus has been *making* news everywhere, including here in Latvia.

Even before the Wuhan virus showed up in Latvia, the media here was trying to stir up fear among viewers. A TV camera and interviewer stopped me as I was walking down the street a couple weeks ago.

The news reporter asked me if I was worried about the Coronavirus. I said no because we didn't have any cases here yet. I then explained that I wasn't worried at all because God is in control. He will take care of me.

Somehow, I don't think I ended up on the TV news anyway because my confidence was in God. I'm sure they didn't want to hear that!

-Connie Cortright

*Yea, though I walk through the valley of
the shadow of death,
I will fear no evil:
for Thou art with me;
Thy rod and thy staff
they comfort me. -Ps 23:4 KJV*



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