



GWC's Commitment to Theological Education in Africa

by The Rev. Dr Mark Dickson (GWC Principal)

In 2023, the GWC board adopted a fresh iteration of the GWC strategic vision, which will be in effect for the next five years. Below is a bulleted summary of the seven pillars of that vision, with the overall focus being to build up theological education in Africa.

As I've said, this vision and plan has seven pillars. These can be arranged into three broad areas: leadership development, educational reach, and internal cohesion. Below, I'll say a little about each pillar, which is located under their appropriate headers.

Leadership Development

- Faculty: GWC aims to continue building a faculty team that seeks its theological unity in Reformed and Evangelical belief, shaped by the deep conviction that there is no other source of God's revelation outside of the Bible.
- Graduates: **The goal is to equip future leaders with the ability to interpret and apply Scripture effectively within the context of 21st-century Africa**, remaining faithful to Evangelical doctrine while addressing contemporary needs.

Educational Reach

- Collaboration: GWC seeks to partner with individuals and organisations committed to strengthening and sustaining theological education across Africa.
- Online Expansion: Our strategy emphasises expanding GWC's reach by offering online courses and making theological education more accessible across Africa.
- Thought Leadership: GWC aspires to be a leading voice on theological issues and contribute to critical conversations within the African church, including matters of theological pedagogy.

Internal Cohesion

- Harnessing Technology: GWC recognises the power of technology to streamline administration and enrich student learning, but at the same time, wishes to preserve the value of time-honoured teaching practices.
- Vibrant College Community: **We aspire to build a strong, united college community that includes faculty, staff, and students.** This fosters collaboration and a shared sense of purpose.

By focusing on these three broad areas in fresh ways, GWC seeks to continue playing a significant role in equipping future generations of African Christian leaders and shaping theological education for the continent's varied contexts.

Plans for Greater Accessibility at the College

The slow and faulty lift operating in the main building at GWC has cost the college community a lot financially and in terms of accessibility over the years.

The current lift set-up is stainless steel cladding along two sides of the interior with folding bars along the two opposite sides for entrance and exit to the floors. In addition to any problems caused by mechanical breakdowns, there is also the difficulty of restricted access to the auditorium on the second floor due to the offices built adjacent to the lift.

We believe that **our students and staff would benefit hugely from installing a new lift**, which will be built by the stairwell outside the library and able to service all the floors without passing through any offices. It will also have a greater capacity than the existing lift's maximum of two people. Because of the pressing need for access and our frustrated efforts to have the current lift repaired (related to auditing and certification), we've decided to move forward and replace it.

The total cost of the new lift in our main building is approximately R1 300 000, which includes a large scenic elevator, associated building works, professional fees, and council scrutiny costs. **Be praying for us as we continue to raise capital for this project, and please get in touch with the college if you would like to contribute to it.**



Donate towards the lift here www.gwc.ac.za/donate/gwc-general-fund/ and use the reference: GWC Lift



Planning on Postgraduate Studies at GWC? Consider Hyflex Learning

Last year, GWC shared an update concerning its Hyflex classroom. By utilising that classroom in 2024, the college has already been able to extend two in-person postgraduate intensives to those studying remotely. Presently, the college is working on being accredited to provide this mode of learning. However, as Dr Lovell notes, "We are able to offer modules in this mode due to COVID era regulations for emergency remote teaching and learning that are still in effect." Excitingly, when the college is accredited for remote learning, it will already have the necessary tools in its operational Hyflex classroom.

Dr Lovell continues, "To my mind, **our capability in hyflex mode teaching and learning has been a huge leap forward for GWC's postgraduate programmes**," with students joining for their respective courses from across the country. Furthermore, GWC was able to open up Dr Craig Blomberg's recent New Testament module to a much larger audience, not only those who couldn't travel to the college but beyond the physical capacity of any of its lecture rooms. "Many people can't imagine returning to postgraduate studies," says Dr Lovell, "because the thought of packing up their life and ministry and returning to Cape Town is unimaginable. But this is a new way forward for those people. It also opens avenues for people who want to audit individual subjects, to extend their thinking and challenge themselves, without returning to full-time study."

In conclusion, Dr Lovell says, "**We should not overlook how much this will benefit remote research students**, who work on dissertations but do not attend classes. It's easy for such students to become isolated very quickly, and research can stagnate easily. Weekly meetings of the ERF are now held in hyflex mode, allowing remote students to participate in GWC's research community, at least to an extent. The simple act of touching base once a week can yield surprising motivational results! At least, students feel like they are part of something."

Explore: An Introduction to Theological Thinking for the Continent

Explore continues its rapid growth, with over 4000 modules being studied during 2023 by 2700 students in 22 African countries. That same year saw 67 students graduating from the course. Student numbers aren't only rising all the time, but drop-out rates are also decreasing, which can in part be attributed to the establishment and development of bases in countries like Zambia, Sierra Leone, Botswana and South Sudan. Convinced of the value of the Explore course, it's our prayer that we'll have 3500 students enrolled by the end of 2024, a number we're hoping will include more pastors and ministry leaders.

Naturally, this growth and new focus demands structures to foster further progress. With this in mind, we're working to develop our Eastern, South-Central, and Southern Regions in several ways. New appointments are key to that focus, and as of May 2024, we've already employed an Explore Executive and Regional Administrators for each of those three regions. These roles are essential for the running of Explore, ensuring that all aspects of our activities are centred on our vision to not only take the gospel to Africa but also to equip African Christians to read the Bible for themselves, live out its truth, and share its good news.

One of the exciting aspects of the Explore course that often goes unnoticed is its function as a channel for bringing students to GWC. Presently, there are 33 students at the college who've completed one or more Explore modules in the past.

Sylvester, in 2nd year, notes that central to his training at FOCUS Zimbabwe, a student organisation, was Explore. "This helped me," he says, "and it made a lot of sense to see the Bible as one story with one Author. Indeed, it was a helpful tool that prepared me for my theological studies here at GWC. Despite challenges from time to time, there are also joys, and I am grateful to God for the opportunity for me to be at GWC. In many aspects of my life, I see growth. Keep me in your prayers."



Rasford, in 1st year, had a similar experience. In his words, "The Explore course is a bird's eye view of the GWC curriculum, which helps one properly understand the single story of redemption in the Bible, unfolding in two different segments, namely the Old and the New Testaments. This impacted greatly on me, as I had to resign from the New Apostolic Church after coming face to face with the truth simply explained by the Explore course."

Finally, while Explore is growing and leading students to the college, it's also being used in other African colleges. This is the testimony of GWC alumnus Inocêncio Varine, who recently oversaw the official opening of Colégio de Formação em Liderança Bíblica (Biblical and Leadership Training College), in Mozambique. He says, "**The starting of the ministry in Mozambique, and its expanding in various parts of the country has been continually encouraged and supported by GWC**, who have been sending students for ministry week since 2008. However," Inocêncio continues, "translating and teaching the Explore material into Portuguese has given depth to our own program and been a personal growth point. In November 2017, we had our first graduation in Cape Town. Currently, we have four students, and by using Explore, we aim to introduce students to theological thinking, ultimately encouraging them to travel to South Africa for theological training at GWC. By this pipeline, we're preparing Mozambicans for ministry."

Find out more about Explore here: www.explore.org.za



Past GWC Students, Present REACH SA Leaders

Here are the testimonies of four men, four leaders within the denomination of REACH SA, who remember the theological training they received at George Whitefield College as having a lasting impression on their roles in ministry throughout the years.

When the recently ordained Presiding Bishop of REACH SA, Siegfried Ngubane, reflects on his time at GWC, **he considers the years spent there instrumental in instilling a deep sense of purpose and commitment to the gospel mission, as well as an environment in which practical mentorship and discipleship could take place** (the importance of cultivating relationships between Christian leaders has lasted long past his studying years). Siegfried is now devoted to encouraging future generations to take up the commission entrusted to them while remaining steadfast in truth, love, and unity.

From within Siegfried's own ministry, Peter Makapela, the area Bishop of the Western Cape in REACH SA, came to his years of theological training at GWC. The experience empowered Peter to embrace church planting as his vocation, and he planted Christ Church Strand in 2007. Today, he remains passionate about establishing churches and gospel communities in the poorest areas of South Africa.

Another of GWC's past students, Goodenough Mthembu, the area Bishop of KwaZulu-Natal and the current Rector at Christ Church Pinetown, also draws on his formative years of theological education to shape his vision for our country. He believes that his past training has laid the foundation for godly leadership and the value of wisdom learned through experience.

The final word from this group of college alumni comes through Mbulelo Maliza, presently serving as area Bishop of Gauteng. From GWC to the Townships within (what most people think is) a small region of our country, he remains certain that genuine relationships and partnerships amongst the REACH SA leaders are vital to the success of ministers and the continued health of their congregations.

If you would like to support these men by praying for them and their ministries, here are some of their own suggestions:

Goodenough Mthembu: to be faithful in his ministry of the Word and the establishment of strong, local churches within KwaZulu-Natal;

Siegfried Ngubane: for increased unity among the members of REACH SA and George Whitefield College; for God's continued guidance and discernment for the leadership of REACH SA;

Peter Makapela, that God would financially bless REACH SA which would, in turn, use the funds for church planting in impoverished areas;

Mbulelo Maliza, for a long-term solution to the lack of human and financial resources as well as the establishment of life-giving relationships within the leadership of REACH SA.

Let us then end with an exhortation by Siegfried that we may all "...steadfastly uphold the timeless truths of the gospel, demonstrating faithfulness and love in all our efforts with our primary focus being the faithful proclamation of the gospel extending Christ's love to those in need."

Behind the Scenes: Get to Know Qukeza Xinwa and the 100 Club

My name is Qukeza Xinwa and I was born and bred in East London. Growing up, I was raised by a resilient single mother alongside my four brothers. Our household was deeply rooted in faith, with my mother being a guiding force in our family and a dedicated Sunday School teacher. It was through her unwavering commitment to the church community that I developed a profound understanding of my own faith, finding inspiration in her steadfast devotion to Christ.

Professionally, my journey has been a winding one encompassing roles in both the educational and corporate sectors. I began my career in education, working at an FET college. I held various positions there, from Student Advisor to being involved in the college's accreditation. After that, I transitioned into the corporate environment, specialising in Recruitment and Talent Management. Currently, I'm employed at GWC working alongside our esteemed partners, the 100 Club.

The 100 Club is a network of churches from around the globe dedicated to supporting our students through financial contributions and prayer. Given my passion for education and empowerment, I'm hugely excited about this endeavour. I believe that my experience in various sectors has equipped me with the skills to navigate the challenges of the working world and make a positive impact. This position also allows me to use my skills by working with people from all walks of life.

I'm grateful for the privilege to collaborate with theological institutions across Africa, assisting in the development of their students and facilitating exchanges with GWC. Alongside Alison Lee, our Executive Ambassador, I strive to ensure that our partnerships are nurtured, fostering growth and sustainability for all involved. Throughout all, I work to maintain the values of my upbringing—integrity, resilience, and a deep-rooted commitment to service. My journey continues to evolve, driven by a passion for empowering others and a profound faith that guides me every step of the way.

From Conversion to Calling, to College and Beyond

In 2008, Emmanuel Mupfure arrived in South Africa as a refugee from Zimbabwe—and he remains one to this day. Emmanuel came to know the Lord while attending Trinity Church Mitchell's Plain. He remembers God's gracious intervention in his life and says, "God found me in a time of confusion. When my identity was not rooted in anything. I was just a young man trying to find his place in a foreign community."

By reading the Bible, but especially those opening lines of Genesis, Emmanuel gained clarity concerning whose story we truly inhabit. Not ours. But God's. "Thus, everything in my life had to correspond with the word of God and what He says about humanity." Throughout his school years, Emmanuel served in children's ministry at Trinity Church, eventually deciding to pursue a career in ministry. However, he had little idea how the ministry would correspond with his other hopes of being a pilot and rapper—for the record, he didn't become a pilot, though he did drop an EP years later.

During Emmanuel's gap year, the church encouraged him to further equip himself for children's ministry through GWC's year-long certificate program, which turned out to be the start of his Bachelor's Degree in Theology. Following college, from 2021 to 2023, Emmanuel spent time training as a curate at Trinity Church Mitchell's Plain. This led to him being ordained earlier this year, becoming the first person who grew up in that church also to be ordained there. It's a wonderful, kind of full-circle story.

Are you interested in praying for Emmanuel's future plans? Though he was supposed to begin an internship in Ireland this year, God has instead placed him as the assistant minister of St Luke's Church in Mitchell's Plain. Join us as we pray for him among our many other alumni and the gospel opportunities before them.

Women in Theological Training: From GWC to JBC

Hi readers, I'm Mbali Maliza, and I primarily work alongside my husband Mbulelo on the ministry team at Christ Church Leondale. I also raise our three beautiful children, with another on the way!

My ministry journey began decades ago while at Melville Union Church, where I was serving as an apprentice in Children's Ministry. Throughout the years, I'd served on other ministry teams, but my passion has remained the desire to see young children come to know and love the Lord for themselves. In addition to my work at Leondale, I also lecture part-time at the Johannesburg Bible College (JBC). The main objective of JBC is to train men and women to teach the Bible faithfully. To this end, my role, which particularly focuses on teaching women, is to equip our students in the handling of God's Word so that they can train others in whatever ministry context, long after they have left our classrooms.

My time studying at George Whitefield College was one of deep enrichment, where I was able to strengthen and nourish my own faith while being taught faithful Bible exposition, church history, and Christian ethics. GWC creates a unique student environment with a curriculum focused on theological training, biblical studies, and practical ministry. As I reflect on my own time at the college, I'm grateful that acquiring Bible knowledge was emphasised along with critical thinking, effective communication and spiritual growth. It is because of this that I'm able to do the work I love so much at JBC—not to mention among children in the church as well as my own home.

New Study Options at GWC

At GWC we want to be responsive to the needs of our various stakeholders. In response to numerous requests for online training, we are in the process of developing online programmes. These programmes will serve those who are not (yet!) able to come to college and our graduates outside of Cape Town. While we are in the process of completing the final steps in registering these programmes, we are pleased to offer online short courses as 'tasters' of what is coming.

Short courses allow students to engage with learning without registering for a full qualification. Short courses do not lead to qualifications registered with the South African educational authorities but may qualify learners for recognition of prior learning exemption at institutions that offer accredited programmes in the same field of study.

We have been running an online short course in biblical theology during the first half of the year. Approximately 30 students enrolled for this course and we have had very appreciative and positive comments as they have worked their way through the Bible.

Apprentices, lay readers and Christians who wish to develop a deeper understanding of Mark's Gospel may want to consider enrolling in a short course in Mark's Gospel (120 learning hours). These short courses are pitched at the level of first-year students. GWC has enjoyed interest from all over Africa for these Short Courses.

Leaders and teachers in theological colleges in Africa and abroad may consider enrolling for GWC's unique short course in Teaching and Learning for Higher Theological Education (TALHITE) (120 learning hours). This short course is has been developed for those who already hold a Bachelor of Theology degree or equivalent. This course enables theological educators and leaders to become reflective practitioners who construct and deliver theological education that is theologically consistent while incorporating appropriate principles of the scholarship of teaching and learning in higher education.

In addition to these and other short courses, we hope to announce the addition of accredited programmes in the near future. Please pray for us as we complete the accreditation of these future programmes.