

Diakonos

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Dear Friends and Supporters,

Fall is always a beautiful time in Michigan, but we were able to share the season in some other climes as well. In September, Peggy and I traveled to Mexico to San Antonio del Mar, where I have lectured several times previously. It is in the Baja and a lovely little campus overlooking the Pacific Ocean. Here, I taught the Book of



The campus in San Antonio del Mar sits on the side of a hill overlooking the Pacific Ocean. This plaza is where many students eat lunch on sunny days (and most days are sunny).

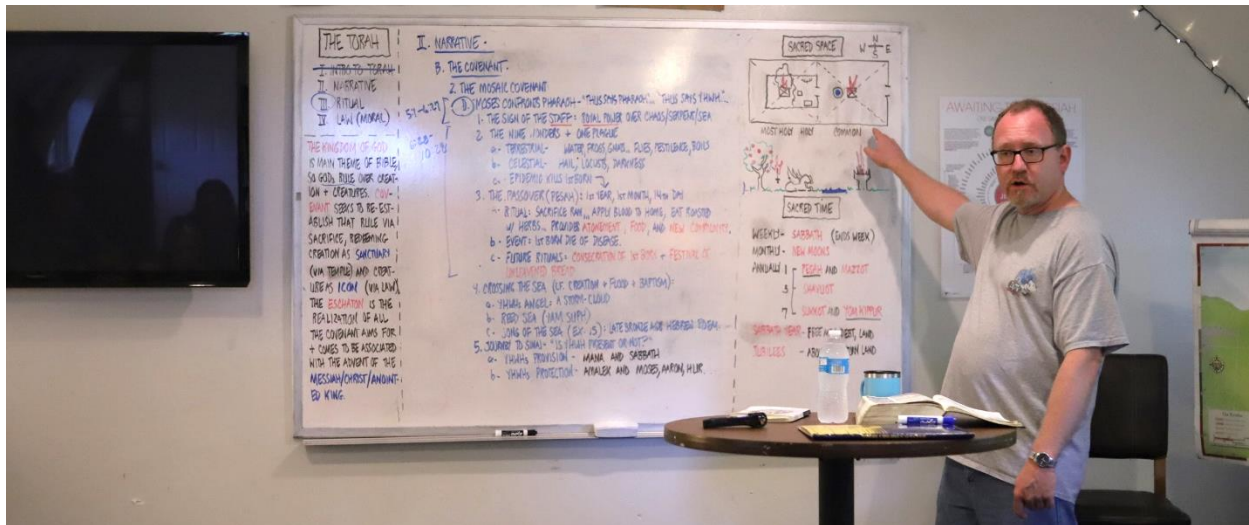
Genesis as well as the formation of the Canon of Scripture. The study of origins, of course, raises a number of very intriguing (and sometimes controversial) issues, some big and some not so big. Big issues include the age of the universe and the parallel stories of the great flood from ancient Mesopotamia. Not so big issues are questions like, “Who were the *Nephilim*?” and “Where did Cain get his wife?” Navigating these issues among a bright and energetic group of 20-somethings from a variety of Christian denominations can be both fun and intense! The students were very enjoyable, coming from Mexico, of course, but also from several other

Latin countries including Ecuador, Colombia and Costa Rica, along with some students from Canada, the USA and Switzerland. In such contexts, my lecture materials are sent in advance, where they are translated into the vernacular (anyone want a set of Powerpoint lectures in Spanish on the Book of Genesis—let me know!). The Director of the School of Biblical Studies, Mark Sharrow, is an Anglican from Texas and a pleasure to work with. And, of course, there is really nothing quite like street tacos in Mexico!



Michele, my translator, and Luis, one of the students, have a conversation with me after class, which is always a bit of a challenge in a bilingual context.

While Peggy and I were flying back from Mexico, Chad, our son, was flying to Honolulu to conduct lectures in the Torah. As a full-time teacher in Michigan as well as a pastor, his available time for lectures is limited, but he gets to Hawaii and



As usual, Chad fills the white board, guiding the students through the rituals and sacrificial system of Leviticus.

England each year, and sometimes, another place or two. He has the same tight schedule I had for many years until I retired. In Honolulu, Chad taught in the Biblical Core Course at the campus in the Manoa Valley, where he has taught several times previously.

In October, I flew to England, where I had lectures in two Schools of Biblical Studies, one in Nuneaton, where I have taught many times (and Chad teaches there as well), and the other in Cambridge, where I have been only once previously. Over the years, Peggy and I have established many enduring friendships in England, so it always is a joy to come back to our “home away from home.” The students in the King’s Lodge School of Biblical Studies this autumn were particularly bright and engaging, coming from England, Canada, New Zealand, India and South Korea. It was especially a joy for me to handle some New Testament material, since I often have taught at this campus in the spring, where the curriculum means I’m working in the Old Testament prophets. This year I was able to handle the intertestamental history and the Gospel of Mark, which is probably the earliest of the four canonical gospels and captures the testimony of Simon Peter, the big fisherman. (Papias, the early Christian leader from shortly after 100 AD, tells us that Mark’s Gospel is based on the eyewitness accounts of Peter.)



Here I am with one of my students, Pastor Wonill Kim, a Korean missionary who oversees some 23 churches in the capital of Kurdistan and is on a two-year study leave. We even had a few days of sunshine at the King’s Lodge at a time of year that is frequently rainy.

On the weekend after lectures were completed, I took the train to London to guide a group of students through the artifacts at the British Museum. Here, we explored the amazing array of Assyrian bas-reliefs and archaeological remnants from Nineveh, Calah, Nimrud, Babylon, Ur, Persia, Egypt, and of course, ancient Israel, all directly or indirectly linked with the history of the Israelites. Both in inscriptions and texts, many historical figures are named which also are found in the Bible, including Israelite kings, like Jehu and Hezekiah, Assyrian and Babylonian emperors like Tiglath-pileser and Nebuchadnezer, and Xerxes, the husband of Esther. A Presbyterian pastor from Budapest, Hungary was listening in on the tour and asked if he could tag along, and of course, we were happy to have him. On Sunday, I attended worship at Westminster Abbey, where the church was celebrating its founding in 1269 AD.



Westminster Abbey

From London, I traveled by train back to Cambridge, where my next set of lectures was back in the Old Testament, the Book of Deuteronomy. The students at Cambridge, as everywhere else in U. of N., came from a variety of countries besides England. They live in campus houses but cycle to the classroom. (Virtually everyone in Cambridge rides bicycles.) I had a new experience in Cambridge in which I was “Ubered” back and forth between the classroom and the guest housing. I’ve never used Uber before in the USA, so it was interesting and quite efficient I thought. Incidentally, one of the requirements of U. of N. is that students earning a degree must take at least one year of study in a country other than their own so as to thoroughly engage in a cross-cultural experience. It was serendipity to discover two students from Michigan, both from the Grand Rapids area!



Here's my Cambridge class—a thoroughly enjoyable group of serious biblical studies students!

Aside from the on-site lectures, my Greek and Hebrew on-line students continue to learn the original languages of the Bible. One very exciting report comes from Kijung (Paul) Moon, one of my former Hebrew students, who has completed his Masters of Applied Linguistics and Bible Translation and now is working on a translation project producing a Bible in the Hopi language for the Hopi Native Americans in the American southwest. He has just finished his translation of the Book of Ruth from the Hebrew text. (Great work, Paul!)

I have only one more lecture trip before the year ends, to Seattle in early December. However, the first half of 2020 will be quite busy, with trips to Canada (both Toronto and Vancouver), Mexico, Virginia, Norway, the Netherlands, Ukraine, Switzerland and England (both Birmingham and Cambridge).

As always, Peggy and I deeply appreciate your encouragement and support! When I retired from pastoral work, I had no idea that I would be embarking on a second career. Still, as God provides energy and strength, we hope to continue serving the world-wide church of Christ Jesus in its many denominational forms. In many ways, it's a small taste of heaven!

Grace and peace,

Dan and Peggy Lewis