

Notes from the Edge of the World

Rev. Matthew Heise

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Above: A rundown section of Leipzig

Life in a New Land

In the rough streets of old Leipzig and surrounding towns, immigrants from the former communist or socialist nations of Vietnam, Mozambique and Cuba abound. Having spent time there the last few years, I couldn't help but notice the similarities to Detroit, with which I am very familiar. High unemployment, abandoned housing, squatters. These characteristics are common in cities that are having difficulties adjusting to changing economic conditions.

In the past few years, however, newer refugees have been flooding into Germany from the Islamic Republic of Iran. While it is not entirely clear, some may be political as well as economic refugees. But in their escape to freedom, the transition has not been easy. A new land, new culture, new language. All of these things can be intimidating for anyone, so the missionary arm (LKM-Lutherische Kirchenmission) of our church partner, the Independent

Lutheran Church of Germany (known as SELK in German), has stepped into the breach. They have reached out in missions to share the good news to people who have lost hope due to their experiences in



Iran.

Above: After devotions in the LKM chapel

Mission Seminar for Iranians

I was in Germany recently to discuss and prepare for oral examinations in my Ph.D. program and had the opportunity to share our work at SELK mission festivals, as well as spend the weekend with the Iranian refugees at a mission seminar. There I had the chance to share with them the hope that we have in Christ, no matter our circumstances. For some it was good news indeed. Some of them had even protested at the Berlin Human Rights Center for Pastor Yousef Nadarkhani, currently imprisoned in Iran and sentenced to death for converting to Christianity.

But for others, the Gospel message was difficult to square with their former allegiance to Islam. You might be surprised at the large number of agnostics among modern Iranians today, no doubt a reflection of the Islamic regime's brutality. Nevertheless, the German Lutheran Mission continues to show

Christ's unconditional love for them by helping them acquire the necessary documents for asylum seekers and simply in adjusting to German life.

Please keep these wonderful people, whom I now call friends, in your prayers. It was clear that many of them are well educated. Therefore the lifestyle change this entails, especially living in the squalid conditions that normally accompany refugees in any country, has been somewhat traumatic. It was a pleasure to see that SELK, unlike the German state church EKD (Evangelical Church of Germany), takes missions and the spiritual lives of all of God's children seriously.



Above: A little r&r on the volleyball court

Prayer requests:

Please pray for LKM Director Roger Zieger and his missionaries in their work. Please pray for the Lord's presence, blessings and comfort in the lives of our mutual Iranian friends. Remember also Pastor Nadarkhani and pray for his family and his release from prison.

Please pray for safe travels to St. Petersburg this week and God's blessings upon my course at the Theological Institute of the Church of Ingria. I will be there until the end of the month and then travel back to Georgia.

Thank the Lord for blessing my cousin Shawn Nunnink and pray for His continued healing of her cancer. The reports of her healing continue to be positive, praise the Lord!

E-mail: matveih@yahoo.com—mailing address- 26650 Woodshire, Dearborn Heights, MI, 48127.

To support my work financially, you can send a tax-deductible gift to:
LCMS World Mission; Missionary Support; PO Box 790089; St. Louis, MO 63179-0089
----**Make checks payable to LCMS World Mission. Mark checks "Support of Matthew Heise."**

If you would like to partner with me in my ministry with ongoing support as an individual or congregation, please contact Debra Feenstra for information on Together in Mission or Mission Senders at 1-800-248-1930 Ext. 1651 or Debra.Feenstra@lcms.org Thank you and may Christ's Easter joy continue to resonate in your lives!



Above: Mission festival at Paul Gerhardt Lutheran Church-Braunschweig, Germany