

REMEMBERING OUR COMPANION SYNOD IN RUSSIA

Sunday, October 8th, 2023



This is a mural in the basement of the Lutheran Cathedral in St. Petersburg, Russia. It depicts the pulling down of a church steeple during the height of the Soviet campaign against religion. The banner reads, “Religion is the opiate of the people.” Below, you will find a poem sent by Alexander Scheiermann, Bishop of our companion synod in Russia for our Remembering Russia Sunday. He attributed it to Bonhoeffer and in the translation used the term “Debris Gold.” I think a better translation into English is “Fools Gold.”

You went running and I stayed lying down
I knew all the stars at the age of seven
Never searched for anything, I was found
Ever stayed true to myself, a child without wounds

My foolishness is more than your gold
More than your house and your boat and your pride
Cause I never wanted more than this fool's gold
Never wanted more than this fool's gold,
than this fool's gold

You searched many years, but in the precious hours
Lost your sense of truth, and found false friends
But in all those years I hoped for but nothing
I was my own king in my fool's palace

My foolishness is more than your gold
More than your house and your boat and your pride
Cause I never wanted more than this fool's gold
Never wanted more than this fool's gold

The gold of this world is not shining at one's hand
It's shining in my heart and illuminates me from the inside

My foolishness is more than your gold
More than your house and your boat and your pride
Cause I never wanted more than this fool's gold
Never wanted more than this fool's gold,
than this fool's gold

Even though our Christian siblings in Russia have enjoyed greater religious freedom since the late 80s, religion is still regarded by many in Russia as just an “opiate”, or, “fool's gold.” Some in our own country feel the same way. This witness from the Bishop of our companion Synod in Russia gives expression to 1 Corinthians 1:18 where Paul declares, “⁸*For the message about the cross is foolishness (fool's gold?) to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.*”

Please include the following in your personal and congregational prayers.

The people of Russia who are also suffering deaths and deprivations caused by Putin's war in Ukraine.

Bishop Alexander Scheiermann as he strives to lead the Lutheran Synod of the Urals, Siberia and the Far East through these trying times.

Missionary Bradn Buerkle who had to flee Russia and is now living in Germany from where he continues his ministry via the internet.

For an end to the war between Russia and Ukraine.

At this time, due to the war in Ukraine, we are unable to visit one another and even have difficulty sending funds due to the sanctions and strained relations. However, we have mutually agreed to continue to pray for one another and share words (poems) of love and encouragement.