



We will open the book. Its pages are blank.

We are going to put words on them ourselves.

The book is called Opportunity and its first chapter is New Year's Day.

~Edith Lovejoy Pierce

Spread the Word

Is there not an excitement in everyone as we enter into a New Year? We look forward to 2011 with anticipation of new opportunities. It is a time when we make resolutions and set goals. And, yes, it is a time to earn that degree you have only dreamed about, or completing a degree that you might be working on.

The GMU staff is excited about the opportunity they have to serve those individuals of all faiths and allow each student to grow spiritually from where they happen to be on their journey. This is indeed a life-giving approach to learning. If you agree that GMU is a unique and effective method of study, we would like to encourage you to spread the word. We acquire many of our students through word-of-mouth advertising and have decided to offer a monetary incentive of \$100 to anyone who refers a prospect to GMU and the prospect enrolls as a result. If the applicant submits your name on the application as the way they heard about our university, we will send you a check for \$100.

Let us open the book and fill the pages with peace, love, joy, and all of our heart's desire for the New Year.

GMU President's Column

Recent events in the United States (Arizona) and in the Middle East (Iraq and Egypt) have highlighted the tragic results of violence bred from conflicts over ideology or religious identity. Those who follow the fundamentalist path whether in politics or spirituality generally divide themselves from those who do not share their limited perspectives on their personal and social values. Global Ministries University has undertaken important steps to fulfill its mission as a catalyst for interfaith and intercultural peace and understanding. We are moving forward with plans to implement a Peace Studies program in conjunction with the Institute for Peace Studies of the Bibliotheca Alexandria (Library of Alexandria) in Alexandria, Egypt and faculty members from the largest and oldest Islamic university in the world, Al Azhar University in Cairo, Egypt. It is ironic that the recent tragic events involving a Christmas attack on a Coptic church in Alexandria is also home to the Institute for Peace Studies with which GMU is forging a partnership for implementation of a graduate degree program in Peace Studies.

GMU is also in a joint project with the Pacifica Institute in California, an interfaith organization sponsored by Turkish Americans located in California and inspired by the writings of Fethullah Gulen, an Imam from the Sufi tradition of Islam. GMU is one of the sponsors for a Forum on the Dialogue of Civilizations which features the intercultural and interfaith work of the Gulen Movement and other examples of interfaith understanding such as the GMU Peace Studies degree program and a Building Peace Dialogue program using Skype to interact with Muslim students and scholars in Egypt (see Building Peace on Facebook). Our conference with the Pacifica Institute will take place at Santa Clara University on Sunday, February 20. In June of 2011 several members of the GMU staff and board will participate in a series of seminars beginning at Al Azhar University in Cairo followed by an international conference at the Library of

Alexandria in conjunction with Globalization for the Common Good Initiative (www.gcgalexandria2011.info). We are also planning to partner with an organization based in Baltimore, Maryland, the Civilization Exchange and Cooperation Foundation, led by Imam Mohamad Bashar Araat (http://cecf-net.org/information/imam_mohamad_bashar_arafat/). This organization features opportunities for students and religious leaders from the Middle East and throughout the Muslim world to visit the United States and take part in educational programs. Civilization Exchange and Cooperation Foundation will be one of the participating organization taking part in our Alexandria conference from June 11 to June 16, 2011. If you wish to become part of our Dialogue program or take part in any of the upcoming conferences, please contact Johanna Koudsi at the following email address: Johann.k@earthlink.net.

Gerald Grudzen, PhD

GMU Implements Online Course Management System

GMU now has Moodle, which is an online course management system. The word Moodle was originally an acronym for Modular Object-Oriented Dynamic Learning Environment, which is mostly useful to programmers and education theorists. In April 2010 we launched this new and sophisticated technology with Classroom Revolution as host server. The site is called www.GMUClassroom.org It has the syllabi for our courses posted and enables students to go online for their assignments and also receive feedback and grades from instructors. Instructors have the opportunity to include additional information and reading material such as articles related to their course and short video such as You-tube. To date only the courses being used by students are posted. Please refer any questions or problems to administrator Mike Conley at GMU5053@aol.com



HELEN HWANG

Helen Hye-Sook Hwang, Ph.D., teaches three classes Ecological Theology, Korean Shamanism, and Gender and Sexuality in Asian Religions at GMU. Dr. Hwang earned M.A. and Ph.D. in Religion with the emphasis in Women's Studies from the Claremont Graduate University. Her ongoing research concerns Mago, the Great Goddess of East Asia, and Her tradition Magoism, an anciently originated pan-East Asian gynocentric cultural matrix that venerates Mago as supreme divine.

Her second M.A. program in East Asian Studies at UCLA, which she is presently in progress, has helped her grounded in teaching and researching Korean and East Asian religions and cultures. She specializes in Buddhism and Korean religions in addition to ancient goddess studies. Her research interests include history, mythology, folklore, arts, and religious thought of East Asia and their transnational parallels of the world. She is currently writing academic articles, magazine columns, and her first book, *The Mago Hypothesis* (forthcoming 2011, Cambridge Scholars Publishing).

Hwang's graduate training also includes Western religions including Christianity. Prior to her graduate studies, she worked and studied as a Maryknoll Missionary in Korea, New York, and the Philippines. She has published many articles both in English and Korean including translation of Mary Daly's first two books, *Beyond God the Father* and *The Church and the Second Sex*.

Besides GMU, Hwang teaches online for Religious Studies and Women's and Gender Studies at University of Central Missouri, Warrensburg MO. She has taught a broad range of classes in universities in Southern California including University of California Riverside, Cal Poly Pomona, and Claremont Graduate University. She resides in Ontario, CA, and speaks to an international audience.



Kosha is relatively new to GMU and is enrolled in the Master of Theology degree program. She chose this program because of her life-long love of learning and her interest in theology, different religions, and science. She has pursued a Master's degree twice before -- once in education and once in gerontology—however, both were with the intent of *furthering her career* and she would lose interest after a few courses. At the age of 60, she has decided it was time to do what will make her happy and take the classes on subjects that were of interest to her. She has a long way before graduation but says that she is *'enjoying the studies so much that she is not looking forward to graduating and having it finished!!!'*

She holds a Bachelor degree from Chaminade University of Honolulu, with a major in Psychology and minors in Philosophy and Sociology and currently works in the Children's Department of a Mental Health Agency as a clinician. She was formerly employed by the State of Arizona in Child Protective Services as a Mental Health Specialist and previous to that position was in the Army for thirteen years as a Behavioral Science Specialist (including Camp Kue, the psychiatric evac hospital for Viet Nam) and multiple jobs in the mental health/social services field in between.

She was raised Pentecostal, converted to Episcopalian for several years, studied Goddess worship for several more years, however, for the past few years has been a practicing Buddhist. When she was Episcopalian , she considered becoming a minister, gave a few sermons over the years, but then became disillusioned with Christianity for a number of reasons and left it completely. She pointed out that *"one of the good things I am finding in my courses at GMU is a renewed appreciation for the "pure-ness", (ok, not a word, but it is what I mean) of what Jesus taught without getting caught up in the dogma."*

Kosha is single and resides in Kingman, Arizona, with her two dogs and two cats.