



*A theological education pathway for  
Churches of Christ around the world.*

## GCS News - June 2023

*Updating our sponsors, informing our current students,  
and reaching out for others to partner with us.*

*Copies available at the [GCS website](#)*

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### **Stories From Kingdom Workers**

As the Marketing Director for Global Christian Studies, I am responsible for creating marketing materials, sending out newsletters, and editing the website. However, one of

my favorite roles of this position is I get to personally interview and interact with the students being blessed by this ministry. I have the privilege to listen to their stories, hear how they came to know Christ and learn about their dreams for their local communities and congregations, and I get to share their stories with you. I am fortunate to hear first hand, how God is actively using them in His glory, and using what they learn through GCS to further His Kingdom. The stories I hear are filled with God's provision in the midst of chaos, poverty, war, famine, peace and sometimes wealth.

Earlier this year in March, I had the privilege of talking in person with two GCS students, Irvin and Vitaly, during their visit to Memphis to take their Advanced Theological Research class. Irvin is from Singapore and expressed his excitement about the new opportunities God has provided to evangelize in his home town. Irvin seeks to grow the Kingdom in a community he sees as financially wealthy, but spiritual poor. He is passionate in using what he's learning to bring together the churches in Asia and sparking a deeper passion and fire for following Christ in Singapore. Vitaly is from Ukraine, and shared his experiences from the war, becoming a refugee, and eventually finding a haven for his family in Nashville, TN. Vitaly recounted multiple ways he has been blessed through his studies at HST. He sees God mobilizing his people and feels fortunate to use what he's learning to serve in the Kingdom within whatever community God places him.

Each of these men come from different countries, speak different languages, and have had very different experiences. Even with such diverse backgrounds and experiences, God's work in both their lives to spread His Kingdom is evident and convicting. Along with their stories, and those of many others, I have heard students time and time again share how God is transforming their faith, helping them become better ministers, and amplifying their passion for His gospel, through their experiences and time at HST. Seeing how the work of GCS and HST educate and equip church leaders is making a difference in so many lives, churches, and communities across the world, is a blessing. Clearly the fields are ripe for harvesting across the globe. Hopefully His commission spurs us all to invest passionately in the work God is doing in those abroad, as we also do in our own communities here at home.

- Heather Hollingsworth

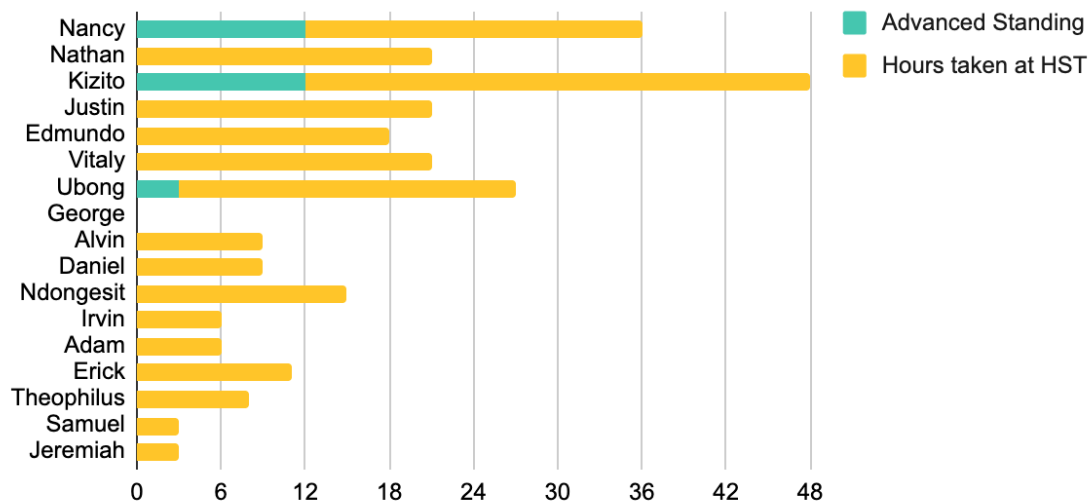


*Vitaly with his family*



*Irvin being interviewed in March 2023*

## Student Progress



*This graph shows each GCS student progressing toward completion of the 48 hour MACM degree.*

*We wish all of our students a prosperous and successful semester. We are glad to be part of how they are honing their Bible study and ministry skills!*

## Creating Global Classrooms

It's a typical week at HST. I am gathering for weekly class this Spring semester, *Leading Churches in Mission*. I have students filing into my classroom, locally in Memphis. At the same time, I am logging on to the Zoom platform. One by one, students log on from their remote locations. As class begins, I start to look around. In my Memphis classroom, I have a student raised in South Carolina preparing for ministry, a Hispanic young man who was a missionary in Argentina but has come to Memphis for training, an elder at a local church who desires further equipping, among others. Then I scan my "Zoom room" and I see several ministers sprinkled around the United States, including a campus minister in Alabama and a youth minister in Kentucky, and a few others. But then I see two church leaders in Switzerland – one in Berne and one in Geneva, a Mexican preacher who recently started full-time preaching, and two Ghanaians who recently graduated from Heritage Christian College and are continuing their studies. These international students are at HST through Global Christian Studies. As I lead the class in prayer to begin, I realize the significance of the moment. Four continents are represented in the classroom, multiple languages are present, a wide variety of church experiences are engaged and everyone is here because they desire skills to lead God's church to participate in God's mission in the world.

Global Christian Studies has made the classrooms at HST to be more than a typical graduate classroom. They have become global classrooms, spaces where students from various cultural backgrounds and experiences can learn together the story of God's mission and how to participate in it. When we discuss topics such as contextualization, we do not just think about the collision of gospel and culture theoretically, rather we discuss it in real time as leaders in a global classroom talk about what embodying the gospel looks like in one's specific culture. When we talk about cultural anthropology and discuss the differences between a honor-shame culture, a fear-power culture, or a guilt-innocence culture, this is not a hypothetical discussion; it is an opportunity for a global classroom to come alive. When we discuss current political issues, such as the Russia-Ukrainian war (and how our faith shapes our response), this is not just a news story, rather, it is the personal situation of students within a global classroom. When we wrestle with entry-points for the gospel in various cultures, we do not simply read a book about cultural engagement, we listen to one another's cultural experience in sharing the gospel. Global classrooms take peer learning to another level. Students rub shoulders with ministers and church leaders in vastly different contexts, and yet they wrestle with the same content together. Discussion can be rich and the applications can be quite varied, but the community becomes enriching.

In my class, there is a project that each student must do, where they spend 10 hours leading a team from their church in some form of missional engagement. In a global classroom, the breadth of these projects grows tremendously. Here is just an example of some projects that I have had: street preaching, open air Bible teaching, engaging in spiritual conversations in public areas, engaging Hispanic immigrants, ministering to Ukrainian refugees, engaging people experiencing homelessness, and ministering to orphans in Mexico. When I came to HST, if someone would have told me about the wide variety of projects that would happen in my class, I would never have believed it. But in a global classroom, the possibilities are endless.

I am thankful for the partnership with Global Christian Studies because it has turned my classroom into a global classroom where I, along with all of my students, learn together about what it means to be a church in a particular context that embodies the gospel in word and deed. I cannot think of a better place to train for ministry.

- Dr. Steve Cloer

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# Congratulations Graduate!!



Congratulations to Jasper Kazito on completing his Master of Arts in Old Testament in May 2023! He plans to work on his PhD at the University of the Free State, Bloemfontein, South Africa. Jasper, we wish you well and pray for your continued ministry in Nigeria!

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## Financial Update

During 2022, Global Christian Studies supported sixteen different students. The support for those students came from thirteen donors. Eleven of those donors sponsor a specific student while two donors have given generously to GCS without sponsoring a specific student. The eleven donors gave \$32,700 in 2022 which along with previous gifts from the two non-specified donors provided \$39,776.16 for the cost of all the GCS student tuition, fees, and assorted costs. The average sponsor gave almost \$3,000 in 2022 while the cost for the average student was almost \$2,500.

Three congregations provide all the administrative costs for GCS. The three congregations are the Wynuum and Belmore Road congregations in Australia and the Eastside Church of Christ in Midwest City, Oklahoma. GCS has four part-time staff members, Heather Hollingsworth (marketing), Caleb Dillinger (advancement), John Coffey (associate director) and Harold Shank (executive director). Administrative costs for 2022 were just over \$23,000.

## Invitation to be a Sponsor

GCS has a deep concern that each sponsored national leader complete their graduate program. Central to our support is having a sponsoring church or donor for each student. We want people in the GCS orbit to be praying for the students and for their concerns. Matching a student with a donor or congregation is important.

Currently we have more students than sponsors. Would you consider helping us identify sponsors? If you could help in any of the following areas, please contact Harold Shank.

- I know of a congregation which might be interested and am willing to provide you with an introduction.
- A friend of mine loves to pray and I could connect the two of you together.
- The congregation where I attend might well be interested. Let me contact one of the leaders and get back to you.

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## GCS Overseeing Congregations

**Eastside Church of Christ**, 916 South Douglas Blvd, Midwest City, OK 73130  
([www.eastsidechurchofchrist.info](http://www.eastsidechurchofchrist.info)).

Their elders include Sam Brandon, Ricky Bugher, Ron Cannefax, and David Walton.

**Belmore Road Church of Christ**, 100 Rostrevor Parade, Mont Albert North, Victoria 3129, Australia ([www.belmoreroadchurch.org.au](http://www.belmoreroadchurch.org.au)).

Their elders are Charles Hooi, Benny Tabalujan, and David Tabe.

GCS is actively seeking additional students and sponsors. Students are urged to consult the GCS website: [www.gcspathway.org](http://www.gcspathway.org) for how to engage with GCS. They can also email John Coffey ([jcoffey@harding.edu](mailto:jcoffey@harding.edu)) or Harold Shank ([drharoldshank@gmail.com](mailto:drharoldshank@gmail.com)).

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## Message to Potential Students

GCS seeks students from around the globe who live outside the US, who have an accredited bachelor's degree, and have the full recommendation of their local congregation. The process of being accepted by GCS and enrolling in a US school takes about four months. Students who attend HST can do all their work online (high speed internet is required), but must take the course Advanced Theological Research on site in Memphis. GCS pays the student's expenses for this Memphis trip.

The total cost of an accredited graduate degree in Bible or ministry is about \$50,000. HST provides a generous scholarship, GCS donors give \$5,000 per year for five years, and the student is required to contribute \$2,600 toward their degree.

For more information: visit [www.gcspathway.org](http://www.gcspathway.org) or email us at [gcspathwayinfo@gmail.com](mailto:gcspathwayinfo@gmail.com)

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# Find out more

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Find out more at: [www.gcspathway.org](http://www.gcspathway.org)  
or go to the GCS landing page on the HST website: <https://hst.edu/gcspathway/>  
Email us at: [gcspathwayinfo@gmail.com](mailto:gcspathwayinfo@gmail.com)

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