



## Greetings from Global Ministries University!

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[Enrollment Doubles in 2011](#)

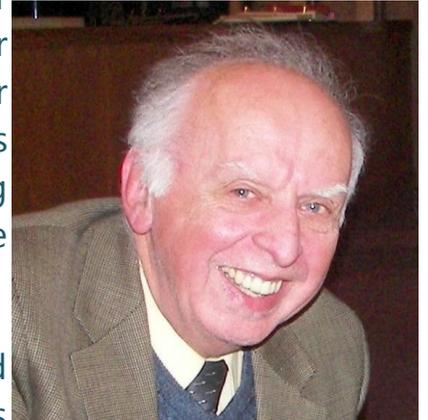
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## MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

I am spending the month of January in New York helping our daughter, Corita Grudzen, who gave birth to our granddaughter, Olympia Erica, on 12/20/2011. She joins our grandson, Quincy Desmond, who is now two years old. This experience of a new life entering our world with such amazing "presence" from the moment of birth, led me to some reflections about the work we are doing in GMU.



We tend to view religious experience as somewhat static and fixed because it is often based upon past historical events which the monotheistic religions of Judaism, Christianity and Islam celebrate at different times of the calendar year. The character of religious experience today, however, is very different from that of past ages. The impact of the globalized contemporary world has an impact on the way we experience the mystery of the divine in our everyday life. In previous ages, men and women could grow up, live, and die in an insular and somewhat closed cultural and religious community and context for their lives and that of their family.

Today most of us are dealing with rapid cultural and technological change which thrusts us into dialogue with people, cultures and religious beliefs that are quite different from those of our birth parents or our culture of origin. For this reason the paradigm for training in ministry and for teaching about religion has changed dramatically since the events of 9/11 in New York. GMU has taken the leadership in development of outreach programs to the Islamic world with conferences in Bangladesh (2009) and California (2011) that interacted with members of major Islamic and Buddhist educational organizations such as Al Azhar University in Cairo, Mahidol University in Bangkok, Thailand and the Gulen Movement, a Turkish and Sufi oriented organization based in Sunnyvale, CA.

GMU is now also planning a Christian/Muslim retreat with the Pacifica Institute and Maryknoll to be held at the Maryknoll Bay Area regional center in San Lorenzo, CA, February 17-20, 2012. Another Christian/Muslim conference is scheduled for July of 2012 with the Maryknoll Affiliate group in New York which will interface with Islamic leaders in the New York area. We are also co-sponsoring an educational trip to Turkey in the summer of 2012 with the Pacifica Institute. Several of our GMU graduate students and alumni are planning to take part in this trip.

Yesterday, I attended a presentation on sacred music at Hartford Seminary in Hartford, Connecticut led by Sister Miriam Therese Winter, a noted composer of sacred folk songs. She pointed out in her lecture that most sacred music in the Catholic Church came from the Middle Ages (Gregorian Chant) prior to Vatican II. She has pioneered the development of new sacred music based upon the contemporary medium of folk music (See [Loving You, produced by the Medical Mission Sisters](#)). Contemporary music and art are part of the way that contemporary men and women experience the mystery of the universe. GMU has already developed courses and certificate and degree programs in [Sacred Arts and Sacred Music](#) and is also planning a seminar for our students in 2012 on Mysticism and the Arts featuring an exploration of mystic experience through various art forms such as music and film. More information on the Sacred Arts seminar will be forthcoming in a future newsletter.

The GMU curriculum features many new approaches to contemporary religious experience and we welcome any additional suggestions from readers that may assist us in meeting the spiritual needs of our time.

Gerald Grudzen, PhD

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## **GMU Enrollment Doubles in 2011**

Global Ministries University has doubled its enrollment in 2011 as compared to 2010. Despite the slump in the economy, we have received more applications than ever before. There are many possible reasons for this surge:

**Interfaith/Contemporary Theology** - We are unique in that we offer interreligious curriculum and contemporary theology. A great number of individuals, many of whom do not belong to a particular faith community, as well as those who are of a certain denomination, but are drawn to our unbiased , contemporary courses.

**Excellent Programs for Adult Learners** – We offer excellent degree and certificate programs that are designed for the adult learner. Students are given the flexibility to complete courses at their own pace, that is, they are able to complete coursework as quickly as possible or fit their studies into a busy schedule. Furthermore, Global Ministries University recognizes the value of the rich background adult learners have acquired and therefore make it possible for students to be awarded prior learning and life experience credit toward most of our degree programs.

**Many Areas of Concentration** – Our students have the opportunity to choose from many areas of concentration. It is possible to focus on Pastoral Ministry, World Religions, Contemporary Christianity, Peace Studies, Sacred Arts, and Sacred Music, to name just a few possibilities.

**Meaningful Courses** – We offer meaningful courses that are relevant in today's world, which include courses that are on DVD. Following are examples of our many interesting courses:

Ministry to the Incarcerated  
Comparative Religion  
Buddhist Ethics  
Korean Shamanism  
Evolutionary Spirituality  
Spirituality and Aging  
Art and Spirituality  
Homosexuality and the Bible  
Wedding Ceremonies and Services  
Liturgical Music Theory  
Progressive Christianity (DVD)  
Religious Fundamentals of Peace Building

**Highly Qualified Faculty** – GMU has very qualified instructors, many of whom hold doctoral degrees and/or are ordained ministers.

Perhaps the most compelling reason we have had such a dramatic increase in applicants is that we have earned the trust of the general public. In the past, most of our applicants would hear about us by word of mouth, that is, someone affiliated with the University staff would recommend our programs, in other words, 'vouch for us.' Today we are receiving an increasing number of applicants from the internet. Trust is a very important issue when considering a degree from a university. It does not come automatically, especially with online universities. Global Ministries University has gained credibility by dealing with our prospects and students with integrity and sincerely having their best interest in mind.

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## MEET OUR FACULTY

**Ronald Nakasone, Ph.D., one of the many competent instructors on the Global Ministries University staff, is proudly featured in this publication.**

Dr. Nakasone is shown here with Potjawan "Poy" Punjinda of Chiang Mai University Museum at an exhibition in which featured two of his calligraphy pieces. The large character is the cursive form for "elephant;" the smaller one is "chaang" or elephant in Thai script.



Ronald Nakasone teaches Buddhist Ethics for Global Ministries University. He is a member of the Core Doctoral Faculty at the Graduate Theological Union (GTU) in Berkeley, California and faculty at the Stanford University Geriatric Education Center. While he has a special interest in Buddhist aesthetics, most of his recent publications has focused on aging and spirituality. Professor Nakasone shares his reflections on bioethical and other modern dilemmas through a variety of international and national forums. He is currently exploring the structure of Buddhist thinking and its implications as an alternative to rational (Western) traditions that posit a single center (perspective).

Dr. Nakasone is an ordained Pure Land Buddhist cleric and an accomplished *sho*- (calligraphy) artist, as well as a distinguished professor. He has published or has in print more than 100 academic books and articles on Buddhist Studies and Aesthetics, Aging and Spirituality, and Ryūkyūnan (Okinawan) Studies, which include "Buddhist Views on Biotechnology" (*Encyclopedia of Ethical, Legal & Policy Issues in Biotechnology*, Wiley, 2000); *Okinawa Diaspora* (University of Hawai'i Press, 2002); "Teaching Religion and Healing: Spirituality and Aging in the San Francisco Japanese Community" in *Teaching Religion and Healing* (Oxford, 2006).

Professor Nakasone received the 2011 Sarlo Excellence in Teaching Award from the Graduate Theological Union. Students and colleagues contributed essays to *Memory and*

*Imagination, Essays and Explorations in Buddhist Thought and Culture* (Nagata, 2010), a festschrift that commemorated his completion of one life cycle (60 years) according to the Chinese zodiac.

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## STUDENT IN THE SPOTLIGHT

**Global Ministries University student body includes a variety of outstanding individuals with diverse and notable backgrounds and ministries. Teresa Keogh is highlighted in this edition.**

She is pictured below with one the AIDs orphans she met in Kenya and has been helping ever since.



Teresa Keogh is a GMU Master of Theology student and plans to use the degree for her future ministry. She is a Roman Catholic, a convert, and one who is very involved in the Church. She has great dreams of being even more deeply involved in serving God and His church and this degree will open doors for her in prison, school and hospital chaplaincy, as well as in parish ministry. She is particularly attracted to the idea of working in hospital ministry, as she spent twelve years trying to get into medical school to study to become a doctor and nineteen years teaching third-year medical students at the University of Ottawa School of Medicine.

She holds the equivalent of an honors degree in the Art and Science of Movement with a double major in Physical Education and Dance and a double minor in Science and Sociology from the University of Sussex in England. She also has a Master's degree in the

Science of Teaching English as a Second or Foreign Language from Bernelli University in the U.S.A. and Specialist Certification in Religious Education.

She works as a catechist on two different Indian Reserves in the Canadian Arctic. From the end of August until mid-December, she lives on an Indian reserve in Fort Albany and from January to the end of June, she lives on another Indian reserve in Attawapiskat. As catechist, she teaches religious education in the elementary school and does sacramental preparation. She also does many things in the parish, such as serving on the altar, reading at mass, giving holy communion in the parish and the hospital and providing music at some of the masses. In addition to working as a catechist, she also teaches at the school in Fort Albany as a supply teacher and a Special Education teacher.

Teresa is very excited about earning another degree, especially a degree that will give her the opportunity to study theology more deeply. She says '*It's wonderful to have this chance and I'm enjoying every moment of my studies.*'

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## CLASSROOM SHOWCASE

Students of Global Ministries University submit outstanding coursework. This is an excerpt taken from a paper submitted by Dana Reynolds, a former Master of Theology student and ordained priest. The assignment is part of course entitled *Jewish Midrash and the Gospels, which is based on John Shelby Spong's book Liberating the Gospels*. Dana is moved to find a way to incorporate what she has learned in this assignment into her ministry:

*My studies of Spong's work have helped to clarify the missing pieces of not only theological, but also spiritual/mystical understanding. Conceptually integrating the full and complete acknowledgement of Jewish daily life and Jewish ritual as lived in Jesus' time, enlivens and enlarges my love for and understanding of Christ and his teachings. I also feel to a new extent the pain that Jesus must have encountered when those in positions of power of his own faith turned against him because he challenged their laws and statutes. I, too, experience this from the hierarchy of my faith.*

*The understanding that my faith's roots took hold in the Jewish tradition, brings clarification and with that clarification comes a vision of simplicity and transcendent beauty as I imagine the weaving of Jewish and Christian traditions into a new or renewed form. Again, the challenge is how to creatively synthesize what has been discovered into liturgy and spiritual practices that will*

*be meaningful, educational, and inspirational for others. I find the invitation to this challenge to be very exciting and energizing for my spiritual life and my life's work.*

*How do I incorporate what I have learned that is new into my faith tradition? This is the question that has cracked my spiritual/religious understanding wide open. For me, I am feeling called to embrace and move towards new forms of Ecumenical and Interfaith liturgies and worship opportunities for celebrating God's love in ways that are truly inclusive. The box of out-dated Catholic doctrine has been opened and my heart and prayer/spiritual/religious life can no longer be contained in the box. I must be free to explore, express, and embrace the Truth. The truth of Jesus, the human, faith-filled Jew, who lived and breathed himself into the fullness of human potential according to God's will and purpose for his life.*

Ms. Reynolds, an outstanding student, graduated from Global Ministries University and has gone on to teach Sacred Art courses for GMU and is the mentor of our Master of Theology in Sacred Arts degree program.

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