



# The Global Notebook

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## Accomplishments are Blooming at GMU!

### Conference Meetings Planned for GMU Students



There have been a number of GMU students who are curious as to the academic goals of their 'classmates' and have expressed an interest in having some kind of interaction with them.

As a result, we had a trial meeting in March using Zoom, an audio/visual tool to conduct conference calls and it went so well that we have decided to set up a meeting on the first Thursday of every month. The meetings will be 30 minutes in length and begin at 5 p.m. PDS. This time period was selected in an effort to accommodate the most students from all four time zones. The next meeting is scheduled for **Thursday, May 5th**. The meetings will vary... sometimes they will feature a specific topic and other times they will be a meet and greet type of meeting where students will have the opportunity to talk to other students and find out what their program is like, what they are studying, and what their goals are. The May 5<sup>th</sup> gathering will be conducted by Provost Dr. Michael Conley and he will offer an thought-provoking history of the Ten Commandments and then initiate a discussion about them. Students will be receiving an email with the information needed to connect with GMU classmates and are encouraged to participate in this new and innovative endeavor.



### GMU President and Wife Invited to Speak at GTU

Dr. Gerald Grudzen and wife, Marita Grudzen, were invited to the Dominican School of Philosophy and Theology of the Graduate Theological Union

in Berkeley recently to speak about their peacebuilding project in Africa, [Paths to Peace Kenya](#). This project brings together Christian and Muslim teachers from the coastal region of Kenya for an interfaith leadership training conference. Each year they recruit an equal number of Christian and Muslim teachers to take part in a three or four-day training program held in Mombasa, Kenya. Dr. Grudzen and Marita Grudzen work closely with leaders in the Muslim community in Kenya and one of their Muslim faculty members, Fatih Akdogan, is the Director of the largest Muslim private school in Mombasa with over 1,000 students. They were invited to speak at the Graduate Theological Union by Professor Marianne Farina, a Roman Catholic nun who is also an expert on Islamic theology and culture. She is a member of the faculty of Islamic Studies at the GTU. She worked for many years as an educator in Bangladesh before taking her position at the GTU. It so happens that Dr. Grudzen and Marita Grudzen began their international work by founding Milk for Bangladesh in 1975 during the time of famine in Bangladesh. They also have had a decade-long relationship with the Muslim nation of Turkey through international conferences that we have attended there and work with the Pacifica Institute in the Bay Area.

### GMU Student Composes Poem for Assignment



Margie Schneider is an ordained Interfaith Minister and Animal Chaplain, who has completed the Doctor of Theology degree program. One of her courses in

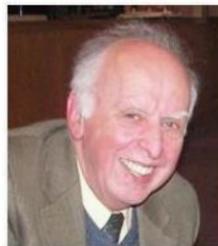
her program was Creation Spirituality and this poem was the submission for one of her assignments.

#### Ode to Creation Spirituality

The Earth is our Mother  
We are her kin  
Our Father who loves us  
Dwells there within  
Thru Science and Creation they say we are one  
with the trees, the stars and even the sun  
They say life is a blessing  
not just about sin  
That the child inside us  
needs to come out and win  
If we take heed of their wisdom  
We will be changed and be healed  
And that is when our gifts are revealed  
For when we are reborn into the truth of it all  
we know it's about compassion not about the fall  
And when we can trust what we have been told  
We give birth to a power that is more valuable than gold.

This poem not only shows the caliber of work our students produce, but it also reflects the creativity that the GMU method of study promotes.

### President's Column



*This past week we remembered the momentous events of 1968 with the anniversary of the assassination of Martin Luther King in Memphis, Tennessee on April 4, 1968. 1968 also marks the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Federation of Christian Ministries. Global Ministries University grew out of the*

*reform movements taking place within Roman Catholicism following Vatican Council II from 1963 to 1965. One of the hallmarks of this era was the understanding that all religious traditions of the world have a role in creating a just and peaceful world. Martin Luther King and those who followed his nonviolent example played a key role in bringing to an end the Vietnam War. Other peacebuilding religious leaders in the Vietnam were Thomas Merton who also died in 1968 while visiting Buddhist leaders in Thailand and Thich Nhat Hanh who led the peace movement in Vietnam and continues his peace mission to this day in the US and France. Next week I will travel to Pennsylvania to meet with Mr. Fathullah Gulen, the founder and spiritual leader of the Hizmet movement, a Sufi oriented educational organization with schools in over 100 countries around the world. The Hizmet movement stresses interfaith dialogue and peacebuilding as key principles of its spirituality. I also have sponsored a Turkish visiting professor at San Jose City College, Doctor Murad Hatip, PhD, to facilitate the United Nations affiliate dialogue project with the Middle East called Soliya Connect. Doctor Hatip joined us in speaking at the GTU this past Thursday about the role of Africa and the Middle East in the Peacebuilding process. We have been invited to explore a possible affiliation with the GTU for GMU and plan to meet with GTU officials in the coming months. Marita and I will also attend the pre-Parliament of World Religions conference in Chicago from April 23,24 and 25. I plan to report on the Parliament meeting in a future Global Notebook column.*

### Calling All GMU Graduates

All GMU graduates are cordially invited to participate in the Global Ministries University Graduation Ceremony to be held on Saturday, July 21, 2018 at 4:30 p.m. The ceremony is being held during the Federation of Christian Ministries Assembly at the Doubletree Hilton Hotel in Philadelphia. There are three options to participate: 1) attend the [Assembly](#) and participate in the entire weekend; 2) attend the ceremony only from 4:30-5:30 p.m.; 3) participate from your home via conference call. If you are planning to attend using any of these options, please contact our [Central Office](#) as soon as possible so that we can give you the necessary information you will need.



### Celebrant Training Program is Thriving



*Celebrant Training Instructor Antoinette Marold*

The GMU Celebrant Training Program is becoming more and more in demand as the general public becomes aware of it. For those who are not familiar with its purpose, the program is designed to

train individuals who wish to conduct ceremonies and services, especially weddings and funerals. There are some people who are in a ministry or profession in which they are asked to conduct either weddings or funerals or both but do not have the training to do so in a professional manner. Lay women and men are being asked to conduct services because there are an increasing number of people who are not affiliated with a church but would still wish to have a nice service.

Most students enroll in this program because they need the training, however, a certificate is earned upon completion of the program and there are also those who pursue the certificate to verify their credibility. Another great feature of the Celebrant Training Program is that it can actually be custom-designed to give you the specific training you need for the type of celebrant you are or want to become.

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*-Martin Luther King: "I have a dream..."*