



Vaduz, Liechtenstein

By Paul W. Lamicela

Introduction

Liechtenstein is one of the smallest independent countries in the world, having a total area of about 160 sq. km (62 sq. mi.) and a population of about 34,247 people. It is a beautiful country, situated in the Alps and bordered by Switzerland to the west and Austria to the east. The Rhine River forms its entire western border. Vaduz (Va-DOOTS) is the capital of the Principality of Liechtenstein (*Fürstentum Liechtenstein*), and because Liechtenstein is so small, much of this city profile will apply to the whole country.

Our family was privileged to spend a couple days in Liechtenstein in the fall of 2004. We stayed in a hotel about 1,300 meters (4,265 ft) above sea level! Liechtenstein is a fascinating place!

More about Liechtenstein

Liechtenstein's form of government is a hereditary constitutional monarchy that consists of a constitution, a twenty-five-member parliament, and a Prince. In Liechtenstein, the Prince plays an active role in governing his country.

Liechtensteiners, and most of the other people living in the country, are Germanic. The official language of Liechtenstein is German, but a dialect called Alamannic is commonly spoken.

The climate is surprisingly mild for the country's location in the Alps. Average temperatures range from -1°C (30°F) in January to 21°C (70°F) in July.

The currency used in Liechtenstein is the Swiss franc, because of Liechtenstein's close ties to Switzerland. Switzerland and Liechtenstein are in a customs union. Switzerland also represents Liechtenstein internationally and staffs the border crossing between Liechtenstein and Austria.

Liechtenstein is a very sophisticated country, and has one of the highest living standards in the world.

Like Switzerland, Liechtenstein is a neutral nation, which means it does not maintain an army. The last time they were involved in fighting was in 1868. Soon after, Liechtenstein disbanded its army of eighty men and became neutral.

About Vaduz

As can be imagined from the size of Liechtenstein, Vaduz is very small. It has a population of only 5,050 (2006 estimate). Despite being the capital city of Liechtenstein, Vaduz is more like a town. It is about 470 m (about 1540 ft) above sea level. The Prince's castle, or, *Schloss Vaduz*, is located on a hill overlooking the town, while the parliament building is nestled in the town below.

Vaduz is a tourist center, with hotels, restaurants, and many shops. The town also boasts an art museum, which displays part of the princely family's art collection, and a stamp museum. Liechtenstein is widely known for its postage stamps. Many more are produced than are actually used for postage, and these are collected by philatelists from around the world.

We also hiked up a trail to the Castle. It was a twenty-minute walk from the town to the Castle. After seeing the outside of the castle, we took an opportunity to pray for Liechtenstein from that strategic location.

Spiritual

Liechtenstein is a country so steeped in Catholicism that it has become very much a part of the culture. For example, celebration of the national holiday, the Prince's birthday, includes a mass on the castle grounds. The holiday is scheduled to coincide with the Assumption—the day Catholics commemorate Mary's supposed ascension into heaven. It is saddening to see the great darkness of this

religion enshroud so many of the Liechtensteiners.

However, there are a few Protestant churches. What do they believe?

When we were in the country, we contacted the pastor of a Protestant church we had passed. We told him that we were Christians from the United States and wondered if we could meet with him. He said he would not be available, but suggested that we meet with the Catholics. "After all," he said, "They're Christians, too." He also suggested that we try to meet a certain other Protestant minister, saying, "I'm sure she'll be happy to meet with you." Our short conversation with this man revealed to us the false, modern Christianity they are embracing. There may not even be one true, New Testament church in the whole country!

Between the darkness of Catholicism, the darkness of false Christianity, and the darkness of secularism, there does not seem to be much, if any, of the light of Christ shining in Liechtenstein.

Please pray that the light of Christ will shine in Liechtenstein. Pray that the Lord will send true Christians into



Liechtenstein to be that light, and pray that if there are any true Christians in Liechtenstein, they will let their light shine brightly in their country.

Liechtenstein is a nation blinded by the enemy of our souls and desperately needs Jesus.

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