



# The Global Notebook

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## GMU Graduation Ceremony Held in Cleveland



The Global Ministries University graduation ceremony was held at the Federation of Christian Ministries Assembly in Cleveland on the weekend of August 6-8. Because we are an online university, we have students from all over the country; therefore, not all graduates are able travel the distance. However, four individuals attended the Assembly (l to r):

**Donnieau Snyder** from California, earned a Master of Theology degree  
**Maryann Crilly** from New Jersey, earned a Certificate in Celebrancy  
**Gail Schultz**, GMU Registrar from Wisconsin, earned a Master of Theology degree

**Dan Lee** from Texas earn a Ph.D. and a Th. through our Joint Doctoral Program

Snyder, Crilly, and Lee also participated in the FCM commissioning ceremony, which took place at the Assembly. Those commissioned by FCM have legal status to marry couples.

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## GMU Administrators Receive Soto Award



Mike Conley, Provost, and Jean Conley, VP for Operations and Development, were the recipients of the Federation of Christian Ministries Anthony Soto award in recognition and appreciation of their dedicated and supportive commitment to education and FCM. This award is presented to a member(s) of FCM at the Assembly, alternating recipients between FCM's five geographical regions, which happened to be the Pacific Region this year, where Jean and Mike preside. The selection of the recipient is discerned well in advance by a small committee and is not revealed until the Saturday evening dinner, a gala event where everyone attending the Assembly would be gathered. Consequently, most of the 150 attendees were surprised, including Jean and Mike!

The Conley's also presented a workshop at the Assembly, entitled *'Unwelcome at the Table... A Blessing in Disguise.'*

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## MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT



This past August Marita Grudzen and I and GMU doctoral graduate Frank Pisciotta traveled to Kenya in order to participate in two interfaith seminars sponsored by Global Ministries University. One of the seminars took place at the Bishop Haddington Theological Institute In Mombasa where we held a previous seminar in 2014 and the second seminar took place on the historic Lamu island near the coast with Somalia. Lamu island is a world heritage site which has been

impacted by the upsurge in violence perpetrated by Al Shabab militants who have crossed over into Kenya and attacked people on the mainland in Lamu county. Both of the seminars featured the participation of Christian and Muslim teachers from the Mombasa and Lamu county regions. The Lamu seminar featured the participation of youth who developed dramatic presentations on the trauma they experienced from attacks by Al Shabab. The Cambridge University publication below documents well the work we are doing in Kenya.

## Interfaith in the Face of Conflict: Mombasa & Lamu



For the past three years the towns of Mombasa and Lamu in Kenya have been hit by religious conflict: between 2013 and 2015 there were several arson and grenade attacks on churches in Mombasa and rising tensions between the Christians and Muslims who lived there. The situation worsened on the night of the 15<sup>th</sup> June 2014, when over seventy people were murdered by a suspected Al Shabab terrorist who targeted Christians in the Mpeketoni area of Lamu County (about 800 km away from the Kenyan capital, Nairobi). The aftermath was felt immediately in Kenya's schools: integration was reversed. Where schools were predominantly Christian, there was a significant drop in Muslim student enrolment and vice versa.

To arrest this religious tension, the [Global Ministries University \(GMU\)](#), based in California, USA, organised an interfaith programme enabling teachers and students to enhance religious coexistence. The seminars were held in Mombasa and Lamu respectively on 13 – 15<sup>th</sup> and 16 – 17<sup>th</sup> August, 2016. The main theme was how teachers could nurture the values of coexistence and mutual respect in young minds.

The seminars took two different approaches: in Mombasa only teachers attended, while in Lamu teachers, students and pupils learned together. To make the message of coexistence clear, the students of Lamu Primary and Secondary schools presented drama and poems which spoke of hindrances to coexistence and how to overcome them. The drama presentations helped to highlight that terror is a criminal offence and has no religious connotation. It also made clear that in Kenya, as in most African countries, the common enemies were poverty, disease and racism, not religious difference.

After the seminar there were recommendations that there should be a change in the Kenyan educational curriculum to include a course on interfaith studies. Currently students study Islam, Christianity and Hindu as stand-alone courses according to their own religious background. Arguably, this has led to increased prejudice among the students and pupils of different faiths, as prejudices and ignorance of religious doctrines were identified as key stumbling blocks that many Muslims and Christians struggled with.



**School Teachers at the Mombasa Workshop**



**Teachers and Students Learn Together at the Lamu Workshop**

If Christianity and Islam were followed as Jesus Christ and Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) instructed, Mombasa and Lamu would experience peace and cohesion. Both Jesus Christ and the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) instructed and enacted the principle of loving your neighbour, so we as their followers today should follow suit.



“Individual cultures and ideologies have their appropriate uses but none of them erase or replace the universal experiences, like love and weeping and laughter, common to all human beings.”

**-Aberjhani**

### Contact Us

[Global Ministries University](#)

41593 Winchester Rd.

Suite 200 PMB#045

Temecula, California | 92590

Tel. 866 419-8020  
Fax. 858 810-1954

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