



THE MAGISTERIUM OF JESUS VERSUS THE MAGISTERIUM OF THE SCRIBES

By Rector Dr. C. Walter Winterle

The Gospels report that Jesus taught with authority. At the end of the Sermon on the Mount it is recorded: "When Jesus had finished saying these things, the crowds were amazed at his teaching, because he taught as one who had **authority**, and not as their teachers of the law." (Matthew 7:28,29). The reaction of the people in the synagogue of Capernaum was no different when they heard the preaching of Jesus and saw him cast out a demon: "They were amazed at

readings in the synagogues. Why this comparison, which ends up generating jealousy and hatred from the scribes and other religious groups?

Jesus had authority that came from the Father. He said to his disciples: "The words I say to you I do not speak on my own **authority**. Rather, it is the Father, living in me, who is doing his work." (John 14:10).

The scribes usually just repeated what they had read in God's Law and interpreted it in their own way. They did not always speak with conviction, but they were concerned to transmit only knowledge and tradition.

his teaching, because his words had **authority**.... All the people were amazed and said to each other, "What words these are! With **authority** and power, he gives orders to impure spirits and they come out!" (Luke 4:32,36).

What is the difference between the teaching of Jesus and the teaching of the scribes? After all, the scribes were the teachers of that time. They were in charge of teaching God's Law to the people and explaining the Bible

The difference between the form and content of the scribes' messages and Jesus' message was notorious. Jesus was recognized as a Rabbi, meaning Teacher (John 1:38) at the highest level of the magisterium. He himself reaffirmed his position as Teacher when he said on the night he was betrayed: "You call me 'Teacher' and 'Lord,' and rightly so, for that is what I am" (John 13:13).

And just before He returned to heaven, He said: "All **authority** in

COVID-19 UPDATE

The LTS had to close on March 18 due to the Corona Virus. In this newsletter, you can read what happened at LTS before and during the Lockdown, and various other reports from people involved with LTS.

God willing, final year students will resume classes on June 17, and graduate in November.



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heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore, go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely, I am with you always, to the very end of the age" (Matthew 28.18-20).

The Teacher of the teachers delegates the task of teaching to His church. We speak in the Teacher's place, we are His spokesman according to His promise: "Whoever listens to you listens to me; whoever rejects you rejects me; but whoever rejects me rejects him who sent me... I have given you **authority** to trample on snakes and scorpions and to overcome all the power of the enemy; nothing will harm you.". (Luke 10.16,19). And He promised us: "But you will receive **power** when the Holy Spirit comes on you" (Acts 1:8).

This authority of Jesus refers not only to the "pastors and teachers" (Ephesians 4.11), but we can apply it to all those who exercise Christian teaching at all levels, beginning with the parents at home when they educate their children, continuing with the kindergarten teachers, and passing through all classes and levels of teachers to the most senior doctors.

I hope that people can notice in us at least a little of this authority delegated by Jesus to his Christians, and that we are not like the scribes of Jesus' time, mere repeaters of truths and traditions, but without conviction. Let us look at some cases where this authority of Jesus should be noticed:

- At home: Parents should be aware of their role as educators, not mere procreators. Do not delegate your children's education only to nursery schools/ kindergarten and later to other levels; or the religious education only to the Sunday School. Be educators by words and deeds, with authority and conviction, in the style of Jesus. Do not let yourselves be dominated by your children, nor by the influences of a permissive education without fear of God. Educate your children in the fear and love of the Lord.

- At school, at all levels: Teachers must follow the

curriculum adopted by schools. Christian teachers can make a difference. Without breaking the rules, put on your own spice and give your Christian testimony of love. When you are forced to teach the Theory of Evolution according to the books, say that there is also the biblical version of Creationism, and that the "theory of evolution" is still a theory that has not been proven, because they are still searching for the missing link. Have the courage to be authentic and confess your faith with authority, being ready to suffer the consequences. The same principle applies to other controversial topics. Have the courage and authority to confess your faith.

- In the church: Firstly, to the Sunday School teachers: Do not be a mere repeater of some stories or doctrines, entertaining the children with activities while the parents are in the service. Prepare yourself well, see how you can extract the central points of Law and Gospel from the Bible Stories. Assure those entrusted to you of the certainty of God's love in Christ that you too have. Secondly, to the pastor: Do not prepare your sermon as an academic document or a dissertation. Proclaim with conviction the divine truth: the law that condemns, the gospel that absolves and gives life. Do not celebrate the service by praying a "crying" litany, but emphasize the various parts of the liturgy with authority and eloquence. Sing the hymns with vigor and conviction.

Above all, carry out your duties with the authority you have received from Jesus and with love for the people entrusted to you. People will notice a difference in your style of teaching and the teaching of others. Perhaps they will praise and acknowledge today, and criticize tomorrow - as they did with Jesus. But be sure to witness. Know that behind and above your magisterium is the magisterium of Jesus, who has all the power in heaven and on earth (Philippians 2:9-11) and who saves people through our witness and teaching with authority.

Pastor Carlos Walter Winterle

Pretoria, May 21, 2020

Trip Report – Rev. Stephen Preus (February 29-March 13, 2020)

It was an honor to return to LTS to teach an intensive course in hermeneutics. For ten afternoons, three hours a day, I taught 28 men the principles of biblical interpretation. There were 26 students from LTS in the class and two guests. The guests were from South Africa and Germany. The students were from Congo, Ethiopia, South Africa, South Sudan, Uganda, and Zambia.



Some of the students in class

Our main text for the class was *Biblical Interpretation: The Only Right Way* by David Kuske. With this book as a guide, the students learned how to put into practice their belief in the inspiration and Christocentricity of the Scriptures. The class broke down into three sections.

First, we considered the proper way to interpret the Scriptures by focusing on six principles of biblical interpretation. The students learned which books of the Bible are canonical; how the Scripture's worldview is a supernatural one; how the only text that is determinative is the original; and the importance of the historical, grammatical, and Scriptural settings of the Bible.

Second, we studied the history of interpretation from the time of Christ until the modern era. This included looking at the early church's use of allegory, the middle ages and Renaissance's continuation and elaboration of this allegorical method, and Luther returning the church to the simple, plain meaning of Scripture in the Reformation. The students also learned about how the errors of Pietism, Rationalism, and Existentialism interpret the Bible for their own purposes.

Finally, we gave an overview of false methods of interpretation that fall under the umbrella of historical-criticism. Among these were Rudolf Bultmann's existential demythologizing approach and gospel reductionism. By comparing these false methods of interpretation to the true way of approaching Scripture, the students were able to see more clearly how important a class on hermeneutics is for guarding the good deposit entrusted to us in Scripture (2 Timothy 1:14).

Overall, the students were receptive to the material.

They took daily quizzes based on their reading assignments, which accounted for 65% of their grade. A final exam tested them on material covered during the entire course and accounted for 35% of their grade.

I taught this course as a representative of St. Philip Lutheran Mission Society (SPLMS). SPLMS formed after several students from Concordia Theological Seminary in Fort Wayne, IN traveled to LTS in the spring of 2008. While there, we saw the influence the education at LTS had on Lutherans in Africa. Desiring to help the students learn Scripture and the Lutheran Confessions into the future, we created SPLMS to help provide financial aid to students, to pay for the travel of guest lecturers, and to raise money for other seminary needs (like the library extension for which we raised \$15,000—it looks great, by the way, and will be a wonderful addition for the seminarians for years to come!).



Rev. Preus preaching during Matins

Due to donations of members of the board of directors, every dollar donated to SPLMS goes to help LTS and her students.

So, it was an honor to return to LTS not only to teach but also to represent my brothers of SPLMS.

It was also a privilege to be a colleague of my seminary professor, Dr. John Pless, who is a regular visiting professor at LTS. He taught on Law and Gospel in the mornings while I taught on hermeneutics in the afternoons. He also, as is his tradition and the students' delight, hosted a braai for the seminary on our last night in Pretoria.

Dr. Pless and I arrived in Johannesburg on March 1, and were picked up by Dr. Hiestermann, the new professor of New Testament and registrar at LTS. He informed us that a water main in Pretoria had broken and that the seminary had no running water for at least a few days. Dr. Pless and I had planned on staying at the seminary guesthouse but were instead graciously hosted for four nights at Dr. Hiestermann's house (Dr. Pless) and the house of the rector, Dr. Winterle (Pr. Preus). A special thank you to both Dr. Winterle and Dr. Hiestermann and their families for their hospitality and brotherly conversation while we were with them. Once the water main was fixed, we were able to stay at the seminary guesthouse, which, thanks to the work done by members of St. Paul's in Pretoria, is a convenient and comfortable place to reside while teaching at LTS.

In addition to teaching I was responsible for two sermons during our two weeks of daily chapel. I also preached at English Lutheran Fellowship in Randburg, Johannesburg on Sunday, March 8. Rev. Toby Ahlers is pastor there, as well as an instructor at LTS. He and I studied together for a year at Westfield House, Cambridge, England from 2008-2009. So, it was a special bonus for me to see an old friend and to converse with him and his wife and children over coffee and a braai.

The hospitality of the students, professors, staff, and area pastors left an especially good impression upon me.



Rector W. Winterle, Dr. J. Pless, Rev. Preus and N. Müller at Pilanesberg Game Reserve

Thank you to several in particular: Emily, who cooked our lunches; Rosemarie and Martha for all of the photocopies made for my classes; Dr. Winterle, who with his wife, Lidia, hosted me for four nights, and also took a few of us to Pilanesberg National Park & Game Reserve for a day of recreation and excitement; Dr. Hiestermann, who with his wife, Renate, put on a delicious braai one evening; Pr. Günter Hohls and his wife Hanna for a lovely meal at their home; Rev. Mintesinot Birru Hanfato, who is doing a fine job overseeing the library at the seminary; and the students, whose appreciation for my class came in the form of bottles of delicious South African wine. All of these reasons for thanksgiving show that LTS not only has a dedication to Lutheran theology but also a cordial atmosphere that flows from their love of Christ and His Word.

It was a privilege to teach at LTS. Shortly after our departure, like many schools in the world, the seminary had to close her doors due to COVID-19. We pray they are open again soon in order to continue the good work they have begun. God grant LTS years of faithful teaching and diligent learning in the name of Christ, our Lord.

Sincerely,

Rev. Stephen Preus, 1002 E. 13th St. Vinton, IA 52349, U.S.A.



NEW ENGLISH TEACHER: We welcome our new English teacher at LTS—Ms. Cornelia Simelane. Ms. Simelane has joined the part-time teaching staff at LTS in March. She is a qualified teacher with a long list of educational qualifications to her name. She is fluent in six languages (English, Afrikaans, Northern Sotho, Zulu, Tswana and Swazi). One thing that we have noticed about Ms. Simelane is that she is very creative in teaching her classes. The students are never bored! We pray that God will bless her work at LTS.

Trip Report – Dr. John T. Pless (February 29-March 13, 2020)

I was privileged to return to LTS to teach a two-week intensive course on “Studies in Law and Gospel” for 35 students (both residential and visiting pastors). Primary text for the course was my book, *Handling the Word of Truth: Law and Gospel in the Church Today*. The generosity of donors made it possible to provide a copy of this book to each participant. The lectures engaged each of C.F.W. Walther’s theses on the proper distinction of God’s Law from His Gospel with a view toward preaching and pastoral care. We looked at examples of how Law and Gospel are confused in contemporary Christianity. Students provided incidents from their experience within African churches and we enjoyed lively and insightful classroom discussion on biblical, dogmatic, historical, and pastoral topics relating to the necessity of distinguishing Law and Gospel. Each student was required to write a sermon on an assigned text that would demonstrate his ability to distinguish Law and Gospel.

In addition to teaching I preached for morning chapel on March 3 and 10. I also preached at the Divine Service at the Evangelical-Lutheran Church in Arcadia (ELC) on the Second Sunday in Lent (March 8).



Drs. Pless and Hiestermann serving at the ELC

Rev. Stephen Preus of the St. Philip Mission Society travelled to South Africa this time. It was good to have him as a colleague teaching a course in hermeneutics.

Given a break in a water main that deprived the seminary of water for several days, I want to thank Dr. Heinz Hiestermann and his family for hosting me at their home from March 1-4. After the water was re-

stored, I enjoyed staying in the newly renovated guest apartment. I’m grateful to St. Paul Lutheran Congrega-

tion in Pretoria for sponsoring this renovation. Visiting professors now have comfortable, clean, safe, and accessible lodging on campus.

It was a special joy to see the completion of the library expansion and renovation. This project was completed with the fine support of the St. Philip Lutheran Mission Society. In addition to providing space for the growing collection of books, the facility includes a conference room, a work station for the library, and a comfortable setting for students to study. I want to especially acknowledge the expert work of our librarian, Mintesinot Birru who has organized the library and put in place measures to make sure that books are not stolen.

This trip I was able to bring several new volumes for the library including the new two-volume set, *LSB: Companion to the Hymns and Encyclopedia of Martin Luther and the Reformation*. These volumes will be placed in the closed reserve section of the library. Numerous other new publications were brought for the general collection including books donated by 1517 Publications. Again I thank all donors for their contributions making these additions possible.

The library is still in need of the following volumes in the Concordia Commentary Series: Ephesians (Winger), John (Weinrich), Mark 8:27-16:8 (Voelz), I–II John (Schuhard), I–II Kings (Maier), Galatians (Das), Romans (Middendorf), 2 Peter-Jude (Giese), Ecclesiastes (Bollhagen), Ezra-Nehemiah (Steinmann), Jonah (Lessing), and Amos (Lessing), Isaiah 40: 55 (Lessing), Ruth (Wilch). In addition we also need *The Pillar New Testament Commentary on Second Corinthians* (Mark Seifrid) and *The Pillar New Testament Commentary on the Letters to Timothy and Titus* (Robert Yarbrough). If there are any donors who could contribute these books, please contact me.



Students in Dr. Pless’ class

I want to thank our Rector, Dr. Carlos Winterle for this excellent leadership and kind hospitality. On Saturday, March 7, he drove Pastor Preus, Noah Müller (Oberursel student auditing my class), and me to Pilanesberg National Park for an enjoyable day of watching a variety of animals native to South Africa. We are grateful that Dr. Winterle has now received a renewed visa making it possible for him to continue at the seminary. Under his leadership the seminary has moved forward.

I enjoyed a fine Sunday afternoon braai at the home of Pastor Siza Lugojobo in Johannesburg on March 7. On our last evening at LTS, I hosted a farewell braai for students and faculty. This has become



Student representative Lucky Mia and Prof. Pless preparing the farewell braai

something of a cherished tradition as we celebrate our work together.

I enjoyed lunch with Prof. Alwyn Swanepoel from the faculty of the Afrikaanse Protestantse Akademie located near our seminary. Prof. Swanepoel has been helpful in consulting with us as we move toward accreditation.

We left South Africa before the Covid-19 outbreak made an impact there. Just a few days after we left, the seminary had to close on account of the pandemic. It will remain closed until after Easter at the earliest. Deo volente, I will return to teaching an intensive course on pastoral counseling at LTS on July 27-August 7, 2020 and then staying on for a mission festival and pastors' continuing education course in Wartburg. However, the pandemic makes these plans tentative. When I checked the cost of an airline ticket to South Africa yesterday, the cost was over \$4,000. That is more than double the price of a ticket. So we will need to wait and see if the prices come down and travel restrictions are lifted. Please keep this in your prayers.

I want to express a word of profound thanks to the donors—both individuals and congregations—whose gifts made this trip possible. Thank you!

I am grateful to God for the many teaching trips I've been permitted to make to South Africa since August of 2009 and I fervently pray that I might return there again in July.

John T. Pless, M.Div.; D.Litt., Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne, IN USA

REPORT ON LCMS OIM DEACONES/WOMENS SEMINAR, SEPTEMBER 9 – 18, 2019—Grace Rao

“Because Christ has forgiven us and died for all people, we love our neighbor and show mercy to those in need. LCMS WR-HC – Mercy forever”

It was a blessing and honor to visit the Lutheran Theological Seminary, Pretoria, in Southern Africa at the gracious invitation of Rt. Rev. Dr. Carlos Winterle to teach “The Role of Women in the Church,” at LTS seminary, Pretoria. The women participants were from different Lutheran churches in Southern Africa who attended the ten-day course. Dr. Winterle and I agreed on having a limited number of participants and not having a large group. My experience says that such small group seminars are much convenient for granting scholarships, distribution of resources (gifts from LCMS), and extending hospitality. The joy of teaching these ladies was that we had wonderful cordial class discussion, conducting tests, and final examination. Although, we addressed it as seminar, the tests and examination helps in evaluating each student, who may consider pursuing deaconess studies.

During the planning process the Bishop of CLCSA was pleased to learn that LCMS was hosting the event, expressed his interest to help his women of the church. He endorsed six women to attend the course. In addition, we had two deaconesses from LCSA (graduated in 2011); one student from LTS seminary who is an employee of the seminary; one deaconess student yet to complete her studies from LCSA; one recently graduated deaconess from LTS but from different Lutheran church; and one Ethiopian student married to

a seminarian at LTS.

I was able to complete the teaching on the Role of Women in the Church. The students expressed how wonderful it is to learn, hear, and understand the clear teaching from the Scriptures about the women's function in the church. I spent a fair amount of time each day preparing for the class, tests, and grading the final examination. The grades (marks) was submitted to the rector for their records.

On the last day of the course, Rev. Dr. Winterle invited the participants and I to join the leaders of ILC Africa region, visiting the campus. We attended Dr. Winterle's presentation. I and the students had the privilege of not only meeting the church leaders, but also the LCMS area directors as well.

Overall the visit and teaching was fruitful. I look forward for such event in the coming years, most probably in 2020. For me, it brings great joy not only teaching, also, learning from the student's thoughts, concerns, and questions. I pray to the gracious Triune God to bless both our efforts of LTS and LCMS. Thank you!

Respectfully submitted

Deaconess Grace Rao

December 9, 2019

STUDENT REPORT—MY ACTIVITIES DURING HOLIDAYS

By Pierre Shukuru (December 2019– January 2020)

Preaching and teaching, this was my main point.

Visiting some people who were no longer coming to Church.

Doing bible studies focusing on different parallel passages.

Visiting even those who do not attend Churches and share with them the word of God.

I also was invited by some of the Church members whenever they needed some clarities.



God willing, Pierre will graduate at the end of 2020

Since the majority of our Church members in Harrismith has a Pentecostal background, including myself, and because I have already been converted with my household to the Lutheran faith, and therefore, with the knowledge which I am gaining to the seminary, it is my duty to share this benefits with others as well especially people of Harrismith where I normally go during my holidays.

In regards to preaching and teaching, I really had opportunities of doing that on different occasions, and I thank God for that because I could see the interest of people in hearing the word of God during the services, especially when I was doing some bible studies with them, this was very interesting for me and for them too. They were raising questions which I could not imagine, especially when it comes to the matter of salvation by Grace alone through faith in Christ, justification and sanctification, these were the points that always makes our discussions more interesting during our bible study.

They really have different understanding concerning: sola gratia, sola fide, sola scriptura (especially salvation). They believe a lot in good works that one must do to please God in order to be saved. The bible studies, which I was doing started to get interesting when I asked them if we can recite the Ten Commandments together. After reciting them, I asked them a question if we can be saved by keeping the law? One of them stood up and yes! If we keep them very, very well. Then I quoted the story of a man who claimed to know the commandments since he were young, but later failed to love his neighbour when Jesus asked him to sell his properties and share with the poor (he failed to show love to his neighbour).

I managed through the help of the Holy Spirit to provide answers from the scripture and explained to them that according to what scripture says, as well as according to our Lutheran understanding of the scripture, we are saved by grace alone. Ephesians 2 was my main text reading for clarifying their confusion. Thanks be to God, because after reading Ephesians 2 and the story that I have quoted, this person confessed that he now understood something about salvation. After the church service, more people came with questions. Then I had to explain the topic of salvation again. Still others were booking a meeting with me so that we can talk more about the word of God.

Visiting our Church members who were no longer coming to Church, I took the opportunity to share with them the word of God and do some prayers with them, then speaking the word of encouragement to them, and then some of them started coming to Church again. It really was a blessing to me to see how the Holy Spirit is working in this people through the word. I also had an opportunity to visit one of our Church members who gave birth to a baby girl at the hospital of Harrismith; it was wonderful to see how children are increasing in our Church.

Visiting those young people who do not attend Church services anymore was also part of my mission. We had some chats with them. I first conversed with them on whatever conversation they had, and later on I would introduce them to the word of God. Sometimes it works, sometimes it doesn't work, but that does not mean we should stop preaching and teaching of the gospel of Christ. As servants of God, we are told not to give up, for we are not the ones that convert people, but the Holy Spirit.

To conclude; my holidays were really a blessings to me and my family, as well as to those whom we met and with whom we shared in the blessings and gifts of the word of God. I wish it will be like this in the future when we will be called as ministers of the word of God to other people after when we complete our studies here at the seminary. I pray that God will grant this unto us all in your name Jesus Christ our Lord and saviour, who lives and reigns with the Father and the Holy Spirit one God now and forever Amen!

Report by Dr. John G. Nordling, CTS Fort Wayne, For service at Jonathan Ekong Memorial Lutheran Seminary, Obot Idim, Nigeria 2 March – 3 April 2020

I have had the privilege of teaching beginning New Testament Greek at Jonathan Ekong Memorial Lutheran Seminary (JEMLS), Obot Idim, Ibesikpo Asutan Local Government Area, Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria, to about 50-60 students on a daily basis. In the 2019 report I explained how this opportunity developed from an original plan of having Rev. David Imuk study the beginning Greek intensive with me during either the summer or fall term at CTSFW.

However, since he was unable to come, I secured the permission of my donor (Mr. Gerald Schultz, Rathdrum, ID) for myself to come to Nigeria for two five week terms in 2019 and 2020. This year (2020), then, I reconvened the course, beginning at chapter 19 of Voelz's *Fundamental Greek Grammar* (FGG) and—thanks be to God in Christ Jesus—was able to bring all of the students through chapter 42 (the final chapter of FGG) before the seminary was closed down by local police on the final day of instruction, due to the COVID-19 scare.



Dr. Nordling is a regular visiting lecturer at LTS

Many of the students were the same as last year—although some of the fourth years did not return (they had graduated and taken calls)—and some were brand new to me, although the Rev. Imuk had been teaching/reviewing the material over the intervening year, both to new and returning students. Something else that helped my teaching of the second five week term was that the Rev. Fr. Wokoma was able to bring flash cards back to Nigeria after the 2019 LCMS convention, and a lot more of the students were using them, so could retain the material better. Hence, I am pleased to report that the quiz scores improved dramatically, from perhaps 2 or 3 out of 10, to 6, 7, 8, or (a few) 9s out of ten. This is a good indication, I believe, that several of the students did really learn Greek this time around and were “on top of” what must be done to learn the language optimally. Of course, as the Nigerian government began to close borders and tighten restrictions on account of the corona virus, there were times when attendance was lower than I could wish (in the 40s or lower 50s). But these were difficult times and, just as I was “trapped” in Nigeria and couldn’t fly out for the longest time, so several of the students were cut off from returning home also, until the very end when the seminary closed. And so I would have to say that the mission of my teaching Greek in 2020 was met—even though we were unable to administer the final exam.

As was the case in 2019, so I attempted to teach the class pretty much the same way I teach it in Fort Wayne—that is, as an intensive wherein we cover one chapter of *FGG* per day, whether the students “get it” or not. There are daily translation assignments and nearly daily quizzes, intended to keep all the students together and learning the material efficiently. Also, the physical challenges were the same: the open air classroom, vexatious heat and humidity, noisy motorbikes, dump trucks, and the dreadful brick-making factory which required me to bellow at the top of my lungs to be heard. However, I had the foresight this time to have purchased 12 black dry erase marking pens, so students sitting even far away were able to see the white board better. Also, all of the students enjoyed our daily singing (the “Chairete Song,” Lord’s Prayer, etc) and my

space stories (Elon Musk, eventual Martian colonization, Tesla, etc). The Rev. Imuk met with most of the students in the afternoon outside of class – and he was my intrepid grader and helped me to call on students for translation and parsing during the morning sessions. Again, I feel that the overall objectives of the course were largely met: the Greek was more difficult (as we completed the final chapters of *FGG*), but most of the students were better prepared, “tracking,” and so better able to “rise to the challenges” involved. It would have been nice to round out the course with the final exam when we wanted it. But I am just grateful that I was able to instruct them each day through chapter 42 before the police “pulled the plug” on our meeting together. The students will have the leisure of reviewing everything on their own and so taking the final exam at a later date and time when the students return and the seminary re-convenes.

In addition to teaching Greek every morning from 8:30 – 10:45 a.m., I preached nearly every day for five weeks at Chapel (11:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.), and met one additional hour daily for a New Testament elective (Romans, then Pastoral Epistles [1 Tim], then Matthew) for which I quizzed the students at the Friday session. It was very hot (usually in the mid- to upper-80s, with 70-80% humidity) and once I forgot to bring water (not a good idea). So I taught daily from 8:30 a.m. until 2:00 p.m. with no break for lunch. I can honestly say that this teaching experience is the most difficult I have ever encountered as a pastor—but, truth be known, some of my most rewarding ministry also. I got into the “rhythm” of the daily preaching. Hence, I wrote out a 3-4 page, single-spaced, homily every day [M-F] for nearly five weeks straight, and preached one Sunday morning service at what they call the Cathedral congregation, where the seminary students attend. Most days I delivered the sermon from my computer rather than printing it off. I must commend Dr. Michael Adoga, the seminary rector, for copying the daily quizzes and handouts that had to be made—printing was done at a site off-campus, yet almost always got to me on time.

In short, several colleagues were absolutely essential to the success of this venture: the Archbishop Christian Ekong, for carving out five weeks for me to teach this class as an intensive at the seminary; Rev. Fr. Wokoma, for being in the class most days to make sure that the students were focused and engaged; Dr. Adoga, for keeping up with my incessant printing requests, and getting me the daily water and bananas I needed to stay healthy; and the Rev. Imuk, for keeping up with the grading and tutoring. Mention should be made also of the fact that I was able to rest well at the Majesty-Realm Hotel (shower, air conditioning, wi-fi connection, etc). Truly, there is nothing more refreshing than a cold shower, Star beer, and fresh fish pepper soup when one has been out in the heat all day and working hard.

I should also state that, with the government shut-down of the airports, I was more or less “trapped” in Nigeria from March 23 until my repatriation flight out of Lagos on 18 April. I attempted to fly home on Sunday 22 March, but KLM cancelled flights the day before, requiring that I fly back to Uyo, just as the hotels and airport in Lagos were closing. Although this extra time in Nigeria enabled me actually to finish teaching the class successfully, it came at the cost of considerable anxiety, stress, wondering how I’d be able to get back home, and additional financial expenses that could not be foreseen in advance. When the Majesty-Realm Hotel closed on Friday 3 April, Archbishop Christian Ekong helped me pack up my belongings in the darkness and let me stay with him and his family until the morning of Thursday 9 April, when a professional extraction team whisked Dr. Adoga and myself from Uyo to Lagos, a trip of nearly 14 hours. God sent his holy angels, bringing us safely to the airport Ibis Hotel in Lagos, where I awaited a repatriation flight home. Special thanks must also be given to Rev. Gary Schulte, the entire OIM team, and Dean Gieschen and President Rast of CTSFW, for organizing the extraction team with World Aware. Rev. Schulte called me nearly daily from about 25 March on and gave me much encouragement when things looked bleak. Finally, I am obliged to thank the Rev. Dr. Michael Adoga who accompanied me to Lagos from Uyo on 9 April, was

my means of communication with the US Embassy so that I could get on the repatriation flight home, and my encouraging companion with whom I discussed Philippians and many other matters of theological interest. After I left the country on 18 April Dr. Adoga remained “stuck” in Lagos until finally he was able to arrange a safe way back to Uyo on 9 May. Hence, in the manner of Timothy supporting St. Paul (see Phil 2:19-24), or even Jesus suffering on behalf of us sinners, so Dr. Adoga suffered patiently in a run-down hotel room in Lagos for several weeks so that I could get safely out much earlier. I shall never forget his selfless devotion to me, and am only sorry that I kept him from his wife (Grace) and family for so long. Through this ordeal I had to learn patience, and to appreciate the first-Article gifts God gives in his way and time, even if—from my limited perspective—it sometimes seemed he didn’t know or care about my personal predicament. But he did, and does. Time and again God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, “surprised” me by attending to serious matters about which I was utterly ignorant at the time. Before leaving the seminary on 3 April Rev. Fr. Wokoma reminded me several times that God is my “Strength.” Indeed, he is more than this. As the psalmist says, God is my “refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble. Therefore we will not fear, though the earth give way and the mountains fall into the heart of the sea...” (Ps. 46:1-2). Truly. I have also come to appreciate better Paul’s famous series in his letter to the Romans: he “boasts” in his tribulations, knowing that trouble produces perseverance, perseverance character, character hope, and the hope “does not bring one to shame” (Rom 5:3-5). The events of the first two weeks of April helped me to appreciate this scripture better than at any other time in my life.

Finally, I would like to express my gratitude to Mr. Gerald Schultz of Rathdrum, ID, for providing most of the material support needed to fund this venture. In spite of the financial challenges that were incurred on account of the corona virus pandemic, I feel we were able to keep expenses related to actually teaching the course to a minimum and so fully satisfy Mr. Schultz’s desire to bring Greek to large numbers of students in Nigeria. In his own way and

manner, God brought this venture to godly conclusion in 2020. May it be a blessing for the preaching of the gospel in Nigeria and Africa for many years to come!

Sincerely,

Dr. John G. Nordling

Professor of Exegetical Theology

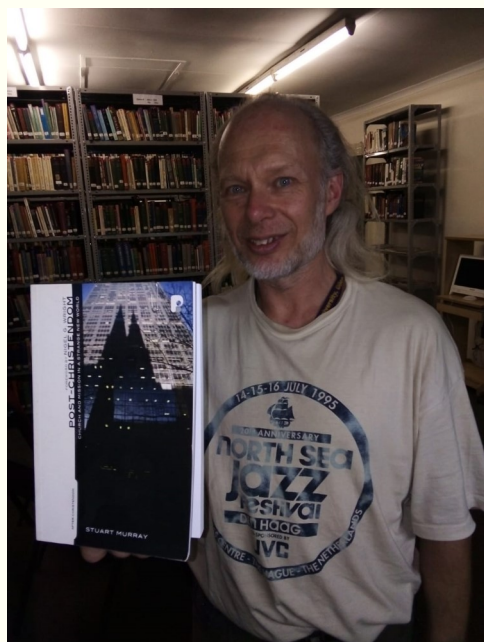
Concordia Theological Seminary

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Happenings at LTS

Work done in the library: During the national lockdown, work did not cease in the LTS library. The following was done in the revamped and expanded LTS library by our librarian Mintesinot Birru, who was assisted by one of the tenants at LTS, Prof. Stefan Grüner, who is a lecturer at the University of Pretoria: 1. Documents were sorted, stored in the archive, and prepared for recycling 2. Books which were mixed were sorted according to language: German, African/Dutch, South African local languages, and English. Books were re-shelved according to their call number/classification 4. English books were registered on a spreadsheet and on Library software; both old and new 5. The German books which are in the office of the Rector we shelved and entered on spreadsheet for those who need to do research in the German language. We thank Prof. Grüner for the donation of four books; and also for giving his time assisting in the Library.



Left: Prof. Grüner with one of the books he donated.

Right: Prof. Grüner and Mr. Birru working in the library.



Cancelled Intensives:

Due to the Corona virus pandemic and the resulting travel restrictions, the May intensives by Dr. Paul Mueller and Rev. Dr. Sibongiseni Sithole had to be cancelled. We thank these lecturers for their willingness to teach at LTS and their continuous support of the LTS. We hope to have them back soon!

More Happenings at LTS

LTS during the lockdown:

The LTS has been closed since 18th March, and, God willing, will reopen on 17th June. Most of the students went home, even the two from Zambia. Only six foreigners remained: From Uganda, Sudan, Congo-DRC (3), Ethiopia; and lecturer Mintesinot. They are sweeping the campus, taking care of the beds, working in the veg garden and enjoying its harvest. The veg garden project has been very successful up to now, as can be seen on the picture below.

A students' WhatsApp group was created, and also an e-mail group, which allows the Rector to be in touch with the students during the Lockdown. The students are receiving some assignments, but some don't have money to buy data to search in the Internet, or don't have good connection to do research, as they didn't take their textbooks home with them. The lecturers and the Administrative staff are working from home as much as possible.



New operations manager:

An Operations Manager, Mr. Gustav Paul, began to work at the LTS on 1st June. He is sponsored by the St. Paul's congregation. His work will alleviate the Rector and the Secretary of many duties they were performing, especially related to the maintenance and renovation of the LTS premises.

We welcome him as part of the LTS team!



Faith
» OVER «
FEAR!

Coming up@LTS

- ♦ 17 June Reopening of LTS for final year students
- ♦ 5 September LTS Open Day

Please pray for the LTS:

- Pray that God gives wisdom to the leaders of the country and guide them to take measures that will help minimize the spread of the Corona virus. COVID-19 has seriously reduced all economic activities, and so has negatively impacted many people.



- Pray for the LTS in Pretoria, that the reopening will run smoothly and students and staff will remain healthy, and that students will be able to finish the academic year.

- Thank and praise God for all supporters and friends of the LTS, for all donations, grants and prayers that allow the LTS to continue its mission of graduating multipliers for the Lutheran Church in Africa, and for continued support of

the LTS, and that God will provide labourers for his harvest, and many will be saved.

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. Donations are also possible via check or Paypal. Please see our website for details (www.lts.ac.za).

Account Holder: "Lutheran Theological Seminary in Tshwane NPC"

Bank: ABSA, current account no. 860510030 Branch Code: 632005 Swift Code: ABSA ZA JJ

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