

LTS NEWS

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LUTHERAN THEOLOGICAL
SEMINARY



Trip Report: Prof. Dr. John Nordling

Teaching an intensive on the book of Romans: 24 April – 4 May 2017

I have had the privilege of teaching Romans (selections) for two weeks (24 April – 4 May 2017) at Lutheran Theological Seminary, Pretoria, South Africa. This is my ninth teaching trip to South Africa and funding this venture has always been a challenge. This trip was financed by left over monies from a two year grant financed by the Elm Grove Lutheran Foundation (Elm Grove Lutheran Church, Elm Grove, WI; Rev. Eric Skovgaard) two years ago, and two lesser gifts from the Extended Ministry Endowment Fund (Blessed Savior Lutheran Church, New Berlin, WI) and the Board of Evangelism (Elm Grove Lutheran Church, Elm Grove, WI).

Instruction for the Romans class consisted of roughly 3 hours of instruction per day, three hours in the morning on MWF and three hours in the afternoon TR. This time I taught 10 male senior students from South Africa and other African countries. As in former years, I projected the Greek text of Romans onto the wall of the LHF Room and worked through

selections of the material exegetically and theologically. I certainly could not cover everything, but I am pleased to report that we touched on those portions of Romans that most pertain to the doctrine of Justification in this the 500th anniversary of the Reformation: the life and travels of Paul, the wrath of God, righteousness through faith, the example of Abraham, Adam and Christ (Rom 5), dead to sin/alive in Christ in Baptism (Rom 6), slaves of sin/slaves of righteousness (Rom 6), struggle against the sinful nature (Rom 7), life in the Spirit (Rom 8), subjection to the governing authorities, the deaconess Phoebe (Rom 16:1-2), etc. I quizzed the students 8 times on this material, had a two-page Romans hand-out for them to complete during the first weekend I was there, and a final exam to write on the last day of the class. I had already exhausted my book budget by buying copies of Martin Franzmann's commentary on Romans back in early February, as requested by Dr. Weber. Therefore, I made copies of Dr. Gieschen's

Faculty Engagements

Dr. Karl Böhmer is pictured below preaching at the joint mission festival of the congregations Sottrum and Sittensen of our German sister church, the SELK, on Pentecost Monday.



Notes on Romans that were written some time ago for DELTO students. These Notes help students to come to terms with the Greek text they are to be reading and work quite well for teaching Romans in the field, as I have discovered in other mission settings.

Here are the assignments I expected from each student in the Romans class:

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| 1. 8 quizzes (approx. 1 quiz per day): | 50% |
| 2. Assignment Sheet on Gieschen
(due over the weekend): | 20% |
| 3. Class participation
(attendance, questions): | 10% |
| 4. Final Exam: | 20% |
| Total: | 100 pts possible |

In addition to teaching the two week intensive Rector Weber requested my preaching at Chapel during the 10:00 a.m. services on 26 April and 3 May. During the first first two Sundays of my stay (23 and 30 April) I worshipped with the Webers at St. Paul's Lutheran Church, just two blocks from the seminary on Arcadia Street (Rev. Martin Paul). On the plane to Johannesburg from Atlanta I met Rev. Jacob Corzine who asked me

to preach at the student service on the evening of Sunday 23 April. Then on the evening of Tuesday 25 April I attended, and took minutes for, the meeting of the LTS Board of Directors at which were present Dr. Gunther Rencken (Chairman), Rector Weber, Rev. Matthias Albers, Mr. Michael Grosse, Mr. Berno Niehbur, Mr. Ruben Dlamini, and Mr. Ben Mokopanele (student representative). This meeting was noteworthy for two reasons: first, Mr. Grosse has spear-headed an initiative to buy the adjacent Rose House (Bed & Breakfast) in order for the seminary to grow dramatically in future years; and second, the Board engaged in a prolonged discussion regarding the rectorship of the LTS. A decision was taken to meet with the LTS Members (the church bodies and mission organization represented at the LTS) in the near future in order to establish clarity and to reach an amicable solution on the way forward in this regard.

The trip was significant for other activities as well: during my first weekend there I accompanied Dr. Weber to the ELCSA Akasia Prayer Men's League Parish Conference (29 April) in order to inform the men—pastors and lay leaders—just why the Lutheran Reformation remains significant and to answer questions. A van-load of our students came from the seminary and it seemed a good way to inform many laypeople just why the Reformation remains important, 500 years after the fact. During my final weekend (5-7 May) I had the distinct pleasure of accompanying Wilhelm and Angelika to the Kurisa Moya Nature Lodge—to go birding and simply enjoy the pristine hinterland of the northern Drakensbergs east of Polokwane. The accommodations were first-rate and we had a marvelous time. This part of my trip I finance myself, but find it well worth treating myself to an authentic African vacation after working hard for two weeks before boarding the plane for home. Also, this is a perfect time to be traveling and spending money in South Africa: the exchange rate was 13.4 Rands per 1 U.S. dollar (sometimes the rate is 7 to 1), so I was able to take the Webers out to dinner a couple of times and buy gifts for my return journey home.

Finally, I would like to express my gratitude to Dr. Wilhelm Weber, Jr., his wonderful wife Angelika, and two of their four children (Friederike and Detlev) who so kindly hosted me in their home throughout the entire two-and-a-half week period. Every day I'd wake at 6 a.m., breakfast, and accompany Angelika and kids in rush-hour traffic to our respective places at the



University of Pretoria or the seminary. Then when the day was over we'd retire to the Weber home where I'd relax: check my e-mails, drink Windhoek Beer, decompress, and generally enjoy myself. I should also mention in this connection that I received a free and nutritious lunch every day with the students at LTS prepared by Emily Ngubeni, a local African. Also, during my two weeks there, I was invited to dinner by Dr. Karl Böhmer (teaches at LTS), and Rev. Martin Paul (pastor of St. Paul's, the FELSISA Lutheran Church just down Arcadia Street from the seminary). Another couple that had me over to their place for wonderful German cuisine was Rev. and Mrs. Guenther Hohls, who was a pastor in the FELSISA until his retirement. Rector Weber has been to me a great host over the years and a real brother in Christ. It is vital that the LCMS continue to support LTS with our offerings and prayers, even as we respond to dramatic requests for assistance elsewhere. I welcome this opportunity to have served the Lord and his church by teaching at LTS in April-May 2017 and hope, by God's grace, to return to teach next year in April or May.

Sincerely,

Dr. John G. Nordling

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 USA

Items requested

Rector Dr. Wilhelm Weber writes:

Dear friends and supporters of the Lutheran Theological Seminary in Tshwane. We're looking for more cupboards, tables, sideboards and beds for our growing student numbers in Arcadia and Farenden Streets. Perhaps you've also got a fridge to donate or a heater for the coming winter. Please consider giving to the Lutheran Theological Seminary in Tshwane. Our Seminarians are a very grateful group of mainly foreigners, who are dependent on appropriate accommodation and facilities here. These things they only use while studying theology here. It's not for personal enrichment, but to enable our Seminarians a suitable place to study, learn and live during their years at the Lutheran Theological Seminary in Tshwane.





Why Struggle with the Ancient Languages?

by
Rev. Robert van Niekerk

Lector in Greek at the Lutheran Theological Seminary in Tshwane

‘Why do we need to keep on struggling with the ancient languages?’ This is a question all theology students ask during their times of study. After all, Hebrew and Greek are not easy to master; they are not something you can get to know by allotting just a few minutes of practice each day. To know and appreciate these languages fully will take a minimum of three hours of practice a day, at least in the beginning. Along with this, there are also other modules that need to be practiced, learned, and mastered. So naturally, every theologian will ask this question at some point. By looking to the past it is possible to find an answer to this question.

In 2017, Protestant churches across the world are celebrating the 500 year anniversary of the Reformation. This began most notably when Martin Luther nailed

his 95 theses to the Church doors in Wittenberg. One of the lasting contributions of the Reformation was when Luther translated the Bible into a German dialect his countrymen could understand. Luther and his translation of the Bible were preceded by an important English Yorkshireman by the name of John Wycliffe (c. 1329-1384). Wycliffe began but never finished a translation of the Latin Vulgate Bible into English with the intent that his fellow countrymen be able to read and understand it for themselves. This endeavor he motivated by referring to Moses who heard God impart the Torah in his own language, and to the disciples of Jesus who were taught in a language that they understood.

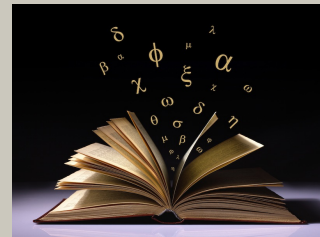
What is striking about both Wycliffe and Luther is that they wanted not only to translate the Bible into the common language of the laypeople, but also to make sure that their translation would be understood by the laity. This is why both of their translations are not just word-for-word translations, but rather contextual translations in the sense that they took the context of their readers into consideration when they translated the Bible.

This brings us back to the starting question: ‘Why do we need need to keep on struggling with the ancient languages?’ Because just

like Luther and Wycliffe wanted to preach the word of God in the contextual language of their people, we today also need to be able to translate and preach the word of God within our own languages and contexts.

This comes even clearer when considering the diverse contexts of the students at the Lutheran Theological Seminary in Tshwane. Some of the students come from small communities with their own unique communal languages. Most of these communities do not have Bible translations in their own languages. In aiding these students in learning the ancient languages, and in their struggle through learning, they are being empowered to translate and preach the Word of God and the teachings of the Church in their own language.

This is why any preacher, student, and theologian who struggles with the ancient languages in preparing for an exam, lecture, bible study, or exam is contributing to a tradition started more than 500 years ago. This is what makes the long hours and endless work worthwhile in learning and continually using the of ancient languages.



Ancient Languages:

As part of their training, LTS students learn to read the original Greek and Hebrew, in which the Holy Scriptures were written, during their first years at the seminary. They continue to hone their skills by participating in Lectio Continua classes as senior students. These classes provide ongoing readings through the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments in the original languages. In this way, the students are prepared so that they can study with visiting lecturers such as Dr. Nordling (p.2), who provide greater detail and conduct thorough analyses and study of the texts of Holy Scripture.



Rev. Robert van Niekerk (pictured here with an LTS student) is a minister in the Dutch Reformed Church of Africa (Nederduitsch Hervormde Kerk van Afrika) and serves as a tutor and lector in ancient Greek at the LTS.



Rev. Dr. Arthur Eichorn



Prof. Dr. Carl Fickenscher



Prof. John Pless

LTS Preschool Update

*Praise God from whom all blessings flow;
Praise him, all creatures here below;
Praise him above, ye heavenly host:
Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.*



Although it's very clearly autumn in Pretoria, we are thankful for crisp mornings, clear, blue skies and sunny days at the LTS Preschool. Our children arrive at school in the morning dressed for winter with knitted caps, scarves, thick coats and even mittens, but fortunately they're able to peel off layer after layer as the day gets warmer, which it inevitably does. We are thankful for a beautiful climate, lovely autumn colors and the joy of playing outdoors for much of the year

As is common at this time of the year, students write exams and two of our own teachers, Trinah and Nokulunga spent several days on study leave and wrote five of their annual exams. Their Early Childhood course is proving to be quite demanding with ongoing assignments for each module as well as lots of practical work. We are very proud of their results thus far and wish them continued strength and endurance as they work and study. Our stalwarts, Tshireletso and Raheema have again shown their selfless dedication as they put in many extra hours to ease Trinah and Nokulunga's teaching and duty

load. We cannot thank them enough for their positive attitude and willingness to serve each other! Thank you ladies! Several of the LTS Deaconesses also help out on a weekly basis and for this we continue to be grateful. Florence, the wife of an LTS student, has also been a big help and is learning the ropes too while she attends to their toddler daughter.

The children have settled in well to their three respective classes and continue to flourish and grow. We've had the fun addition of two rabbits this term which have brought much joy. It's lovely to see how gentle the children can be with the little bunnies and how therapeutic it is to have animals around.

We continue to weave our Faith Integration curriculum into each day and we marvel at the ability of the young minds to memorize songs, psalms and memory verses. They really are like sponges and relish the opportunity to show us what they can recite and remember. We talk daily about Jesus' love for us, about being kind and patient with one another, helping where possible and forgiving each other for minor infractions because, thankfully, and by the grace of God, we are continually forgiven! Our weekly Matins service is especially pertinent as we attend Confession and Absolution with the seminary community on a Wednesday. We thank God for allowing us to serve in this community!

Coming up@LTS

July

- ☐ 19 Lectures Commence: 3rd Quarter
- ☐ 27 Staff Meeting
- ☐ 30 Rector Dr. Weber to attend Luther Congress in Wittenberg, Germany

August

- ☐ 10 Staff Meeting
- ☐ 24 Staff Meeting

September

- ☐ 2 LTS Open Day
- ☐ 29 Lectures end for 3rd Quarter



LUTHERAN THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

Training Christ's followers as pastors, teachers, evangelists, missionaries, bishops and deaconesses for faithful service in the Lutheran Church of Africa.



The Lutheran Theological Seminary in Tshwane is a registered Public Benefits Organization. Donations to LTS can be deducted according to Section 18(a) in the South African tax laws.