Reformation ABCs

# W is for Wartburg Castle

Towering above Eisenach, in the state of Thuringia, is the splendorous Wartburg Castle, where Luther spent ten months in exile as a ‘bandit’ of the Roman Catholic hierarchy. It was also the home of St. Elizabeth of Hungary. From May 1521 to March 1522, Martin Luther stayed at the castle under the name of Junker Jörg (the Knight George), after he had been taken there for his safety at the request of Frederick the Wise following his ex-communication by Pope Leo X and his refusal to recant at the Diet of Worms. While at Wartburg Luther translated the New Testament into German; visitors can see his writing desk. Wartburg Castle was made a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1999.

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# W is for Wittenberg

Wittenberg - ‘Luther’s Town’ -is in Saxony in north central Germany, located along the Elbe River southwest of Berlin. It is ‘Luther Center’ during the 500th Anniversary of the Reformation. It is debated among Luther historians whether he did, in fact, nail his 95 theses on the wooden door of Castle Church on October 31, 1517. The original wooden doors were destroyed in the 1800’s and bronze doors eventually replaced them. For all the debate about how the 95 theses were first circulated, there’s no doubt that the Reformation began in Wittenberg in 1517. Luther’s crypt in located near the altar of the imposing Castle Church (Schlosskirche) also called All Saints Church, today a Lutheran Church. Luther’s residence, a converted cloister in the town, is now a fabulous museum.

Left, the Castle Church. Right, view of main square of Wittenberg, with the City Church (St. Mary’s) at center.

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