

WITTENBERG: THE BIRTHPLACE OF THE REFORMATION

ALMOST 500 YEARS AGO, the Reformation, which proclaimed a pure and undefiled Gospel to the world, began in the lowly city of Wittenberg. At the time of the Reformation, Wittenberg was a small, provincial town with a developing university. Wittenberg appeared insignificant to the world (and many would say the same today). Yet in a pattern that the Lord has used over and over again throughout history, He chose what is insignificant to the world to be significant in bringing His salvation to all peoples.

Martin Luther would have had a difficult time imagining a gathering of confessional Lutheran leaders at the dawn of the twenty-first century. Yet Luther would confess and have the hope that as long as this world exists, the Church of Christ will remain standing against the gates of hell.

The papers presented in this issue of the *Journal of Lutheran Mission* were presented at the second International Conference on Confessional Leadership (ICCL) held in Wittenberg, Germany. The ICCL was held in conjunction with the dedication of the Old Latin School, located across from the *Stadtkirche*, Saint Mary's, the congregation where Martin Luther preached at least 1,000 times. The Old Latin School will be a beacon for

confessional Lutheranism to the entire world. We hope in the coming years that the Old Latin School will host many more conferences where papers of interest to Lutherans worldwide are presented and published.

The ICCL in Wittenberg had representatives from 41 countries, which represented 23 million Lutherans worldwide. The theme of the ICCL conference was "Celebrating the Reformation Rightly: Remembrance, Repentance, Rejoicing." A goal of the conference was to help prepare world Lutheranism for the celebration of the 500th anniversary of the Reformation in 2017. The papers presented in this journal are to contribute to that anniversary celebration.

The Lord has blessed us greatly. Confessional Lutheranism is here for this moment to be Lutheran and

to take the confession of the Lutheran church into the world.

I hope that you enjoy the papers presented in Wittenberg and find them edifying and helpful as you consider the upcoming celebration of the 500th anniversary of the Reformation.

In Christ,
Matthew C. Harrison
PRESIDENT

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