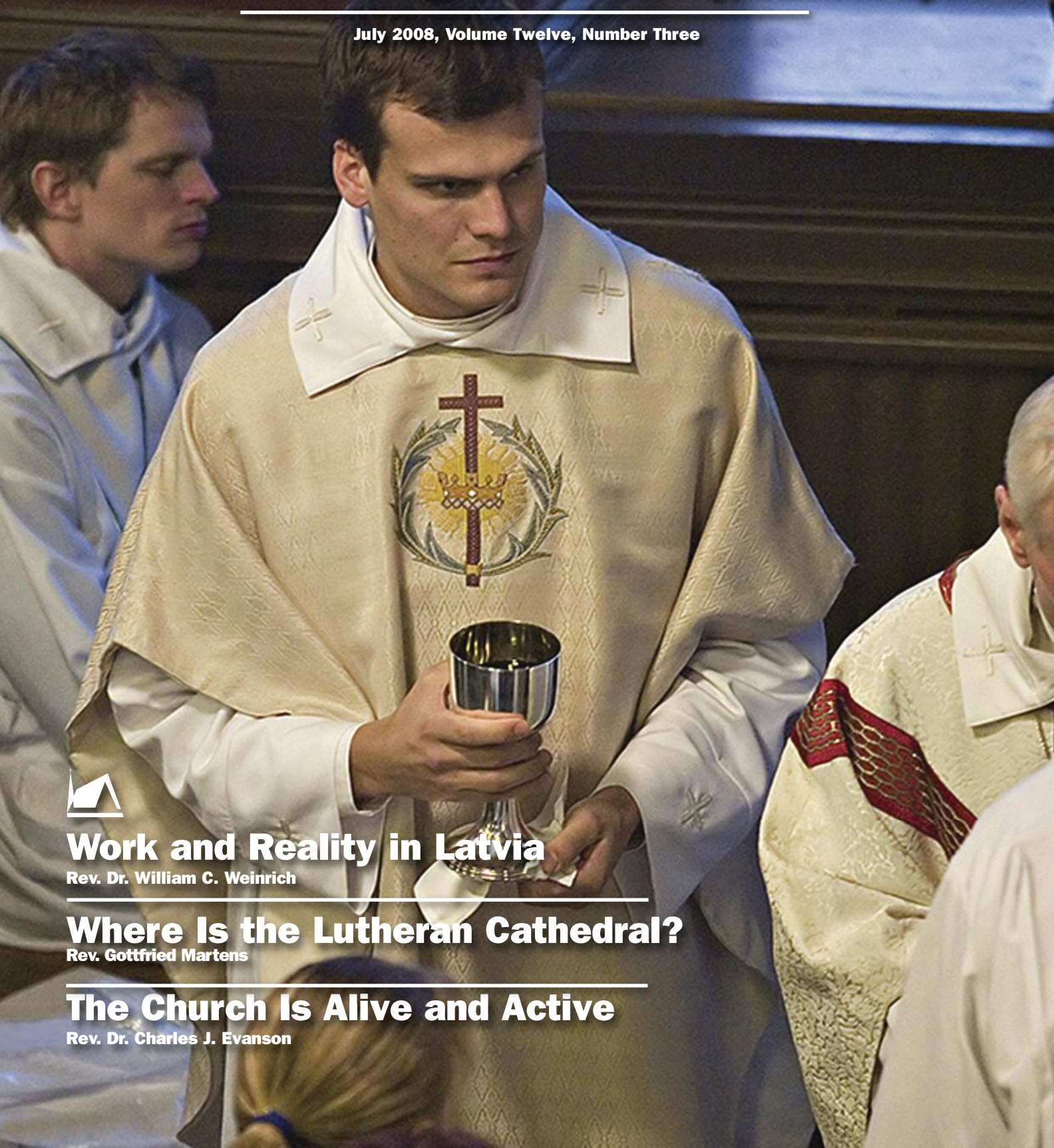


For the Life of the World

Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne

July 2008, Volume Twelve, Number Three



Work and Reality in Latvia

Rev. Dr. William C. Weinrich

Where Is the Lutheran Cathedral?

Rev. Gottfried Martens

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Modern Missionaries

By Rev. Dr. Douglas L. Rutt



“But isn’t Spain a Christian country?”

That is what many people assume. Since the “Catholic King and Queen,” Ferdinand and Isabella, drove the Moors from Granada in 1492, the Roman Catholic Church has dominated the religious scene in Spain. Catholicism in Spain, however, left little room for the doctrine of justification by faith. Some theologians and priests during Reformation times became interested in the teachings of Martin Luther; however, the Spanish Inquisition was quick and harsh in its dealings with “Lutheran” sympathizers.

One notable early suspect of holding to Lutheran beliefs was Archbishop Bartholomew Carranza (1503–1576). His words to the dying Holy Roman Emperor Charles V, encouraging him to trust fully and only in Christ and to commend himself to the grace of God for his salvation, were interpreted as heretical. He spent seventeen years under investigation by the Inquisition, even though he never explicitly described himself as a follower of Lutheranism. While some Protestant congregations sprang up in Spain during the time of the Reformation, they were dealt with very effectively, which had the long-term result of creating a homogeneous, militant version of Catholicism that has reigned in Spain ever since.

As in much of Europe, however, Spain today is experiencing increasing secularization. Fewer and fewer people are attending mass, and the baptism of children in Spain has plummeted. President Rodríguez Zapatero has summarized the values of Spaniards today: “They want more sports, less religion.”

However, with secularization has come an openness to new ideas and a renewed interest in the teachings of the “heretic” Martin Luther, whom Spaniards know played an essential role as the “enemy” in the formation of the Spanish identity and personality. In the 1990s, requests from people in Spain for information on Luther and Lutheranism began to come into the headquarters of the LCMS and our partner churches.

Concordia Theological Seminary’s connection with Spain began with the work of Dr. Douglas

Rutt, Associate Professor of Pastoral Ministry and Missions, and former area secretary for Latin America and the Caribbean of LCMS World Mission, who developed a project to send the first Lutheran missionary to Spain in modern times. In February of 2000, Rev. Marcos Berndt of Argentina was sent. Dr. Rutt continued to visit Spain occasionally to offer orientation and support to the new missionary and the fledgling Lutheran church that was slowly coming into existence.

In the spring of 2002, Dr. Arthur Just, Professor of Exegetical Theology, spent his sabbatical in Spain assisting in the evangelistic mission work. “Dr. Just made a considerable contribution to the advancement of the mission at a critical time,” Dr. Rutt commented. “Having grown up in Mexico, he was able to connect in a compelling way to the people of Spain. His time there resulted in connections with people who are now some of the primary leaders of the new Evangelical Lutheran Church of Spain.”

Today the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Spain is served by two missionary families, both from Argentina, Rev. Walter and Paola Ralli, and Rev. Gustavo and Rosana Lavia. Dr. Rutt has visited Spain, most recently in March of 2006, to teach courses, and continues to work in support and collaboration with the Spanish Evangelical Lutheran Church. Most recently Dr. Rutt and Rev. Ralli have collaborated in a project with the Lutheran Heritage Foundation and the American Bible Society to produce a Spanish Bible with an appendix containing *Luther’s Small Catechism and Explanation*. Rev. Ralli developed several additional questions and answers to address contemporary issues being faced by the church in Spain and Latin America. This version of the Bible will soon be published by the American Bible Society and be available for use by missionaries in the entire Spanish speaking world. 📖

Rev. Dr. Douglas L. Rutt is Associate Professor of Pastoral Ministry and Missions and Dean of Distance Learning at Concordia Theological Seminary.



Nuevo Bautizo en la Iglesia Evangélica Luterana Española