



The Global Notebook

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Global Ministries University continues to expand its horizons! We hope you find the articles in this newsletter enjoyable and enlightening!

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Message from the President



During the week preceding Easter of this year Marita and I traveled to Kenya for the sixth annual interfaith leadership training conference sponsored by Global Ministries University. This year's conference was the most successful to date since we had our most committed and enthusiastic group of teachers who have taken this course with us. We had nine Christian and nine Muslim teachers in the group and they were also equally divided between women and men. As part of the follow up for this course we have introduced a mechanism for us to continue contact with the teachers through social media and a follow up meeting with them in November of 2017 led by other members of our training team.

As part of the preparation for the 2018 course that we are planning Marita and I had the opportunity to take part in a week long seminar on Peace Education at the Maryknoll Mission Institute during the week of June 17 to June 23, 2017. It was conducted by Father Elias Opongo, SJ, Director of the Peace Education

Center at Hekima College in Nairobi. Father Opongo has agreed to join our Paths to Peace faculty for the 2018 teacher training program in Mombasa, Kenya. You can view a picture Father Opongo and myself on the [GMU Facebook page](#).

After taking part in the Kenya teacher training program I traveled to Thailand for meetings with officials of Mahidol University in Bangkok, Thailand. This visit had been arranged by Doctor Ron Nakasone, noted Buddhist scholar and prior Director of Buddhist Studies at the Graduate Theological Union, Berkeley, CA. Doctor Nakasone also has had a long relationship with the Religious Studies Department of Mahidol University and now serves as a GMU faculty member and consultant for our relationship with Mahidol University. GMU has had a Memorandum of Understanding with Mahidol University for the past nine years and we are eager to continue this relationship as a new Dean of Religious Studies takes up leadership of the Religious Studies Department later this year. Our visit attempted to clarify some of the procedures that have made it difficult for American students to register for the Joint ThD and PhD program that we have developed with this university. I will have more information on the status of this program later this year

Gerald Grudzen, PhD

GMU Graduate Celebrates 10th Anniversary of Ordination



On July 22, the feast of Mary Magdalene, Rev. Juanita Cordero will celebrate the tenth anniversary of her ordination as a Roman Catholic Woman Priest (RCWP). Juanita has established her own faith community in Los Gatos, CA and has been a leader in the San Jose area in many social justice issues. She and Rev. Penny Donovan, also a woman priest and GMU student, have developed a collaborative ministry which is well known in their local area. Juanita and Penny have also taken part in International Theological Studies in Jerusalem and been part of interfaith programs with the Muslim Community

located in the Palestinian territories and also in Santa Clara County. Juanita completed both her Master of Theology and Doctor of Theology degrees with GMU. Penny and she also serve as mentors and advisors to other women seeking ordination. GMU has pioneered theological education for nontraditional students for the past 15 years and we are proud of our graduates who have gone forward to establish fruitful and unique ministries.

FCM and GMU Interfaith Conference Held on June 3, 2017



The title for this daylong conference was *Interreligious Dialogue and Human Rights: Affirming Our Solidarity*. The idea for the conference emerged about six months ago when John Raymaker, a GMU faculty member and longtime member of FCM, indicated an interest in coming to the US from Germany and participating in a conference which would help to expand the vision of FCM to encompass more of a global perspective such as the *Paths to Peace Kenya* project of which John Raymaker has been a major supporter. The idea for such a conference would include Interfaith Dialogue with the US Muslim community.

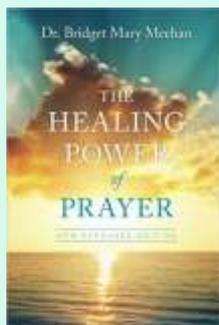
John had been in touch with Rev. Diane Dougherty, the southern region VP for FCM and she had agreed to provide hospitality for John when he would come to the US. The Atlanta area was chosen as the site for the conference as Diane, who resides there, is actively involved with several human rights organizations. Another significant reason for choosing this area is that Professor Richard Penaskovic, an FCM member in Alabama, has had extensive previous contacts with the Atlantic Institute, a major Muslim organization in the Atlanta area as a presenter at Interfaith Conferences. The Istanbul Cultural Center, a sister organization of the Atlantic Institute, agreed to host the event and provide a major speaker for a discussion of human rights abuses in Turkey by the government of Prime Minister Erdogan. The Istanbul Cultural Center is located in Alpharetta GA, a suburb of Atlanta.

Through the initiative of Rev. Diane Dougherty and her extensive interfaith network, a number of interfaith groups took part in the event, including representatives from the Bahai community in Atlanta, an Interfaith Women's Network led by Muslim and Jewish women, a Latino Alliance for Human Rights, and an expert on nonviolent social change, Professor John Turess, from Lagrange College in Lagrange, Georgia. Gerry Grudzen, President of Global Ministries University and his wife, Marita Grudzen as well as other FCM members were prominent in the meeting as workshop facilitators and speakers. In addition to Rev. Diane Dougherty, Gerry and his wife Marita presented a summary of the Paths to Peace Kenya interfaith project as the opening presentation for the conference. Muslim and Jewish interfaith leaders complemented their presentation with reflections on the connection of the interfaith movement in the Atlanta area with concerns for human rights issues such as Islamophobia, racism and immigrant rights. At the end of the daylong conference, members of the Istanbul Cultural Center prepared a Ramadan Iftar dinner for all of the participants. Approximately 60 people attended the daylong conference and about 120 took part in the dinner.

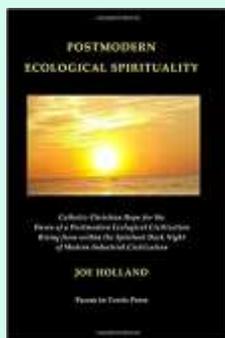
On Sunday morning following the event the FCM/GMU planning team met to discuss how to publicize the conference and possible ways to develop future events using the Internet as a possible vehicle for participation in such events. John Raymaker, Richard and Nancy Penaskovic, Diane Dougherty, William Weiskopf, Gerry Grudzen and Marita Grudzen took part in the assessment and future planning on Sunday, June 4. Each member of the planning team agreed to promote the spirit of this meeting among their own networks.

GMU Retains Outstanding Faculty

Global Ministries University students have the advantage of taking courses that are facilitated by highly qualified instructors. In order to be a part of the GMU teaching staff, instructors must hold a graduate degree in their area of study, however, most of them hold doctoral degrees. Furthermore, many of our instructors also teach at other universities, hold additional prestigious positions and/or are published authors. Following are two instructors who have recently had their books published:



Dr. Bridget Mary Meehan teaches several courses for GMU and is Dean of the Doctor of Ministry and Master of Divinity degree programs. Dr. Meehan received her B.A. from Immaculata College, M.A. from Catholic University, and Doctor of Ministry from Virginia Episcopal Seminary. She is an ordained Roman Catholic Woman Priest, a spiritual director, conference speaker, consultant in women's spirituality. She is also the founder and producer of a TV program, [GodTalk](#), hosts a [blog](#) and is author of over twenty books. Here is her latest book: *The Healing Power of Prayer*. New Expanded Edition which can be ordered from [Create Space](#) or [Amazon](#).



Dr. Joe Holland is an eco-social philosopher and Catholic theologian in the intellectual school of humanistic-ecological postmodernism. Joe holds a M.A. and Ph.D. from the University of Chicago in the field of Social Ethics, as well as a B.A. in Philosophy and M.A. in Religious Studies from Niagara University. In addition to teaching a course for GMU, entitled 'Catholic Social Teaching,' he is Emeritus Professor of Philosophy & Religion at Saint Thomas University in Miami Gardens, Florida. Dr. Holland has authored several books, and his latest is entitled *Postmodern Ecological Spirituality*. Go to [Pacem in Terris Press](#) for a complimentary copy of cover through Chapter 1 and to [Amazon](#) to purchase.

GMU Aims to Give Students a Meaningful Experience



Many universities provide their applicants with a set program and require them to take specified courses in order to earn their degree. It is the goal of GMU to give our student a meaningful experience, an experience that will truly assist them after they graduate. Our students are adult learners and most of them have a very good idea of what courses will benefit them the most and therefore are given the opportunity to custom-design their program. On the other hand, if they do not know what courses to select, our staff is very happy to provide the assistance they need.

However, we go beyond this very beneficial feature... students also have the option of changing their courses at any time for a small fee. We have students that enroll in a program with a particular ministry in mind but then change direction, in which case they can also change their courses. Our students are not stuck in courses that no longer benefit their goals. We welcome our students to contact the central office if they wish to change a course(s).

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