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Thoroughly Different Experience Than a Bible Class in Iowa

Blessed Good Friday, Saturday Sabbath, and Easter Sunday to You, Dear Reader!

Earlier this spring, we were blessed by Rev. Paul Schulz together with his wife, Clara, and their children, Peter and Sophia, spending one month at the Lutheran School of Theology. In this letter, you will hear Rev. Schulz's voice as he reflects on his time in Kenya.



"Oh, it's no big deal. I've been there before," was my stock answer to give to those who asked if we were nervous heading to LIA/LST for the month of February 2024. It was partially true. Twelve years

ago, for January-May of 2012, I lived at the previous LIA compound in Karen, Kenya. I was not yet trained in anything useful, had no wife or children, no employment and at home having just recently graduated from university. As such, that trip was spent mostly tagging along with Pastor May on seminar trips all around Africa and filling the time in between with projects around the compound.

This time, however, with a new location, having been ordained and having served in the parish for 6+ years, having a wife and children who came along, it was most certainly different from my last time. The Karen neighborhood where I had stayed before was completely unrecognizable. My duties had changed: no longer a "go for" for Pastor May, but rather a "professor" in charge of organizing and teaching two classes. Of course, traveling with family is unlike traveling alone as well.

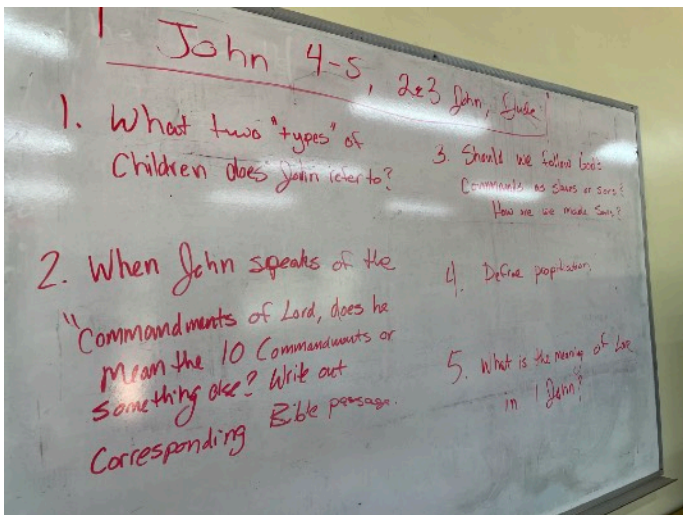


With all that was different, it was indeed like a totally new experience. Learning the operations around the campus and seeing how well everything has been designed was our first big encounter. This aspect is nothing short of incredibly impressive. From the water storage and pumping to the solar power, everything was a great improvement from

the extreme unreliability of the Kenyan power grid which would often seriously hamper work and life on my previous visit. The food was always well-made and filling, perfect for inducing a nice post-lunch sleepiness in the students for the afternoon class.



My duties on this trip were teaching the Epistles of John, Jude, and Revelation for two weeks. Following that was another two-week class on Ecclesiology (what is the Church) and Eschatology (what are the end times). Not knowing at all what to expect, the months prior was a feverish blur of preparing outlines, gathering possible readings, and generally



reacquainting myself with some of the more in-depth realities of these studies that a typical parish preacher like myself may not get the chance to focus on too frequently.

After arriving and getting acquainted with the students, we were quickly off on journeys through John's theology and thoughts of what is coming upon the world as the Scriptures predict. The students, 6 in total, were from a variety of countries, cultures, and languages (Revelation 7:9) making teaching a thoroughly different experience than a Bible class in Iowa. Notably, instead of these differences in origin introducing disparity in interpretation, we all found that the message of the Scriptures is applicable cross-culturally. The message that has singular meanings as opposed to the idea of multiple "contexts" producing numerous meanings of the text, as is so widely promoted in less confessional theologies. To put it simply: While we have distinct challenges in different areas, the sin, the flesh, and the false desires are the same wherever you are. So also, repentance, faith, and the Gospel have little need to be "contextualized", because Christ has died and risen for all in the same way; the One for the many. (Romans 5:19)



Whether I learned more, or the students learned more, it was a great challenge and opportunity to sit with them for 4+ hours per day, engrossed in the Scriptures. My six students were timely, well-

prepared, and inquisitive - all qualities that make teaching a joy. While I am far from being an expert in the areas I was asked to teach, we undertook the task together seriously. In doing so, we found hope in John's Revelation, a desire instead of fear for the end times, a true comfort in the Church as described in the New Testament, and a deeper Christian relationship with each other.



Not even a week in, and it became clear that this class would provide me with an experience of working with passionate, faithful future pastors, and not mere academic theologians interested in the latest theories. More class time than I expected became focused on matters of casuistry and ministry resulting from our deep study of the texts of the Scripture. I was able to share some of my experience from parish ministry, both mistakes and joys, while we worked through both hypothetical situations the students may likely face, and ministerial situations they have already experienced.

It was truly wonderful to see how LIA/LST has grown literally from the ground since my last time there. While the stones of the Ngong soil may not yet "cry out" (Luke 19:40) in a verbal fashion, the buildings made of stone that pepper the campus do contain many faithful voices. They continue to cry out as all Christians are commanded to: in repentance, in desire for mercy, and most importantly, in thanks, praise, and continual teaching of what our LORD has done in His Son Jesus Christ and by the power of His Holy Spirit. May God continue to richly bless the work of LIA/LST as the apostolic work of teaching, preaching, and preparing men for ministry goes on in the

shadow of the Ngong Hills to the glory of Him who made the heavens and the earth.



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