

Diakonos

danlewis@dkonos.org

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Dear Friends and Supporters,

Now that it is in the bleak mid-winter (or at least that is what Christina Rossetti's poem calls it), allow me to update you on our winter mission ministry. The Advent



Sunrise on the San Antonio del Mar campus in the Baja is a beautiful time of day. This mission campus, in addition to hosting the School of Biblical Studies, also has built no less than 7000 homes for Mexican families, similar to Habitat for Humanity.

Season saw Peggy and I in Mexico, where I was teaching on the Theology and Letters of St. Paul. I had an excellent class of students from Mexico, but also from Costa Rica, Sweden, Germany, and the USA. The weather was lovely, and the Mexican people are so delightfully hospitable. Plus, we had our fill of street tacos, which

are especially good in the Baja! My translator for most of my lectures was Ben Wassow, from the University of Hamburg in Germany. Ben is a marvelous linguist, fluent in English, Spanish, and of course German, plus he also has studied Greek

and Hebrew. He and his wife are in Mexico for the balance of 2021, but in 2022 he will be moving to Madrid to head up a Discipleship Bible School in Spain.

Consequently, we've been invited to do some lectures in Spain in 2023, which is exciting, since we've never been to Spain before.



Here, Ben and I are working together as we did every day. Incidentally, the two projection screens for my Powerpoints are displayed in Spanish on the left and English on the right, since this campus is bilingual. All my materials are sent on ahead and translated by the time I arrive.

We were back home just six days from Mexico before driving to Lancaster, Pennsylvania, this time for lectures in the gospel and letters of John. Lancaster, as you may know, is Mennonite country, and indeed, I had a number of Mennonites in my classes. They are a lovely people and deeply committed to Christ. Besides my lectures each day, the campus hosted a Q/A session one evening with the surrounding community invited, and about 40 attended. Questions ranged from how to interpret Romans 9 to the ancient Christian confession that Christ descended into hell to the doctrine of the Trinity—and a lot of things in between. Lamar and Kara, the department directors of biblical



Lamar and I have an enjoyable moment before the Q/A.



Here is half a dozen of the students in Pennsylvania.

studies, were gracious hosts and just enjoyable to be with, and the students were very engaged in their studies as well.

With only a weekend to rest (albeit, I also teach the Sunday Adult Bible Class at Mariners' Church in downtown Detroit), I started lectures by Zoom Monday morning on 1 and 2 Peter. I had lectured for this School of Biblical Studies in Rostov on Don, Russia some months ago, and it was a delight to be

back with them. Peter's letters in the New Testament were addressed to believers in several Roman Provinces on the south coast of the Black Sea (the Roman



My Zoom face on the wall of the Russian classroom makes me look a bit like the Cheshire Cat in Alice in Wonderland, except I didn't disappear.

Pontus Euxinus), and Rostov is just on the other side of the same sea. Hence, while St. Peter didn't get to Rostov, so far as we know, he certainly wrote to early Christians who lived in the same basic area, a fact that was not lost upon the Russian students.

February saw me in Amsterdam, the Netherlands, where I did a week's lectures on Deuteronomy for a class of about 25. The campus is right off of the water ways and the city maritime buildings, and alongside the campus is one of the canals that thread their way through Amsterdam.

I found the Dutch students very engaged with lots of well-thought-out questions. It has been a few years since I've taught in the Netherlands, so it was good to be

back. I do have to say, however, that traveling during the Covid era is a great deal different than it used to be. I was required to have five pieces of documentation



This is the University of the Nations campus in Amsterdam. As you can see, the sun is shining, so spring is on the way!

to get into the country, all in both digital and hard copies, including not only my passport, but also a government health questionnaire, a negative Covid test, a government quarantine form (which had to be completed even though I was exempt), and a letter from the university verifying that I was entering the



Here is my Dutch class. Fortunately, I was able to lecture in English, since all the students had learned English as a second language. Indeed, they were very good English speakers.

country for educational reasons (which is why I was exempt from quarantine). For the return to the USA, it is mostly a reversal of that process but somewhat simpler.

The week following my Amsterdam lectures, I lectured in Cambridge, England, this time by Zoom on the book of Ezekiel. Here are my Cambridge students:



Amarissa



Arianna



Ben



Erika



Hannah



Isabella



Jeremy



Joy



Karina



Kenneth



Kyoungmin



Natalie



Stephan



Taylor



Victoria



Theclar

Ezekiel is an unusual book, and the meaning of his visions are not always obvious. There are, of course, the famous passages about the “wheel within the wheel” and the valley of dry bones, but even these call for some careful treatment. Here, we first meet the higher register of angels called cherubim, which surround the divine throne. Indeed, Ezekiel 1, along with Isaiah 6 and Revelation 4-5, are the most detailed descriptions of God’s heavenly throne and heavenly worship, and generations of Christians, going back to the early days of Christianity, have taken these visions as models for earthly worship, which is why Christian worship, traditionally at least, is liturgical. Many Christians have concluded that if heavenly worship is liturgical, and if the synagogue and temple worship in the Old Testament was liturgical, then Christian worship should follow in kind. In any case, we had a good week together working through this fascinating book.

As I write this, I am two days away from heading once more to Mexico, the same campus pictured at the beginning of this newsletter. Here, I will teach in a different department than previously, and my subjects will be 1 & 2 Chronicles, Malachi, Intertestamental History, and the Dead Sea Scrolls.

Like most of you, I am looking forward to spring! I have a full slate in the coming quarter, including lectures in Toronto and Vancouver in Canada, back to Cambridge in England, and then two weeks in Richmond, VA. May will include lecture trips to Tyler, Texas and Orlando, Florida.

As always, Peggy and I are deeply grateful for our supporters! Quite literally, we could not do this without you.

May God's blessings rest upon you all!

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Dan and Peggy Lewis". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, sweeping initial "D" and "P".

Dan and Peggy Lewis