

First Kenyan to Receive GMU Scholarship



John Baya is the first student from Kenya to be granted a \$500 scholarship from GMU and is enrolled in the Bachelor of Religious Studies in African Spirituality. John has a Diploma in Education, which is equivalent to an AA degree. He also participated in the Interfaith Certificate Program that

President Grudzen co-facilitated in Kenya in 2014-15, which will give him advanced standing toward his degree. GMU has begun to set up a scholarship fund to be used to provide degrees and certificates in interreligious studies in Kenya and other third world countries. We thank all of you who contributed to the scholarship fund and want you to know that your contribution is being used for a very worthwhile cause, as you can see. Those of you who would like to help other Kenyans in their quest for higher education in the area of peace and interreligious dialogue, you may make a donation on Gofundme.com.

GMU Makes New Year's Resolutions



Here we are into a New Year and Global Ministries University would like to wish each and every one of you a very happy and fruitful year. Many individuals have given up on the tradition of making New Year resolutions, reasoning that the resolutions are usually broken by February. Nevertheless, we at GMU are determined to keep the following resolutions.

Our Staff will strive to:

- ❖ give students the best possible service;
- ❖ be available and responsive to questions and requests;
- ❖ offer personal guidance when needed;
- ❖ treat every student with respect and dignity;
- ❖ provide the most rewarding learning process possible.

We are not hesitant to make these resolutions or doubtful that we can keep them because they are a part of our normal procedure. We do not believe that earning a degree or certificate or taking a course needs to be drudgery and, therefore, it is always our goal to nurture the most fulfilling experience possible for our students.

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT



During my recent trip to Kenya I had the opportunity to take part in a weeklong interfaith seminar co-sponsored with the Coast Interfaith Council of Clerics (CICC) for 26 students at the Bishop Hannington Theological Institute in Mombasa, Kenya. This was the third interfaith seminar we have offered in Mombasa and it is the largest group to date. They represented all of the regional areas along the coast of Kenya which is where most of the intercultural and interfaith conflict has occurred in the past few years. We plan to reconvene with this group in August for another three-day seminar to review the interfaith and intercultural projects that they have undertaken.

The GMU representative in Kenya is Doctor Martin Olando who regularly commutes between Nairobi where his family lives and Mombasa where he directs the Anglican affiliated theological center known as the Bishop Hannington Theological Institute. In addition to his duties with the Bishop Hannington program, Doctor Olando has agreed to serve as the GMU contact person for students enrolling from Kenya in GMU degree programs. We soon expect to have several students, who graduated from the Interfaith Certificate Program that we offer with CICC, in one or more of our degree programs.

We presently have two students from Kenya who are officially enrolled in GMU: Reverend Stephen Anyenda, CEO of CICC, who has begun study in the GMU Doctor of Theology program with an interfaith focus and John Baya, a graduate of the interfaith certificate program, who is undertaking a Bachelors degree in religious studies with a focus on the indigenous religions and spirituality of Africa.

While I was in Kenya I also spent four days in Nairobi in order to continue our planning for a new Interfaith program that we will offer in August of 2015 at the Columbia University Africa Regional Center in Nairobi in conjunction with the Maryknoll Fathers and Brothers of East Africa. In this seminar we will focus on the role of teachers in presenting an interfaith perspective on the four major faith traditions in Kenya: African indigenous religions and spirituality, Christianity, Islam and Hinduism. We had an initial steering committee meeting for the weeklong seminar on Thursday, January 15th, at the Columbia University Center in Nairobi, with several teachers from diverse areas of Kenya. Doctor Martin Olando and Frank Pisciotta will co-chair a second steering committee meeting in April of 2015 at Columbia University Africa Center. Frank is enrolled in the GMU Doctor of Theology degree program.

In addition to the conference in August we are exploring a relationship with the Jesuit Hakimani Centre in Nairobi for development of a research project on the marginalization of certain youth sectors in the country of Kenya and the attendant growth of religious extremism.

Our work in Kenya continues to grow and we are excited that Global Ministries University is becoming part of the interfaith network in Kenya and East Africa.

Gerald Grudzen, Ph.D., President

MEET OUR FACULTY



Lou Wolner, M.S., N.B.C.C., holds a Masters in Guidance and Counseling from the University at Albany, a Diploma for Advanced Graduate Studies at Michigan State University in Existential Psychology and Philosophy, is a Nationally Board Certified Counselor, and has studied eastern and western religious traditions through workshops, seminars, retreats, and self study.

He teaches one of Global Ministries University's newest courses, *An Introduction to A Course in Miracles*. It is a course intended to familiarize students with some basics of *A Course In Miracles*, a self-study curriculum that illuminates the integration of practical psychology with an in depth spirituality. He has been a student/teacher of A Course of Miracles for over 25 years.

Professor Wolner also teaches undergraduate Psychology and Religion courses for the University of Phoenix and mentors and supervises K-12 student teachers for the University of Phoenix, San Francisco Bay Area Campuses. His professional background includes university student personnel administration; human resources management; high school teaching, counseling, and administration; as well as career coaching in private practice.

Lou is a trained outdoor docent and leads hikes in the Santa Cruz Mountains. He resides in Los Altos, CA with his wife, Nancy. They have three adult children and 3 grandchildren.

STUDENT IN THE SPOTLIGHT



Kevin Lycke, M.S.W., is a student in the M.Th. program. He asserts that the reason he chose Global Ministries University is because he wanted to study theology in a way that would allow him to learn at his own pace. He also wanted a program that offers a traditional yet progressive perspective that can be utilized in a practical yet meaningful way. He further stated that he chose the Master of Theology degree program because it responds to and quells his desire to learn more in depth about his own faith and tradition while challenging him intellectually, spiritually, and emotionally by embracing new, creative, thought provoking, life giving ideas.

Kevin is a licensed clinical social worker (LCSW). He is a private practitioner who works with adults, adolescents, children, families, and groups. In addition to providing psychotherapy, he offers community-based consultation on religious and spiritual diversity.

He was raised Roman Catholic and is now a practicing Episcopalian. However, throughout his adult life he gained a profound appreciation for other religious/spiritual beliefs and expressions of faith and now considers himself "Christo-Celtic." He is deeply Christian but passionately wedded to Celtic spiritual traditions that are rooted in cosmology. He is a practicing interfaith minister and oversees a ministry called [The Heart of Sophia Ministry](#). Kevin is a wedding/union officiant, conduct baby blessings, home/dwelling blessings, baptisms, various religious/spiritual initiations, respond to home/facility sick calls, and offer spiritual counseling, to include end of life and bereavement services.

When asked how he feels about completing his program and graduating, he said: *"I simply LOVE GMU's M.Th. program! I am learning from "top notch" scholars and though I find the course content rigorous, the faculty is "there" to ensure a learning process – they encourage and invite their students to "come and see, hear, feel, and taste" facets of inquiry while challenging students to think beyond and outside the bounds and comforts of traditional knowledge. The faculty shines through and inspires me through their passion for theology, spirituality, diversity, and social justice. I am moving forward with great anticipation that I will successfully complete the program and receive the Master of Theology degree. I still have more work to do but often think, "If I have gained all this so far on my GMU journey, how much more I will receive and be graced by such efforts?"*

Kevin lives in Ronkonkoma, NY with his partner, Clyde and they share their home with two cats: Merlin, a very loving black and white, "Tuxedo" cat and Arthur, yes, as in "King Arthur," a very loving, very inquisitive Siamese!

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Send feedback, comments, and/or questions to Jean Conley, editor and Vice-President for Operations and Development, [Global Ministries University](#)