

IN THE
BEGINNING
WAS THE WORD



LUTHER
2017
500 YEARS OF
REFORMATION

**THE ANNIVERSARY
OF THE REFORMATION
IN 2017
HIGHLIGHTS**



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FOREWORD

DEAR READERS,

Every individual should be allowed and ought to have access to God's word – this was one of the great reformer Martin Luther's demands, which ushered in social changes in more than just Christian churches. Luther is also rightly considered to be one of the precursors of the Enlightenment and democracy, of responsible citizenship and vital civil society. 2017 will mark 500 years since Martin Luther penned and, according to tradition, posted his 95 Theses on the door of Wittenberg's Castle Church.

The Reformation begot and fostered cultural changes. Martin Luther's translation of the Bible was crucial to the development of the German language. Without question, the Reformation gave rise to profound political changes, first, in Germany and Europe and, then, in the "New World". Not least, in conjunction with Humanism, it changed the conception of humankind by placing greater stress on individual freedom and responsibility. Its educational ideal had an enduring impact on society, scholarship and art; the Protestant ethic influenced the world of work. All of these impacts remain appreciable to this day. This anniversary is an occasion to raise awareness of them, to raise them to the surface so to speak.

What exactly will be taking place in the anniversary year? This brochure is intended to be a basic guide to the abundance of public and church events. I hope that you discover things in the program that interest you – entirely in keeping with Martin Luther's words, "It is far better to see with one's own eyes than with the eyes of another."



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Monika Grütters".

PROF. MONIKA GRÜTTERS MDB

Minister of State and Federal Government
Commissioner for Culture and the Media

FOREWORD

DEAR READERS,

500 years of Reformation: Together with countless people from near and far, we are going to celebrate a renewal that still induces people to venture something new, to shape the world, to change society, and to defend life – wherever this is necessary, even against resistance.

Celebrating together will also entail inquiring: Whence do we come? What happened back then in Wittenberg and Riga, in Zurich and Strasbourg? It is essential to understand who we are. Above all, however, it is essential to reassess who we want to be.

The Reformation came to have a major impact from the heart of Germany – throughout Europe and beyond. That is why we will be celebrating 2017 in ecumenical fellowship with all Christian churches and denominations throughout the world. Not as a celebration of Luther, but as a celebration of Christ. The two major churches have long since discarded the polemics between them. Christians of both confessions have been listening to and talking with each other intently in recent decades. In the process, it has become increasingly evident that what Catholics and Protestants hold in common is far greater and stronger than anything that separates them.

500 years ago, people rediscovered the power that lies in God's love. This power continues to have an impact. That is why we are inviting Christian churches and all groups, initiatives and institutions in our society that share this message to celebrate the anniversary of the Reformation in 2017 together with us – as an expression of our hope for a better world. God makes all things new.



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Heinrich Bedford-Strohm".

REGIONAL BISHOP

DR. HEINRICH BEDFORD-STROHM

Chairman of the Council of the Evangelical Church
in Germany

THE ANNIVERSARY OF THE REFORMATION IN 2017

Reformation Day on October 31 will be a national holiday in all of Germany only in 2017. The heads of the state governments have agreed on this. On this day, Martin Luther will have posted his 95 Theses against the abuse of indulgences exactly 500 years ago. According to his secretary Georg Röser, Luther sent his theses along with letters to ecclesiastical superiors and, according to his secretary Georg Röser, posted them on the doors of Wittenberg's churches as an invitation to debate them. His theses spread throughout the land like wildfire thanks to the printing press, which was already well established at that time. The Augustinian monk and professor of theology





in Wittenberg could have hardly imagined what profound ecclesiastical and social changes he would be setting in motion over the centuries as a result.

Numerous outstanding events in the 2017 anniversary year, which will already begin on October 31, 2016, will examine these impacts of the Reformation well into our day, into our present-day life: The three national special exhibitions in Berlin, Eisenach and Lutherstadt Wittenberg initiated by government entities are a first. Church entities have initiated a 2017 Reformation Summer with, among other things, a European Roadmap, the world exhibition “Gates of Freedom” and the German Protestant Kirchentag. The spectrum of events ranges from an international academic conference to a new production of an opera and even a pop oratorio. This brochure presents them in the sequence they will occur.

The actors involved in the anniversary of the Reformation are already nearly beyond counting. Numerous museums, universities, cities, congregations, associations and individuals are acting on their ideas. They are all putting with their enthusiasm and great dedication into making the anniversary of the Reformation in 2017 an unforgettable event with a global impact.

Left: Luther Posting His Theses, Ferdinand Pauwels, 1872, 85 x 72 cm, oil on canvas
© Ulrich Kneise / Wartburg-Stiftung Eisenach
Top: Market in Lutherstadt Wittenberg during Luther's Wedding 2008
Photo: WittenbergKultur, Johannes Winkelmann



“HERE I STAND...”

Exhibitions in New York, Minneapolis and Atlanta Will Be Promoting the Anniversary of the Reformation in 2017

In the run-up to the anniversary of the Reformation, the State Museum for Prehistory in Halle, the Luther Memorials Foundation of Saxony-Anhalt, the Deutsches Historisches Museum, and the Stiftung Schloss Friedenstein Gotha are putting together a special exhibition with the support of the German Federal Foreign Office and together with various American partners. A showcase exhibition at The Morgan Library & Museum in New York will examine the events in Luther's life that were crucial to the incipient Reformation. An extensive exhibition at the Minneapolis Institute of Art will paint a comprehensive picture of Luther's life and work as well as the historical context of the Reformation. And a showcase exhibition on Cranach's painting "Law and Grace" will be shown at Pitts Theology Library at Emory University in Atlanta.

Starting in October of 2016, the digital exhibition #HereIStand will also furnish information on Martin Luther's biography and impact. At the same time, users will be able to download and print out posters of the online presentation. This will enable a variety of institutions all over the world to put on an exhibition during the anniversary of the Reformation Quincentenary.



Lucas Cranach the Elder, Law and Grace (details), 1529, © Stiftung Schloss Friedenstein Gotha

“Here I stand: Martin Luther and the Birth of the Reformation”

The Morgan Library & Museum
25 Madison Avenue | New York, NY 10016

October 7, 2016 – January 22, 2017

“Martin Luther: Art and the Reformation”

Minneapolis Institute of Art
2400 Third Avenue South | Minneapolis, MN 55404

October 30, 2016 – January 15, 2017

**“Law and Grace: Martin Luther, Lucas Cranach
and the Promise of Salvation”**

Pitts Theology Library
Chandler School of Theology
Emory University
1531 Dickey Drive
Atlanta, GA 30322

October 2016 – January 2017

www.here-i-stand.com



LUTHER POP ORATORIO: THE THOUSAND VOICE PROJECT

A mega choir of some 1,500 – 2,500 vocalists, along with a symphony orchestra, musical stars and a band are the extraordinary ingredients of the “Luther Pop Oratorio”, the choir project of the Stiftung Creative Kirche and the duo of authors Michael Kunze (libretto) and Dieter Falk (music). Together with the Evangelical Church in Germany (EKD), the team is following up the success of its “The Ten Commandments” by bringing a choir project to the stage during the anniversary of the Reformation, which will dramatically explore the fundamental issues of the Reformation in Martin Luther’s life and work: his struggle for biblical truth, his struggle against the authorities and the church – an exciting and true story about politics and religion. Following the world premiere (October 31, 2015, Westfalenhalle 1, Dortmund), this memorable stage event will be performed in several major venues on a nationwide tour of cities in 2017. Always in the center: a large regional project choir made up of church, pop, gospel and youth choirs.





2017 tour dates:

Jan. 14 Hannover, TUI Arena

Jan. 21 Stuttgart, Porsche Arena

Feb. 4 Düsseldorf, ISS Dome

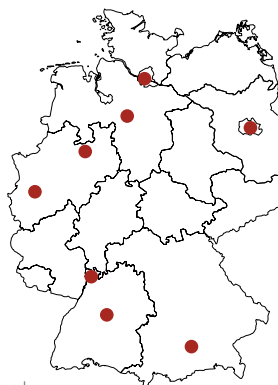
Feb. 11 Mannheim, SAP Arena

Feb. 18 Hamburg, Barclaycard Arena

Mar. 11 Halle (Westf.), Gerry Weber Stadium

Mar. 18 Munich, Olympic Hall

Oct. 29 Berlin, Mercedes Benz Arena



Left: Kick-off rehearsal with 3,000 vocalists, Westfalenhalle 1, Dortmund, April 25, 2015

Top: Kick-off rehearsal, Westfalenhalle 1, Dortmund, April 25, 2015
Andreas Gergen (director) and Frank Winkels (Martin Luther)

WORSHIP SERVICE

HEALING OF MEMORIES

A service of reconciliation prompted and requested by the Protestant and Catholic Churches in Germany will be held in Hildesheim on March 11, 2017, the eve of the second Sunday in Lent (Reminiscere), as the nucleus of a “process of healing of memory”. Regional Bishop Dr. Heinrich Bedford-Strohm, Chairman of the EKD Council, and Reinhard Cardinal Marx, President of the German Bishops’ Conference, will officiate over this worship service. It will combine elements of repentance and prayers for forgiveness with acts of reconciliation intended to bolster the future of ecumenism. This service of reconciliation is also intended to be “regionally re-celebrated” as it were in ecumenically minded congregations afterward. The exact time of the worship service will be announced.

March 11, 2017
Hildesheim

Right: epd





DIVIDED HEAVEN: REFORMATION AND RELIGIOUS DIVERSITY ON THE RHINE AND RUHR

Christian denominations have coexisted in North Rhine-Westphalia for centuries since the Reformation. Judaism has played a significant role, too, and Muslim and other religious communities have arrived in recent decades, especially in the Ruhr region.





The exhibition is taking the anniversary of the Reformation as an opportunity to use significant historical exhibition objects to present the relationships and communal life of different religions and denominations over centuries down to the present, incorporating issues that are current and relevant to the future to generate discussion in an interreligious discourse. To this end, the Regional Museum of the Ruhr area, the Ruhr Museum on the Zollverein UNESCO World Heritage Site have joined together with the Forum Kreuzeskirche in Essen and the Martin Luther Forum Ruhr to develop a broad cultural and educational program along with the exhibition in the anniversary year.

April 3 – October 31, 2017

Ruhr Museum, Essen

Zollverein UNESCO World Heritage Site

Kohlenwäsche [A 14]

Gelsenkirchener Strasse 181

45309 Essen

www.ruhrmuseum.de



Left: Wesel's ceremonial cup of the Flemings and Walloons, 1578, Städtisches Museum Wesel © Städtisches Museum Wesel; Photo: Matthias Roesgen • Top left: Prayer during Ramadan, Essen, July 1980, Photographer: Marga Kingler, © Fotoarchiv Ruhr Museum • Top right: German Katholikentag in Bochum (Aug. 31 – Sept. 4, 1949), Photographer: Willy van Heekern, © Fotoarchiv Ruhr Museum

A special and unique anniversary calls for a special and unique event. That is why government entities have initiated “National Special Exhibitions” for the first time – three exhibitions in Berlin, Lutherstadt Wittenberg and Eisenach will address the range of “Reformation” issues in a wide variety of ways and will constitute one of the centerpieces of the government’s contribution to the anniversary in 2017.

THE LUTHER EFFECT: 500 YEARS OF GLOBAL PROTESTANTISM

For the first time ever, an exhibition will illustrate Protestantism’s global diversity and effective history as well as its potential for conflict among cultures. What impact has Protestantism had on other denominations, religions, and lifestyle choices? How have these encounters changed Protestantism itself? And not least, how have people adopted, shaped and practiced Protestant doctrine? Taking Germany, Sweden, North America, Korea and Tanzania as examples, the “Luther Effect” will tell a story of action and interaction spanning the globe, which started around 1500 and extends into the present.





The Deutsches Historisches Museum will be presenting the “Luther Effect” on around 3,000 m² at the Martin-Gropius-Bau and is assembling exceptional exhibition objects on loan from national and international institutions. Several of the exhibition objects will be on display in Germany for the first time ever. A richly illustrated companion catalog will be also published. Extensive educational offerings and an attractive supporting program will round out the exhibition. The Deutsche Sparkassen- und Giroverband is the main sponsor supporting the exhibition “The Luther Effect: 500 Years of Reformation”.

April 12 – November 5, 2017
Deutsches Historisches Museum
 at the Martin-Gropius-Bau
 Niederkirchnerstrasse 7
 10963 Berlin
 www.dhm.de



Top: “God’s Word and Luther’s doctrine endure now and forever”: The Swedish Kings Gustavus Adolphus and Charles XII as the protectors of Lutheranism, © Nordiska museet, Stockholm
 Left: Edward Hicks, The Peaceable Kingdom: The biblical Peaceable Kingdom symbolizing the Quaker William Penn’s conclusion of a treaty with Native Americans, © Courtesy National Gallery of Art, Washington



May 4 – November 5, 2017
Wartburg Castle in Eisenach

Auf der Wartburg 1
99817 Eisenach

www.wartburg.de

Left: Luther Burning the Papal Bull, Paul Thumann, 1872, oil on canvas, 123 x 150 cm, © Ulrich Kneise / Wartburg-Stiftung Eisenach
Right: Luther's chamber in Wartburg Castle, © Wartburg-Stiftung Eisenach



LUTHER AND THE GERMANS

With 350,000 visitors every year, Wartburg Castle near Eisenach is one of the most frequently visited Luther sites in the world. Its thick walls sheltered the reformer, who had been declared an outlaw and excommunicated after the Diet of Worms (1521), for nearly one year as he translated the New Testament into German, thus laying the foundation for standard written German.

Luther and Lutheranism influenced “the Germans” in many other ways, too. The emphasis on education and the emergence of “middle class” clergy in the form of pastors’ families contributed to Germans’ identity as a cultural nation. Politically, Reformation ideas and the resultant religious schism inflamed deep-seated conflicts. The reformer’s purported obedience to authority was later cast as the Germans’ “original sin”. The exhibition will examine key dominant themes of the Reformation and elucidate how every epoch of German history fashioned its very own image of Luther.



LUTHER!

95 PEOPLE – 95 TREASURES

Wittenberg is the birthplace of the Reformation and the most important site of Martin Luther's life and work. A two-part exhibition will be shown in this historic location in 2017: "Luther!: 95 People – 95 Treasures".

Part one will introduce ninety-five individuals with personal ties to Martin Luther and his work. Luther's impact was varied: He inspired and infuriated people, he touched and repulsed them – but he never left anyone indifferent. Ninety-five approaches to Luther will be presented, encouraging guests to find their own approach to him. And the question of Luther's meaning for us today will be raised.

Part two will be devoted to Luther himself. This exhibition will free the historical Luther from the ballast of five centuries of reception history. "95 Treasures" will bring the man Luther to life. Exceptional objects on loan from Germany and abroad will include Luther's private Bible from Veste Coburg, archaeological finds from the stations of his life, and his holograph will of 1542.





May 13–November 5, 2017

Lutherhaus Wittenberg

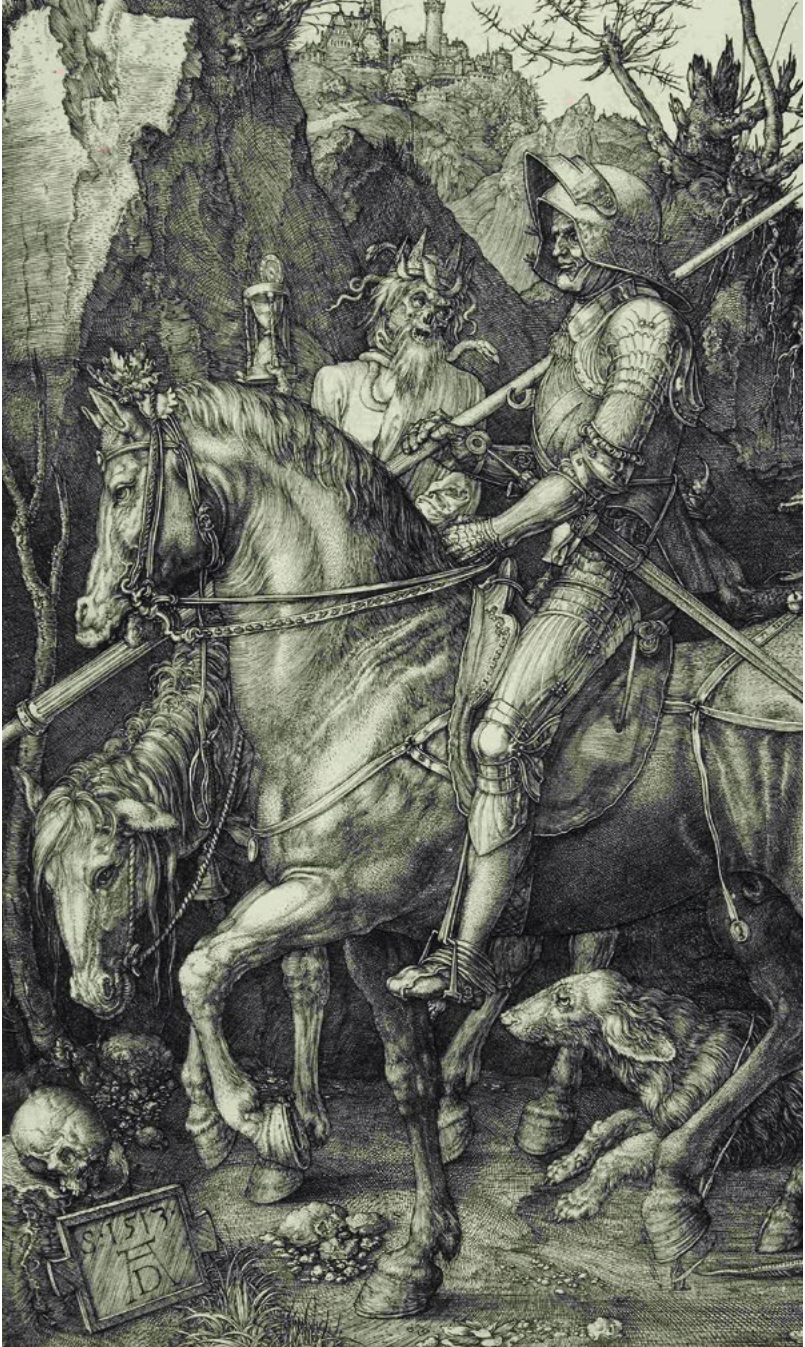
Collegienstrasse 54

o6886 Lutherstadt Wittenberg

www.martinluther.de

Left: Stove tile with portrait of Eve, Luther's residence in Wittenberg, ca. 1530; Saxony-Anhalt State Office for Heritage Management and Archaeology, Juraj Lipták
Top: Martin Luther's writing box, presumably mid-16th cent.; Angermuseum Erfurt, Dirk Urban.





KNIGHTS, PEASANTS, LUTHERANS

The period after 1500 was tumultuous: The knights were fighting their final battle, the peasants were rising in revolt, and the cities were beds of seething unrest. Printing, pamphlets and battle anthems spread new ideas among the populace, casting centuries-old beliefs into doubt. The success or failure of the Protestant movement was primarily decided in Southern Germany, in Franconia, Swabia and old Bavaria. Martin Luther followed the Diet of Augsburg of 1530, which everyone hoped would resolve the confessional issue, from Veste Coburg.

The 2017 Bavarian State Exhibition in the imposing fortress of Veste Coburg will present a panorama of the period before and after 1500. The show is being organized by the Haus der Bayerischen Geschichte, the Coburger Landesstiftung and the city of Coburg. It will present rural and urban life, the knights and princes' old and new splendor, the Peasants' War, and the bitter dispute over the right path to salvation – then as today. The companion exhibition in the Church of St. Moriz in Coburg and an extensive supporting program with much (religious) music and theater will round out the extensive program.

May – November 2017

Veste Coburg

Kirche St. Moriz

Kirchhof 3

96450 Coburg

www.hdbg.de

Left: Albrecht Dürer: Knight, Death and the Devil
© Kunstsammlungen der Veste Coburg



THE ART OF LIBERTY

Along with the World Reformation Exhibition in Wittenberg, the world art exhibition in Kassel will take place in 2017, the year of the anniversary of the Reformation. documenta 14 has announced that it will be building a bridge to Athens with its exhibition entitled “Learning from Athens”. It will touch on Greek philosophy, liberal thought, the cradle of Western culture and democracy as well as the current European crisis, the dictates of economics, and the debate about Fortress Europe’s anti-immigration policy.

This gave the Evangelical Church of Hesse Electorate-Waldeck in Kassel the idea “to learn from Wittenberg” during documenta 14 and venturing to build a bridge from Kassel to Wittenberg, from world exhibition to world exhibition. After all, the Reformation’s notions of freedom and the individual set the arts free. They liberated them from the church’s tutelage, thus contributing to the autonomy of the arts in the modern era.

Against this background, we will explore what autonomous art and the church have to say to each other today and how a free and open dialog can enrich both. As in past documentas, too, the venue for this experiment in Kassel will be the imageless Huguenot Church of St. Charles. The other end of the bridge in Wittenberg will be an abandoned prison. A varied program for school students and adults with museum educational elements, talks with artists, lectures, religious impulses, and music and art installations will accompany the exhibition.



May 2017 – October 2017

Karlskirche

Karlsplatz

34117 Kassel

www.ekkw.de/reformation2017

Top: Church of St. Charles
medio.tv/schauderna



IN THESE FAST-PACED TIMES: THE REFORMATION, 1517–1617

Globalization, media revolution, population growth, climate change – buzzwords of the 21st century? Not at all. Martin Luther already spoke of “these fast-paced times” in the 16th century. The signs of the times were pointing to change. The invention of the printing press expedited the spread of news and ideas just as remarkably as Twitter, Facebook and the like today. The discovery of America altered the face of the known world, Copernicus shook the firmament, and Martin Luther unleashed the wave of Reformations.

This exhibition will trace the path of an idea that proceeded differently than prior attempts to reform the church. It had an impact that led to the establishment of a new denomination. Why? Why then and not before? When and how can an idea change the world? Find out in Braunschweig starting on May 7, 2017.





May 7 – November 19, 2017
Braunschweigisches Landesmuseum

Burgplatz 1
38100 Braunschweig

www.3landesmuseen.de

Left: Cloak, cap and scepter of the first rector of the University of Helmstedt, 1576, Braunschweigisches Landesmuseum, Photo: Ingeborg Simon
Top: Equestrian armor of Duke Heinrich the Younger of Braunschweig-Lüneburg-Wolfenbüttel (1489-1568), Northern Germany, 1542, Braunschweigisches Landesmuseum, Photo: Ingeborg Simon



Discover the Reformation on a tour through Europe when the world assembles in the Lutherstadt and for young people. The anniversary of the Reformation promises to be a unique experience all across the continent and chiefly in Central Germany, the whole summer long.

HISTORY ROAD TRIP: THE EUROPEAN ROADMAP

The roadmap is exactly the right idea, “which our church, our country and Europe” need now in light of the debates about Europe, said Council Heinrich Bedford-Strohm, Chair of the EKD Council, as he presented the route that will crisscross the continent. Sixty-eight cities in nineteen European countries will be tied in with the idea of Reformation. Starting on November 3, 2016, the European Roadmap will be a route leading to Lutherstadt Wittenberg on May 20, 2017 and the World Reformation Exhibition “Gates of Freedom”.

Destinations will include cities in the Netherlands, Hungary, Slovenia and Ireland as well as Rome, Augsburg, Worms and Wartburg Castle. Each stopover will last thirty-six hours. Regional and ecumenical partners have extended invitations to festivities with numerous events highlighting local links to the history of the Reformation. Personal stories will attest to the continued relevance of Reformation ideas. Each stopover will create a memory to be taken along to the World Reformation Exhibition.

European Roadmap November 2016 – May 2017

Europe

www.r2017.org/europaeischer_stationenweg

Graphic: Daniel Leyva/r2017



GATES OF FREEDOM: WORLD REFORMATION EXHIBITION

Rather being something that took place 500 years ago, Reformation is an ongoing process in every denomination, in society, and throughout the world. The “Gates of Freedom” World Reformation Exhibition opening in Lutherstadt Wittenberg on May 20, 2017 will elucidate this in seven sections covering pertinent issues, which were designed by German university students. Churches of different denominations and from different continents, culture makers and organizations that provide space for culture, nongovernmental initiatives and organizations will be presenting their ideas and thoughts on ways to present the Reformation in the 21st century.

Sixteen themed weeks are also scheduled. Panel discussions, concerts and much more will make the World Reformation Exhibition an event lasting the whole summer long.

Two projects are planned to complete the world exhibition in Lutherstadt Wittenberg: a panorama of the Reformation era by the artist Yadegar Asisi and an exhibition by contemporary artists.



LUTHERSTADT WITTENBERG



**Gates of Freedom –
World Reformation Exhibition
May 20 – September 10, 2017
Lutherstadt Wittenberg**

www.r2017.org/weltausstellung-reformation

Graphic: Daniel Leyva/r2017



TRUST AND TRY CONFIRMAND AND YOUTH CAMP

Confirmands from Germany and numerous European countries will be coming to Lutherstadt Wittenberg in the 2017 Reformation Summer. Confirmand camps between June and September of 2017 will enable young people to discover the Reformation in a new way and in fellowship with many others. Team members from their own congregations and local supporters will be offering an exciting and event-filled program ranging from small group workshops to field trips to the “Gates of Freedom” World Reformation Exhibition in Wittenberg and the sites of the Reformation and ending each day together in the evening. This will be a unique experience that will shape the “Wittenberg Generation”.

Youth organizations will additionally be running national and international camps for young people such as the 2017 national camp of the Association of Christian Girl Guides and Boy Scouts in the vicinity of Wittenberg.





June – September 2017
Lutherstadt Wittenberg

www.r2017.org/konfi-und-jugendcamp

Left: Daniel Leyva/r2017
Top: Confirmands before the Cranach Altar in St. Mary's Parish Church in Lutherstadt Wittenberg



KIRCHENTAGE 2017

GERMAN PROTESTANT KIRCHENTAG

The German Protestant Kirchentag is held every two years. The Reformation Summer Kirchentag will be held in Berlin and Wittenberg from May 24 to 28, 2017. Tens of thousands will be coming from all over to Berlin and Wittenberg in 2017.



KIRCHENTAGE ON THE MOVE

Six Kirchentage on the Move will furnish an opportunity to make stops on the way to Lutherstadt Wittenberg from May 25 to 28, 2017 and to explore cities in Central Germany and rediscover a historic cultural landscape. On Thursday, attendees will celebrate an ecumenical Ascension Day service in Leipzig, Magdeburg, Erfurt, Jena/Weimar, Dessau-Rosslau and Halle/Eisleben, which will also be celebrated at the Kirchentag in Berlin. The Kirchentage on the Move will also have programs, traditions and stories of their own.

REFORMATION SUMMER FESTIVAL SERVICE

On Sunday, May 28, 2017, everyone – guests and hosts – will assemble before Wittenberg to celebrate the Reformation Summer festival service with each other. The worship service will be part of a full weekend program in Lutherstadt Wittenberg.

Kirchentag

May 24 – 28, 2017

Berlin and Lutherstadt Wittenberg

www.r2017.org/deutscher-evangelischer-kirchentag-berlin-wittenberg

Kirchentage on the Move

May 25 – 28, 2017

Leipzig, Magdeburg, Erfurt, Jena/Weimar, Dessau-Rosslau and Halle/Eisleben

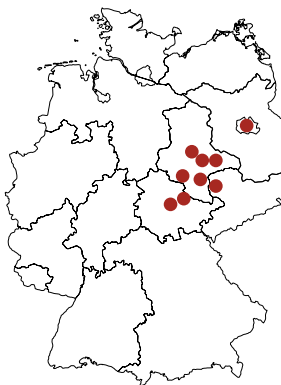
www.r2017.org/kirchentage-auf-dem-weg

Reformation Summer Festival Service

May 28, 2017

Lutherstadt Wittenberg

www.r2017.org/festgottesdienst



Left: Daniel Leyva/r2017

CULTURAL IMPACTS OF THE REFORMATION

Martin Luther's face is presently seen gazing down from advertising logos – the anniversary of the Reformation looking outward with one face. Scholarship now views the Reformation in terms of local histories, intentions and outcomes. Such multiplicity does not really befit a Luther who carved out history with a hammer in his hand.

Critical scholarship in the humanities does not usually attract attention but the conference “Cultural Impacts of the Reformation” will be held at Wittenberg's historic university, the LEUCOREA, from August 7 to 11, 2017. It will examine phenomena that would have been inconceivable without the Reformation but did not stem from it directly. Such vestiges of the Reformation can be found in many domains of life: in the arts and media, in politics and law, in ways of knowing, ways of life and even emotions, and, naturally, in religion itself. Not everyone living with these vestiges is aware of all of them. Making us aware of them is scholarship's task.





August 7 – 11, 2017

Stiftung LEUCOREA

Collegienstrasse 62

o6886 Lutherstadt Wittenberg

www.leucorea.de

Left: Uwe Pfeifer, Table Talk with Luther (1984)
Stiftung LEUCOREA in Lutherstadt Wittenberg
Top: Ottmar Hörl, Martin Luther: "Here I stand ..."
Installation in Lutherstadt Wittenberg, 2011
Photo: Cornelia Kirsch



THE PROPHET

Giacomo Meyerbeer's grand opera "The Prophet", which premiered in 1849, continues to be one of musical theater's powerful treatments of the Reformation and its consequences. Historically based on the Anabaptist rebellion in Münster, Meyerbeer tells the story of Jan van Leiden, whose outrage at the despotic rule of the Catholic aristocracy induces him to become the leader of the Anabaptists. Jan soon comes to realize, however, that the corrupt leaders of the movement are only using him and he blows himself up in the end. Just as he had in "The Huguenots", which premiered in 1836, Meyerbeer addressed the subject of religious fanaticism and the misuse of religion for the pursuit of power. Moreover, the opera was already believed at the time of its premiere to be a commentary on the Revolution of 1848, which had failed not long before. Although it is regarded as one of the absolute masterpieces of grand opera, "The Prophet" is hardly ever staged by major opera houses – most likely also because of its immense material and vocal demands. Nearly twenty years have passed since the last, heavily abridged performance on an international stage (Vienna State Opera). The new production by French director Olivier Py at the Deutsche Oper Berlin will be the culmination of a cycle Giacomo Meyerbeer's three most important operas.





2017/2018 Season
Deutsche Oper Berlin

Bismarckstr. 35
10627 Berlin

www.deutscheoperberlin.de



Left: Deutsche Oper Berlin © Leo Seidel
Top: Deutsche Oper Berlin © Leo Seidel

95 THESES AGAINST THE ABUSE OF INDULGENCES

Granting of letters of indulgence was common practice in the Roman Catholic Church on the eve of the Reformation. Purchasers of indulgences supposedly obtained remission of the temporal penalties for their sins.

The Dominican monk Johannes Tetzel had been selling so-called St Peter's Indulgences at the behest of Archbishop Albrecht of Mainz since 1515. The proceeds were to go toward funding the construction of St. Peter's Basilica in Rome. As a monk, minister and professor of theology, Luther felt compelled to act and began voicing criticism of Tetzel's sermons and business practices very early on. He posted his famous 95 Theses against the Abuse of Indulgences on October 31, 1517. Originally written for academic disputation, his theses spread throughout the German territories like wildfire thanks to printing. They set off a movement that has had an enduring impact on people not only in Germany and has left its traces all over the world.

October 31, 1517 marks the start of the Reformation to this day.

¶ Amore et studio elucidande veritates, hec subscripta disputabuntur in Helmbergae Praesidentis R. P. Martino Lutheri Eremitae no Augustiniani Armi et S. Theologie Magistri eiusdem loci de Ordine. Cuius unque ut quon possint veritas praesentis nobiscum deceptare, facere id literas abstantes.
In Nomine dei nostri Ihesu Christi, Amen.

1. Quia et apud nosse p[ro]f[ess]o Ch[rist]iana, dicendo penitenciam agere, i. comi
2. Quia verbi de penitentia faciantur, i. confessione et satisfactione, quae facit
3. Quia in multis locis, non potest intelligi.
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Out of love for the truth and the desire to bring it to light, the following propositions will be discussed at Wittenberg, under the presidency of the Reverend Father Martin Luther, Master of Arts and of Sacred Theology, and Lecturer in Ordinary on the same at that place. Wherefore he requests that those who are unable to be present and debate orally with us, may do so by letter.

In the Name our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

1. Our Lord and Master Jesus Christ, when He said *Poenitentiam agite*, willed that the whole life of believers should be repentance.
2. This word cannot be understood to mean sacramental penance, i.e., confession and satisfaction, which is administered by the priests.
3. Yet it means not inward repentance only; nay, there is no inward repentance which does not outwardly work divers mortifications of the flesh.
4. The penalty [of sin], therefore, continues so long as hatred of self continues; for this is the true inward repentance, and continues until our entrance into the kingdom of heaven.
5. The pope does not intend to remit, and cannot remit any penalties other than those which he has imposed either by his own authority or by that of the Canons.
6. The pope cannot remit any guilt, except by declaring that it has been remitted by God and by assenting to God's remission; though, to be sure, he may grant remission in cases reserved to his judgment. If his right to grant remission in such cases were despised, the guilt would remain entirely unforgiven.
7. God remits guilt to no one whom He does not, at the same time, humble in all things and bring into subjection to His vicar, the priest.
8. The penitential canons are imposed only on the living, and, according to them, nothing should be imposed on the dying.
9. Therefore the Holy Spirit in the pope is kind to us, because in his decrees he always makes exception of the article of death and of necessity.
10. Ignorant and wicked are the doings of those priests who, in the case of the dying, reserve canonical penances for purgatory.
11. This changing of the canonical penalty to the penalty of purgatory is quite evidently one of the tares that were sown while the bishops slept.

12. In former times the canonical penalties were imposed not after, but before absolution, as tests of true contrition.
13. The dying are freed by death from all penalties; they are already dead to canonical rules, and have a right to be released from them.
14. The imperfect health [of soul], that is to say, the imperfect love, of the dying brings with it, of necessity, great fear; and the smaller the love, the greater is the fear.
15. This fear and horror is sufficient of itself alone (to say nothing of other things) to constitute the penalty of purgatory, since it is very near to the horror of despair.
16. Hell, purgatory, and heaven seem to differ as do despair, almost-despair, and the assurance of safety.
17. With souls in purgatory it seems necessary that horror should grow less and love increase.
18. It seems unproved, either by reason or Scripture, that they are outside the state of merit, that is to say, of increasing love.
19. Again, it seems unproved that they, or at least that all of them, are certain or assured of their own blessedness, though we may be quite certain of it.
20. Therefore by "full remission of all penalties" the pope means not actually "of all," but only of those imposed by himself.
21. Therefore those preachers of indulgences are in error, who say that by the pope's indulgences a man is freed from every penalty, and saved.
22. Whereas he remits to souls in purgatory no penalty which, according to the canons, they would have had to pay in this life.
23. If it is at all possible to grant to any one the remission of all penalties whatsoever, it is certain that this remission can be granted only to the most perfect, that is, to the very fewest.
24. It must needs be, therefore, that the greater part of the people are deceived by that indiscriminate and high-sounding promise of release from penalty.
25. The power which the pope has, in a general way, over purgatory, is just like the power which any bishop or curate has, in a special way, within his own diocese or parish.

26. The pope does well when he grants remission to souls [in purgatory], not by the power of the keys (which he does not possess), but by way of intercession.
27. They preach man who say that so soon as the penny jingles into the money-box, the soul flies out [of purgatory].
28. It is certain that when the penny jingles into the money-box, gain and avarice can be increased, but the result of the intercession of the Church is in the power of God alone.
29. Who knows whether all the souls in purgatory wish to be bought out of it, as in the legend of Sts. Severinus and Paschal.
30. No one is sure that his own contrition is sincere; much less that he has attained full remission.
31. Rare as is the man that is truly penitent, so rare is also the man who truly buys indulgences, i.e., such men are most rare.
32. They will be condemned eternally, together with their teachers, who believe themselves sure of their salvation because they have letters of pardon.
33. Men must be on their guard against those who say that the pope's pardons are that inestimable gift of God by which man is reconciled to Him;
34. For these "graces of pardon" concern only the penalties of sacramental satisfaction, and these are appointed by man.
35. They preach no Christian doctrine who teach that contrition is not necessary in those who intend to buy souls out of purgatory or to buy confessionals.
36. Every truly repentant Christian has a right to full remission of penalty and guilt, even without letters of pardon.
37. Every true Christian, whether living or dead, has part in all the blessings of Christ and the Church; and this is granted him by God, even without letters of pardon.
38. Nevertheless, the remission and participation [in the blessings of the Church] which are granted by the pope are in no way to be despised, for they are, as I have said, the declaration of divine remission.

39. It is most difficult, even for the very keenest theologians, at one and the same time to commend to the people the bundance of pardons and [the need of] true contrition.
40. True contrition seeks and loves penalties, but liberal pardons only relax penalties and cause them to be hated, or at least, furnish an occasion [for hating them].
41. Apotolic pardons are to be preached with caution, lest the people may falsely think them preferable to other good works of love.
42. Christians are to be taught that the pope does not intend the buying of pardons to be compared in any way to works of mercy.
43. Christians are to be taught that he who gives to the poor or lends to the needy does a better work than buying pardon.
44. Because love grows by works of love, and man becomes better; but by pardons man does not grow better, only more free from penalty.
45. Christians are to be taught that he who sees a man in need, and passes him by, and gives [his money] for pardons, purchases not the indulgences of the pope, but the indignation of God.
46. Christians are to be taught that unless they have more than they need, they are bound to keep back what is necessary for their own families, and by no means to squander it on pardons.
47. Christians are to be taught that the buying of pardons is a matter of free will, and not of commandment.
48. Christians are to be taught that the pope, in granting pardons, needs, and therefore desires, their devout prayer for him more than the money they bring.
49. Christians are to be taught that the pope's pardons are useful, if they do not put their trust in them; but altogether harmful, if through them they lose their fear of God.
50. Christians are to be taught that if the pope knew the exactions of the pardon-preachers, he would rather that St. Peter's church should go to ashes, than that it should be built up with the skin, flesh and bones of his sheep.
51. Christians are to be taught that it would be the pope's wish, as it is his duty, to give of his own money to very many of those from whom certain hawkers of pardons cajole money, even though the church of St. Peter might have to be sold.

52. The assurance of salvation by letters of pardon is vain, even though the commissary, nay, even though the pope himself, were to stake his soul upon it.
53. They are enemies of Christ and of the pope, who bid the Word of God be altogether silent in some Churches, in order that pardons may be preached in others.
54. Injury is done the Word of God when, in the same sermon, an equal or a longer time is spent on pardons than on this Word.
55. It must be the intention of the pope that if pardons, which are a very small thing, are celebrated with one bell, with single processions and ceremonies, then the Gospel, which is the very greatest thing, should be preached with a hundred bells, a hundred processions, a hundred ceremonies.
56. The “treasures of the Church,” out of which the pope grants indulgences, are not sufficiently named or known among the people of Christ.
57. That they are not temporal treasures is certainly evident, for many of the vendors do not pour out such treasures so easily, but only gather them.
58. Nor are they the merits of Christ and the Saints, for even without the pope, these always work grace for the inner man, and the cross, death, and hell for the outward man.
59. St. Lawrence said that the treasures of the Church were the Church’s poor, but he spoke according to the usage of the word in his own time.
60. Without rashness we say that the keys of the Church, given by Christ’s merit, are that treasure;
61. For it is clear that for the remission of penalties and of reserved cases, the power of the pope is of itself sufficient.
62. The true treasure of the Church is the Most Holy Gospel of the glory and the grace of God.
63. But this treasure is naturally most odious, for it makes the first to be last.
64. On the other hand, the treasure of indulgences is naturally most acceptable, for it makes the last to be first.
65. Therefore the treasures of the Gospel are nets with which they formerly were wont to fish for men of riches.
66. The treasures of the indulgences are nets with which they now fish for the riches of men.

67. The indulgences which the preachers cry as the “greatest graces” are known to be truly such, in so far as they promote gain.
68. Yet they are in truth the very smallest graces compared with the grace of God and the piety of the Cross.
69. Bishops and curates are bound to admit the commissaries of apostolic pardons, with all reverence.
70. But still more are they bound to strain all their eyes and attend with all their ears, lest these men preach their own dreams instead of the commission of the pope.
71. He who speaks against the truth of apostolic pardons, let him be anathema and accursed!
72. But he who guards against the lust and license of the pardon-preachers, let him be blessed!
73. The pope justly thunders against those who, by any art, contrive the injury of the traffic in pardons.
74. But much more does he intend to thunder against those who use the pretext of pardons to contrive the injury of holy love and truth.
75. To think the papal pardons so great that they could absolve a man even if he had committed an impossible sin and violated the Mother of God -- this is madness.
76. We say, on the contrary, that the papal pardons are not able to remove the very least of venial sins, so far as its guilt is concerned.
77. It is said that even St. Peter, if he were now Pope, could not bestow greater graces; this is blasphemy against St. Peter and against the pope.
78. We say, on the contrary, that even the present pope, and any pope at all, has greater graces at his disposal; to wit, the Gospel, powers, gifts of healing, etc., as it is written in I. Corinthians xii.
79. To say that the cross, emblazoned with the papal arms, which is set up [by the preachers of indulgences], is of equal worth with the Cross of Christ, is blasphemy.
80. The bishops, curates and theologians who allow such talk to be spread among the people, will have an account to render.
81. This unbridled preaching of pardons makes it no easy matter, even for learned men, to rescue the reverence due to the pope from slander, or even from the shrewd questionings of the laity.

82. To wit: -- "Why does not the pope empty purgatory, for the sake of holy love and of the dire need of the souls that are there, if he redeems an infinite number of souls for the sake of miserable money with which to build a Church? The former reasons would be most just; the latter is most trivial."
83. Again: -- "Why are mortuary and anniversary masses for the dead continued, and why does he not return or permit the withdrawal of the endowments founded on their behalf, since it is wrong to pray for the redeemed?"
84. Again: -- "What is this new piety of God and the pope, that for money they allow a man who is impious and their enemy to buy out of purgatory the pious soul of a friend of God, and do not rather, because of that pious and beloved soul's own need, free it for pure love's sake?"
85. Again: -- "Why are the penitential canons long since in actual fact and through disuse abrogated and dead, now satisfied by the granting of indulgences, as though they were still alive and in force?"
86. Again: -- "Why does not the pope, whose wealth is to-day greater than the riches of the richest, build just this one church of St. Peter with his own money, rather than with the money of poor believers?"
87. Again: -- "What is it that the pope remits, and what participation does he grant to those who, by perfect contrition, have a right to full remission and participation?"
88. Again: -- "What greater blessing could come to the Church than if the pope were to do a hundred times a day what he now does once, and bestow on every believer these remissions and participations?"
89. "Since the pope, by his pardons, seeks the salvation of souls rather than money, why does he suspend the indulgences and pardons granted heretofore, since these have equal efficacy?"
90. To repress these arguments and scruples of the laity by force alone, and not to resolve them by giving reasons, is to expose the Church and the pope to the ridicule of their enemies, and to make Christians unhappy.
91. If, therefore, pardons were preached according to the spirit and mind of the pope, all these doubts would be readily resolved; nay, they would not exist.

92. Away, then, with all those prophets who say to the people of Christ, "Peace, peace," and there is no peace!
93. Blessed be all those prophets who say to the people of Christ, "Cross, cross," and there is no cross!
94. Christians are to be exhorted that they be diligent in following Christ, their Head, through penalties, deaths, and hell;
95. And thus be confident of entering into heaven rather through many tribulations, than through the assurance of peace.

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