

The Wittenberg Times

1526-1550



All the news that's fit to print with some editorializing by Martin Luther
Editor: Hank Bitten

1544 Potosi Silver Mines Discovered in Peru

The Spanish are constructing 1,200 homes for 3,000 miners in what has been described as the richest silver mine in the world. Potosi is located in Bolivia at 13,000 feet elevation in the Andes Mountains. Native labor is being used to build the homes for the miners, although there are reports of protests against this forced labor by the Spanish.

The discovery was made by Diego Hualpa who was herding llamas. When he made camp for the night he lit a fire and was surprised to see a shining river of silver from the melted rock in the morning. In the Quechua language, Potosi (Potoocchi) means the "hill where silver flows."

The Spanish are using about 2,000 llamas to transport the silver to the coastal city of Arica for transport to Spain. On the return trip back to Potosi, the llamas transport mercury.



Note: 60,000 tons of silver have been mined from Potosi, you may have some in your jewelry collection! By 1572, Potosi's population was 120,000 making it larger than London, Paris, or Madrid.

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1544 Sweden Passes Act of Hereditary



King Gustav I

King Gustav I continues to benefit from the Protestant Reformation and the popularity of the teachings of Martin Luther in his efforts to centralize power in Sweden. His confiscation of property from the Roman Catholic Church, about 20% of the land, has allowed him to distribute farmland to the nobles

The Act of Heredity changes the succession of authority from rulers elected by the Riksdag of the Four Estates to a hereditary monarchy with his son, Eric, as the next heir. The tax assessments of 1538 on the independent farmers have substantially increased the revenues of the king and ended the monopoly of foreign merchants under the rules of the Hanseatic League. As a result, King Gustav I controls the majority of farmland in Sweden and has developed Europe's first modern army.

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1544 July 20 *University of Konigsberg Founded*

Albertina University opened today in East Prussia. The university is the dream of the Duke Albert of Prussia to establish a Lutheran center of higher learning. The current gymnasium is to be expanded with the purchase of land next to the Konigsberg Cathedral. The University of Marburg founded in 1527 is the first Protestant Academy. Duke Albert expects this intellectual city to attract students to study science, culture, and philosophy. His vision is that the spread of the Protestant faiths will proliferate throughout northern Europe generating vibrant economic growth in the future. Two of the research projects planned for the new university include the publication of *Luther's Catechism* into the Lithuanian language and the translation of the New Testament of the Bible into the Polish and Lithuanian languages. Professor Stanislovas Rapalionis is leading this project. All professors are required to take an oath on the Augsburg Confession. Georg Sabinus, the son-in-law of Philip Melanchthon, is the rector (provost or academic dean) and Professor of Poetry and Eloquence.

Konigsberg is located on the Pregal River about four miles inland from the Baltic Sea. Its seven bridges provide easy access to all parts of the city, where the river divides creating an island where the historic palace and cathedral are located. It has a good harbor and was the center of trade since the 12th century. This is a cosmopolitan city with many nationalities. The Huguenots and Lutherans are the dominant cultures and faith. Immanuel Kant will be one of the famous professors at the University of Konigsberg in the 18th century. The large Roman Catholic university is in Cracow.



University of Konigsberg and cathedral



Pregal River and city of Königsberg in East Prussia, present day Poland near the Baltic Sea.

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1544 November 19 Council of Trent Announced

Pope Paul III announced in his bull, *Laetare Hierusalem*, that the Council will convene on March 15 at the Cathedral in Trent in northern Italy. The decision has been delayed for ten years because of conflicts within the church, the demands of Charles V to hold it in Germany, and the continuing conflict between France and Charles V. The spread of the Lutheran and other Protestant faiths is the primary reason for Pope Paul III's decision to discuss Roman Catholic teachings on justification, the sacraments, original sin, and the free will of man. The opening session is scheduled for March 15 (the first session will not convene until December 13, 1545)

Our reporters obtained one of the articles to be discussed and asked the Reverend Martin Luther for his opinion on it. "The position stated in CANON 9 is false: *"If any one saith, that by faith alone the impious is justified; in such wise as to mean, that nothing else is required to co-operate in order to the obtaining the grace of Justification, and that it is not in any way necessary, that he be prepared and disposed by the movement of his own will; let him be anathema."*

The most important reform within the Roman Catholic Church is that we are saved by God's grace and love. The Scriptures in Romans and Ephesians, are not equivocal on this matter.

1. ***"Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus;"*** (Romans 3:24).
2. ***"Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law."*** (Romans 3:28).
3. ***"Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ,"*** (Romans 5:1).
4. ***"For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God;"*** (Ephesians 2:8).