

Internship Report

1. Introduction

Shortly after the Reformation Jubilee in 2017 I had the chance to join the team of the LWF Center Wittenberg for a two-month internship, from January 22 to March 22, 2018.

Just before, I studied a semester abroad in Oslo. That's how I was motivated to deepen my intercultural experiences. Thanks to my studies in Oslo, I appreciated the gathering of people from different denominations, countries and religions. So, I was really thankful that the LWF center allowed me to broaden my horizon.

2. My Tasks

Mainly, I supported the office work by correcting the trilingual websites of the LWF Center and the associated *Luthergarten*: I wrote several small articles for the website, for examples some reports about tree plantings. Indeed, it was a good exercise – as a future pastor – to learn to switch from the language as a Theologian to public language.

Moreover, I was appointed to create an archive of all newspaper articles since 2009. Even if this may sound a little bit stupid, it gave me quickly an overview about the center and its work.

In general, I want to highlight that I really enjoyed the friendly atmosphere in the office; coming to work was always a positive experience. My work seemed to me useful and was valued by the co-workers. I enjoyed all the time the possibility to ask any questions about the LWF or overall Theology.

As very enriching I experienced two international seminars. One, from the Martin Luther Bund gathering German speaking Theologians and the other from the Lutheran World Federation itself. Because I gained a high amount of experiences, I would like to mention more details about the seminar.

2.1 The 17th International Seminar

At the 17th International Seminar „Reading the Bible with Luther in our respective contexts“ 21 Pastors from 19 different countries took part. Lead by Prof. Dr. Karl-Wilhelm Niebuhr (Jena, Germany) and Sivin Kit (Malayisa) Luther’s hermeneutic was discussed and interpreted from our various contexts. For me, it was very enriching to take part in the lectures. On the one hand, the great professors provided more than the usual methods compared to university: never before I was asked to formulate my opinion to facts. But it seemed to me so important to connect these scientific facts to me and my faith. On the other hand, during the lectures of Sivin Kit, concentrating on contextual theology, it became clear how much our contexts form the understanding of the bible. One text can provide so many different messages to different people and genders. As consequence, a salvation’s message can sound very differently. For instance, the promise of “living water” is more worth in regions with less water; “free water” cannot only be a financial issue, it may free women from their tasks to get water from the dwell. According to my impression Sivin Kit brought these liberal ideas even to more critical minds.

It really broadens my horizon to get concrete insights about the minority churches and their situation. I was shocked how some governments treat harmless people and impressed how much energy the individuals and churches invest for “creative resistance” and interreligious dialogues.

Next to the lessons, I appreciated the shared time with the future, wonderful colleagues. In the two weeks I had enough time for personal conversations about the life as pastor.

Besides, the seminar included visits to the Luther sights in Wittenberg, Erfurt, Eisenach, Torgau where I had the chance to learn in a visual way about Luther. I especially enjoyed the possibility to see Luther’s *Septembertestament*, the first edition of his New Testament, in one of its original prints.

3. The Stay in Wittenberg

In my opinion Wittenberg is a small and attractive town, especially for a short term stay. To have the chance to discover all-round the city, I got some days off work. So, I really had the opportunity to deepen my knowledge about Reformations' history.

By living in the old university *Leucorea* in a paid apartment by the LWF, I felt motivated to study in my private time.

As interesting I perceived the church situation in Eastern Germany. In Wittenberg itself only 18 % of the population are belonging to a church (12 % Lutherans, 6 % Catholics). But nevertheless, I was surprised about the activities of the church and their successful attempts to reach people outside of the church with new services and "faith conversations circles".

In my leisure, I enjoyed that my co-workers took me to several evening groups. In "English and Theology" I met some Theologians who are interested to discuss Theology in English; at the "English Stammtisch" different people from Wittenberg came together in a restaurant to chat.

In a nutshell, thanks to these warm people, Wittenberg felt very fast homelike.

4. Personal Reflection

The time in Wittenberg for me as a student of Theology was really enriching. Insights in new contexts of church, worldwide and in Wittenberg on site, encourage me to keep active in the Lutheran World and strengthen my goal of becoming a pastor. Thanks to the great personal engagement of Joachim Zirkler, Annette Glaubig and Hans Kasch I am going to remember a wonderful stay.