

# DIAKONOS

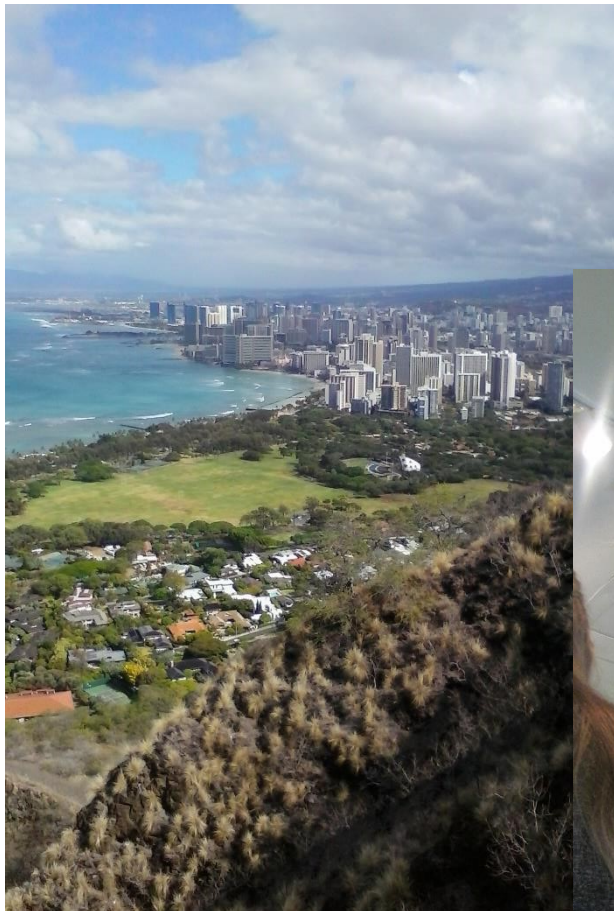
## Dan & Peggy Lewis

[danlewis@dkonos.org](mailto:danlewis@dkonos.org)

August, 2019

Dear Friends and Supporters,

The summer is flying by, and it has been a good one for us. I handled three mission trips this summer, one to Honolulu, one to Kona and one to Cape Town.



ABOVE: I had Friday off while in Honolulu, so I hiked to the top of Diamond Head, and this is a shot overlooking the city.

RIGHT: In the classroom, I am conversing with Jess Baker, the director of the school and one of my Hebrew students.

The small campus at University of the Nations, Honolulu is just near the University of Hawaii in what is known as Manoa, a horseshoe-shaped valley lying between towering peaks on three



sides. It has all the requisites—palm trees, lush foliage, and rainbows. (I saw here for the only time in my life a full double rainbow one morning after a short shower—both of the bows with brilliant colors and both vivid from end-to-end.) I had a good group of international students, including Americans from Nebraska and Maine as well as students from Wales, Norway, Switzerland, Korea and the Netherlands. I did a three-hour lecture each morning on St. Paul’s letter to the Romans, a text that is always a bit of a challenge to teach, since it is very tightly argued from beginning to end, and almost every phrase is dense with theological content. Unlike a lot of the biblical books I cover, Romans does not have the benefit of a lot of archaeological artifacts linked with it (though there is, of course, one very important one, the inscription bearing the name Erastus, the city treasurer of Corinth, who is mentioned near the end of the letter when Paul is exchanging mutual greetings.) Hence, since the whole book of Romans is a single, lengthy sustained argument, it calls for disciplined engagement on the part of the students. Still, being able to teach in English without translation was a bonus, and the students did very well. One of the faculty members here, Jess Baker, is also a Hebrew student of mine, and she is one of my best!



One of Paul’s converts in Corinth was Erastus, the Aedile of Corinth (= administrator of financial matters concerning streets, markets, games and public buildings). This pavement in his honor was laid in about AD 50, perhaps before Paul arrived, and Paul mentions this same man in his Roman letter (cf. Ro. 16:13), which he wrote from Corinth. It reads, “Erastus, in return for his aedileship laid [the pavement] at his own expense.”

I often do lectures in two or three places in close proximity (it maximizes the airline ticket costs), so from Honolulu I took a short flight to Kona on the Big Island, where I lectured in the School of Biblical Studies on the Letter to the Hebrews. While the campus in Honolulu is small, the one in Kona is large and boasts one of the largest single structures on the island (the cafeteria).

Once again, I had a good mix of students from Roman Catholic, Presbyterian, Methodist and Church of God denominations. They came from South Korea, Papua New Guinea, Togo, India, Switzerland and the USA. The director of this School of Biblical Studies, Christer Bergus, was also one of my language students,



though in Greek, not Hebrew. Besides my daily lectures, there was an evening Q/A, with students posing biblical, historical and theological questions at random—all fun stuff!



ABOVE: The Department of Biblical Studies at U. of N. Kona, where I have lectured many times over the past several years, is located on the hillside overlooking Kona Bay and just a short distance from the Kona village.

LEFT: Lectures on the Letter to the Hebrews occupied both mornings and an afternoon, plus the evening Q/A.

At the end of July and early August, my next stop was Cape Town, South Africa, and the real bonus was that Peggy was able to accompany me on this trip! It's a long flight to the southern tip of Africa, but for septuagenarians,

we did pretty well. Special thanks to our supporters, since this trip was gratis. The students were great. Along with a number of South Africans, I also had one from the Netherlands as well as four from the USA. Among them was Erika, a young woman, who to my delight, was personally known to Isiah and Mercy Mafu. Some of you will remember Isiah and Mercy. Isiah, a native Zulu, finished his undergraduate work under me at William Tyndale College before finishing his Master's Degree at Eastern Michigan University—then returned to his homeland to pioneer African Christian Ministries.



Here is a candid shot of Erika and me.



The U. of N. campus has multiple sites, and Peggy and I stayed in the guest quarters here but walked to the building where I lectured (about 10 minutes).

It was winter in South Africa, so we were glad we took sweaters and a jacket. Here, my lectures were on the Israelite kings from Solomon to the Babylonian exile (first week) and the 8<sup>th</sup> century prophets (second week) with their deep reflections and sermons on social justice, a theme that

rings very prominently in South Africa, given its history. You may recall that Desmond Tutu, the Anglican bishop in South Africa, made world news in his advocacy of forgiveness as one of the more hopeful signs of community restoration and healing in his work through the Commission for Truth and Reconciliation. His book *No Future Without Forgiveness* was a landmark work in our world of tensions, war and struggle. N. T. Wright assessed Tutu's work as "the



most extraordinary sign of the power of the Christian gospel in the world in my lifetime,” which is no small thing!



Here are some of the students in the South African school on an outing on Saturday, where we visited the penguin reserve and drove over Chapman's Peak (the site of the famous bicycle race).

Peggy and I were delighted to spend an evening with our friends Nick and Daisy Muir, just before Nick flew northward to the Cameroons for a hub meeting of Biblical Studies leaders from the University of the Nations in the continent of Africa. We also were delighted to spend two lovely evenings with Czernon and Lucy Visagie, the leaders of the department where I taught and a charming, couple with three beautiful children (two of which are twins).

While I was teaching in Africa, our youngest son, Chad, was lecturing in Salem, Oregon at another U. of N. campus. It was an odd coincidence, but he was teaching Isaiah in the USA at the same time I was teaching Isaiah in Africa. Strange parallels! Chad also lectures annually in England, Kona and Honolulu, Hawaii, when he has space in his

schedule (he also is a full-time teacher in Michigan as well as the pastor of a new church plant, the New Temple Evangelical Church in Bloomfield Hills). On one occasion a couple of years ago, he was flying out of Kona about the same time I was flying into Kona, each of us lecturing at the same campus, and there was the

one occasion when someone remarked, “There is an older man lecturing here who looks a lot like Mr. Chad Lewis.”



Chad’s class in Oregon was the typical mix of international students, and as is his custom, he has filled the white board (actually two white boards).

Upcoming trips for the remainder of the year include lectures on the Book of Genesis in Mexico (September) and then lectures at two campuses in England (October), where at the Nuneaton Campus (near Birmingham) I’m covering Intertestamental History, the Synoptic Problem, and the Gospel of Mark and in Cambridge I’m handling Deuteronomy.

Just a word in closing about how helpful so many of you have been in supporting this international ministry... We are deeply grateful! As the unknown author of the Letter to the Hebrews said so many centuries ago, God will not forget your labor of love as you have helped his people and continue to help them!

May the peace of Christ surround you,

Dan and Peggy Lewis