



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

GCS News - April 2022

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

Copies available at the [GCS website](#)

In this newsletter:

- Growing the Global Church
- Student Updates
- GCS Spotlight
- From Our Students
- Word from HST
- Invitation to be a Sponsor
- Message to Potential Students



Growing the Global Church

The early church experienced substantial growth in Jerusalem, but soon persecution scattered the early Christians well beyond the city. As they went, they preached the Gospel (Acts 8:4). Philip taught in Samaria (Acts 8:5-24), the newly converted Ethiopian returned

home to Africa (8:26-40), the Christians in Damascus instructed Saul (9:10-22), Peter worked in Lydda (9:32-42) and Caesarea (10:1-48), and Barnabas served in Antioch (11:19-30). A second phase of growth occurred when the Antioch church intentionally sent Barnabas and Saul out on the Christian mission (13:1-3). The rest of Acts centered on the work of Saul, who became Paul, in the Mediterranean world (13:4-28:30).

Then these first two phases of the growth of the early church, the preaching of those scattered by persecution and the intentional sending of missionaries, is followed by a third phase--local people spreading the faith. Paul reminded the Colossians how they had learned the Gospel from Epaphra, a local Christian (Col. 1:7). Another Colossian, Nympha, hosted a congregation in her house (Col. 4:15). Paul lauded the exceptional ministry of Onesimus, whom he reminded the people is "one of yourselves" (Col. 4:9). Soon people native to Asia Minor, Greece, Rome, and other places took a leading role in the preaching and work of the church.

This model of the global outreach of the early church can be duplicated today. Persecuted Christians carry their faith to new places, and many congregations have sent out missionaries, just as the one in Antioch. Now, in Churches of Christ all over the world, local people much like Epaphra, Nympha, and Onesimus spread the Gospel.

Global Christian Studies (GCS) provides a pathway for contemporary people like Epaphra, Nympha, and Onesimus to gain superior training in ministry. They are not being persecuted in their hometowns. No congregation is sending them out, because they already live in places like Antioch and Colossae, where they speak the language, have their homes and families, and know the culture. As they do their local work, they often desire more training.

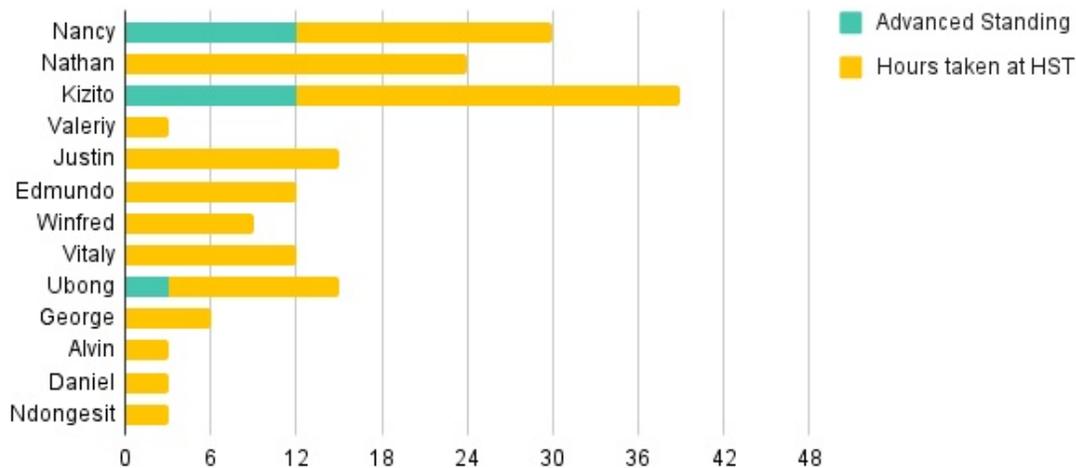
Global Christian Studies is not a school, but it does provide a way for these people to study at the master's level and learn the Bible, ministry, and mission in depth from members of the Churches of Christ. Students sponsored by GCS study online and earn a Master's of Art in Christian Ministry in about six to eight years, but never leave home. When they are finished with their degree, they have a lifetime of imitating people such as Epaphra, Nympha, and Onesimus by spreading the Gospel in their own land.

Jesus told us to go, make disciples, and teach (Matt. 28:19-20). The people we teach then teach others. This biblical chain of the spread of the Gospel remains a powerful example for contemporary churches. Global Christian Studies is part of that chain.

--Harold Shank

Student Updates

Student Progress



- **Nathan Wilson** of Australia took Systematic Theology with Dr. Powell. He said, “It’s my first Theology class and I loved it.”
- **Edmundo Lopez** of Bolivia took Stone-Campbell Movement History with Professor Berryhill. He said, “I obtained several benefits from this class: I have now a great understanding of the Stone-Campbell movement both globally and locally. Indeed, I did my class research project on the history of my local church here in Bolivia.”
- **Ubong Okorie** of Nigeria finished Spiritual and Theological Formation with Dr. Mark Adams. Ubong reports, “the course has helped me to be more intentional in some spiritually formative habits for personal as well as congregational matters.”
- **Kizito Jasper** of Nigeria took Basic New Testament Exegesis and Advanced Introduction to the New Testament. He said, “I gleaned so much from the two courses I took this semester. Advanced Introduction to the New Testament course was very insightful. I learned a whole lot about the context of the New Testament books and basic features and contents of each books. And it has and will continue to impact my ministry greatly. Basic New Testament Exegesis course also was super interesting.”
- **Justin Smith** of Switzerland successfully completed Spiritual and Theological Formation with Mark Adams. Justin said, “I appreciated how the class centered on practical application of the material, and I was able to spend a good amount of time reading Scripture, praying, journaling, and reflecting on my ministry through the different class assignments.”
- **Nancy Wu Won** of Australia just finished Advanced Introduction to the NT. She said, “I enjoyed thinking about what the scholars have wrestled with and enjoyed observing the process by which we received the canon

of the NT. It's nice to see the hand of God at work through the ages and the faith of those who have gone on before us.”

- **Vitaly Samodin** of Ukraine took Multicultural Ministry with Dr. Steve Cloer. Vitaly noted “He's done a great job immersing us into the discipline, sharing from his personal experiences as well as hosting a number of guest speakers working in the field.”
- **George Danquah** of Nigeria enrolled in Sermon Development and Delivery with Professor Dave Bland. George reports, “It was quite refreshing and rewarding for me going through the course. I got exposed to vast knowledge and experiences of preaching techniques. I understand what needs to be considered when preparing a sermon and how to effectively communicate the Word of God.”

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!

GCS Spotlight--Staff, Old and New

Staff Profile--Dr. Harold Shank, Executive Director

Harold Shank is the Executive Director and, along with Benny Tabalujan, one of the founders of Global Christian Studies. Harold currently works as a consultant with faith-based organizations. He provides Bible study material and offers support for those working with troubled children and families.

Harold serves as the national spokesperson for Network 1:27. Network 1:27 is a national organization of about 45 childcare agencies associated with Churches of Christ. He has advocated on behalf of Christian childcare since 1996, through speaking and writing articles and books.

Several of his books take up the biblical perspective on children. *Listen and Make Room—Joining God in Welcoming Children* (2020), *GodWorks—Joining Jesus on the Journey* (2016), *Listening to His Heartbeat—What the Bible Says about the Heart of God* (2009), and his forthcoming commentary on the Book of Deuteronomy all give voice to the concerns about children.

Harold has preached the Gospel for over fifty years, served as president of Ohio Valley University in Vienna, West Virginia, been a professor at Harding

School of Theology and Oklahoma Christian University, and for 32 years worked for the Highland Street Church of Christ in Memphis, TN.

He is also the author of *Loosening Your Grip* (1994), *Up Close and Personal: Embracing the Poor*, with Ron Bergeron and Anthony Wood (2000), *Children Mean the World to God* (2001), *The College Press Commentary on the Minor Prophets* (2001), *It's All About God* (2004), *Introduction to the Pentateuch* (2018), and *Truth for Today Commentary on Judges and Ruth* (2021).

Harold and his wife, Sally, are members of the Memorial Road Church of Christ in Edmond, OK, where Harold serves as an elder. They have two adult married sons and four grandchildren.

Wynnum Church of Christ Gift



GCS is honored to have received a recent gift of AU\$60,000 from the trustees of the Wynnum Church of Christ in Brisbane, Australia. This gift from the trustees is made possible because of the sale of the Wynnum church building in 2021 after the congregation decided to disband. This closes a chapter in the 63-year journey of God's people in that location – a journey which, in the words of longtime Wynnum trustee, Ken Ford, tells of a remarkable congregation which was “in all respects a model of good deeds” (Titus 1:7).

But, in a sense, Wynnum's journey doesn't end there. The generous gift from the trustees will help GCS further God's work as we invest in training and providing theological education for Christian leaders around the globe. In this way, through GCS, the Wynnum legacy will continue to contribute towards future kingdom growth. And so it is that all these individual steps taken in our individual journeys will one day be revealed as part of a splendid tapestry – which is nothing less than the magnificent story of God and His people.

- *Benny Tabalujan, elder, Belmore Road Church of Christ, Melbourne, Australia*

Introducing New Staff!

Due in part to the generous gift from the Wynnum Church of Christ, GCS has been able to secure the services of Caleb Dillinger and Heather Hollingsworth. Caleb will serve as the Director of Development, searching out sponsors for our

growing body of students. Heather will serve as the Director of Marketing, taking on responsibility for the website, newsletter, and other communications.

GCS Update

GCS had ten students on our roster, of whom eight completed classes in the fall of 2021. About half of the students received the grade of A while the rest finished with a grade of B. Twelve students are enrolled for the spring 2022 semester.

Of our ten students on our roster for the fall of 2021, six of them have sponsors. GCS staff asked ten congregations to join as sponsors in 2021 for the others, but none of the churches have yet responded.

From Our Students

Why I Study Theology--Kizito Jasper

I am currently engaged as a minister and an instructor. The local congregation where I minister is predominantly a youth setting and I see the vast majority of them wrestle with the viability of God in their lives. My immediate setting has youth engaging in several extremities to getting wealth and promising them the life of luxury they desire to live. With this particular setting I work with I see God working through my ministering to them to show them an alternate lifestyle. And in my ministry as an instructor, I work with teenagers who wrestle with teenage issues and God knows how much guidance they need. For some of them, they have been abandoned by the church, their parents, and even preachers, so the Bible college where I lecture becomes the last resort for such ones.



I started this year in the congregation I minister looking at the theme on "Our Identities as Christians." Since January we have covered a lot of topics from the Old Testament mostly (paralleling our relationship with God as Christians with YHWH's relationship with the children of Israel), and sparsely from the New Testament (planning to move to the New Testament from the next quarter April-June). From our study, my major audience (the youths) have really spoken with me outside the pulpit on how they have really lost it (their identities as Christians). For many, they were just comfortable wandering like the prodigal son, but with the

lesson(s) so far, they note that they "have come to themselves" and are intentionally working to live in the reality of who they have been made in Christ.

My study of theology is helping me bring God to bear with the multivalent nature of my immediate society and the youths I minister to.

Student Spotlight--George Brenya Danquah

One of our newest GCS students is George Brenya Danquah who is the Director of the Ruth Orr Memorial Community School in Tarkwa, Ghana, West Africa and also teaches at a local high school.

He conducts a regular radio program on the Bible and is also a minister of the Tarkwa-Lowcost Church of Christ. He became a Christian in 1999 through World Bible School. George and his wife Stella Ohene have three daughters, ages eight, four, and just over a year. George just completed Sermon Development and Delivery at HST. He called the class "very refreshing and rewarding." George noted the most helpful part of the class was the Professor Dave Bland and his classmates, who "created a friendly and brotherly-like atmosphere. They made me feel part of a learning community irrespective of my cultural orientation and background."

The class was helpful for George in his one-hour radio program. It helped him "reflect on how to teach and preach" and "relate the Word of God to the daily experiences of my audience." George reported on two people who recently came to Christ through his ministry. One young single mother, Janet, was baptized last fall. George reports she has "become very effective in the life and the work of the new congregation where I minister now." Bismark, a subsistence farmer, had visited the church for three years. After dealing with some issues in his life, George told of how Bismark was baptized in the fall. Now he and Janet "joyfully serve the church and their community." George's goal is to "be more focused with the business of God than what I have myself presently doing." We wish George a wonderful experience at HST, and a life filled with service to our Father.

Word from HST

Report from the new Director of the Library at HST

Jessica Holland began serving as the HST library director in July of 2021. She also teaches the Advanced Theological Research course.

Jessica has worked in various roles in academic libraries. Her library journey, beginning as a student worker in the Brown Library at Abilene Christian University in 2004 to her current position as director of the HST library, has given her a love of the many and varied functions of a library. She is especially convinced that the excellence of a library hinges largely on its ability to provide hospitality as well as

knowledge to its community.

Jessica and her husband, Cameron, attend the Holmes Road Church of Christ in Memphis, Tennessee, where Cameron serves as minister. While neither were born in Memphis, both consider it to be home and one of the best places on earth.



"I have known of the partnership between HST and GCS, but my most recent Advanced Theological Research course was my first time to work hand in hand with our GCS students. I was blessed by the experience and by the students. We are family, united by Christ, and this bond grows when we get to be in community with each other and learn from each other. The partnership between HST and GCS allows us this opportunity. God is doing powerful work around the world, and I am thankful that he is using the relationships we have formed through our shared experiences at HST to further his mission."

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.

GCS Overseeing Congregations

Eastside Church of Christ, 916 South Douglas Blvd, Midwest City, OK 73130
(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).

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 for how to engage with GCS. They can also email John Coffey (jcoffey@harding.edu) or Harold Shank (drharoldshank@gmail.com).

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 or email us at gcspathwayinfo@gmail.com

Find out more

[View this email in your browser](#)

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

Copyright © 2022 Global Christian Studies, All rights reserved.

Want to change how you receive these emails?
You can [update your preferences](#) or [unsubscribe from this list](#).

