



GWC Newsletter | October 2026

Diverse in Heritage, United in Christ

by Dr Jonathan More (GWC Vice-Principal: Academic)

Dear Friends,

The theme running through this newsletter is heritage and culture. It is particularly fitting for us at GWC, as heritage is something we see every day. Our students come from more than 15 different African countries, bringing with them different languages, histories, cultures, traditions and experiences.

At our recent Heritage Day celebration – an annual calendar highlight – students, staff and faculty gathered around tables laden with food from across the continent. We enjoyed dancing, singing and poetry that reflected the many places from which our community comes. It was a joyful reminder of just how wonderfully varied God's world is.

There is something deeply theological about that diversity. God creates variety. He delights in difference. Scripture does not present diversity as something that must ultimately disappear, rather, one of the most glorious pictures of the future God has promised is found in Revelation 7, where John sees a great multitude "from every nation, tribe, people and language" standing before the throne and before the Lamb. The remarkable thing about this vision is that the diversity remains – the nations, tribes, peoples and languages are not erased. As biblical scholar Esau McCaulley observes, the diversity of cultures is itself a manifestation of God's glory. The picture of heaven is not of humanity becoming culturally indistinguishable, but of the rich diversity of God's creation gathered together in worship.

And yet there is something else equally important in John's vision: this wonderfully diverse multitude is profoundly united. They are all gathered around the same throne, worshipping the same Lamb, singing the same song: "Salvation belongs to our God, who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb." That is an important distinction for us as Christians. Diversity is good, but diversity is not the ultimate good. Our different cultures and heritages are gifts from God, but they are not the things around which our deepest identity is built. We are united by something greater than our nationality, language or cultural background: we belong to Christ.

Paul gives us another helpful picture when he describes the church as one body with many members. The ear is not the eye, and the hand is not the foot. Each has its own God-given role. Yet each member exists for the sake of the whole body. That gives us a helpful way to think about our community at GWC. The question is not simply what makes us different, but instead: How has God given each of us our particular heritage and gifts so that we might serve the whole body of Christ? For example, how can Ugandans serve the global church? Or, what particular gifts and experiences do Zimbabweans bring? How might South Africans contribute? What can Christians from Kenya, Zambia, Malawi, Nigeria, Tanzania and the many other nations represented at GWC teach and give to one another?

Our differences are not obstacles to Christian unity. Nor does Christian unity require us to become the same. Rather, the gospel gives us a unity in Christ that is strong enough to embrace genuine difference.

As you read this newsletter, I hope you will enjoy something of the richness and variety of life at GWC. But I also hope you will see beyond the diversity to the deeper unity that holds us together, and for which we praise Him.

With warm greetings,

Jonathan



Culture, Communication & Effective Ministry

Kevin Zwart from Africa Inland Mission (AIM) came to College recently to speak to students about the importance of being equipped to share Christ in a way that communicates most clearly to people from a different culture.

Drawing on his experience from working in cross-cultural missions work in Mozambique and Namibia over the past 20 years, Zwart introduced the eight cultural mapping scales, taken from the book *Culture Map* by Erin Meyers.



CULTURE MAP SCALES

Low-context (Explicit)	COMMUNICATING	High-context (Implicit)
Direct negative feedback	EVALUATING	Indirect negative feedback
Egalitarian	LEADING	Hierarchical
Consensual	DECIDING	Top-down
Task-based	TRUSTING	Relationship-based
Confrontational	DISAGREEING	Avoids confrontation
Linear time (Structured)	SCHEDULING	Flexible time



Created by Agile-Leads

“This scale can help individuals understand what may be going on in the minds, hearts, values and judgements behind our behaviour and interactions with those from other cultures.

For instance, in the deciding scale, if a decision has to be made and one comes from the ‘consensual’ side of the scale, an individual would expect to be heard, consulted and their input valued. If their manager/church leader comes from a ‘top-down’ culture, they would make the decision regardless of what others think, because they have been put in a position of authority to do that very thing and carry the weight of those decisions on their shoulders alone. This could lead to resentment, confusion or misunderstanding,” Zwart explained.

“There are countless examples of how people coming from opposite sides of the scale can misinterpret the other. In our world of Christian evangelism, even the simple, biblical idioms we use must be contextualised carefully.

A San Bushman in the Kalahari is not likely to understand what a ‘fisher of men’ is or even a ‘good shepherd’, so, as we step out in ministry we must be mindful, prepared, and adapt our message accordingly,” he said. Zwart shared a number of other examples and principles with students to help emphasise how crucial understanding culture and context is when sharing Christ.



At GWC, I have had a glimpse of getting to know brothers and sisters from countries such as Kenya, Ghana, Malawi, and South Sudan, as well as people from different parts of South Africa itself. Being surrounded by such diversity has expanded my understanding of the world. These interactions stretch our perspective and remind us that the world is much bigger than the corners we come from. You begin to realise that your own culture, experiences, and way of seeing things are not the only ways of understanding life.

My name is Siphamandla Sitole. Visit our website to read more about my experience as a current student at GWC.



We invite you to join us for our annual

COMMISSIONING SERVICE



25th November 2026 | 10:00 AM

TOKAI COMMUNITY CHURCH

Recently ordained in Uganda, Tumukunde Mwesiga is one of many GWC graduates faithfully serving Christ through local church ministry. His story is a beautiful reminder that theological education is never simply about classrooms or books. It is about preparing faithful servants to cross cultural and contextual barriers, navigate the challenges of ministry, proclaim God’s Word, disciple believers, and strengthen the Church for generations to come.

Visit our [YouTube channel](#) or scan to hear Tumukunde’s story. ✨



Many cultures. One in community. One in Christ.

Our annual Heritage Day celebration has become one of the highlights of the College calendar over the years. Students, staff and faculty wear traditional or cultural attire, people from the same country team up to prepare food or a snack from home. Our international students also have the opportunity to share and display aspects of their own cultural heritage. A vibrant programme of dancing, singing and stories/poetry is performed by different groups, making the day a wonderful celebration of the many cultures represented at GWC. As can be seen by the images below, this year's event was once again a rich feast of cultural diversity and celebration...

Heritage Day 2026



Visit our
[YouTube Channel](#)
or
Scan and join the fun!



Partnering in Theological Education for the Global South



Andrés Ruiz-Caro completed his MTh degree at the end of 2025. His study journey with GWC started in 2016 when he enrolled for the Higher Certificate programme, with a plan to spend one year studying God's word.

During that time, his desire to learn more of the beauty of the Scriptures grew, and he began to dream and pray about becoming a lecturer in order to teach others what he was learning.

What work are you currently involved in?

My wife Annika (also a GWC graduate) and I work as missionaries in Santiago, the capital of Chile. We are members of the pastoral team of a local church called Iglesia Santiago Apostol, and as such are very involved in the life of the church, ministering to people at home, leading a Bible study and preaching. We are also staff members of the Anglican seminary of Chile, CEP (Centre of Pastoral Studies). I am a lecturer and assist with some administrative tasks, while Annika serves as registrar and librarian and disciples female students.

How has GWC's TALHITE (Teaching and Learning for Higher Theological Education) course been of benefit in your institution?

I can describe the positive impact of TALHITE in at least three distinct ways: Firstly, it provides a Trinitarian theological foundation for the task of teaching, which is largely absent in pedagogy literature; secondly, it aids lecturers in improving their instruction by providing a clear structure for both content and format, ensuring clarity regarding learning outcomes; and thirdly, it transforms educators from mere 'holders of information' into active facilitators. This means that students become active participants themselves, learning how to find, retain, and develop information.

What needs do you see in your current context that can be fulfilled by courses such as TALHITE, and indeed, solid theological training as a whole?

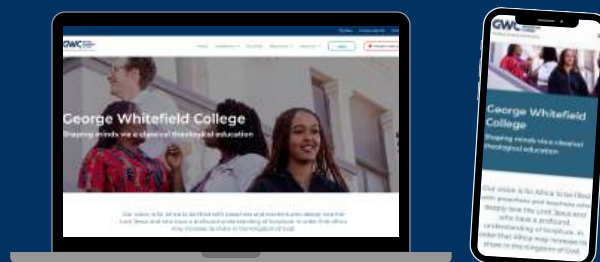
In our context, the traditional view of learning is one where students sit ready to take notes, while the lecturer – viewed as the sole source of knowledge – passes information down to them. Similarly, our seminary has a long tradition of missionaries arriving as 'experts' to teach the local community, with alumni to this day relying on notes provided by them. Programmes like TALHITE challenge this view by equipping educators to foster learning skills, so that students are empowered to face new challenges and generate their own theological insights. This is far more sustainable in the long run.



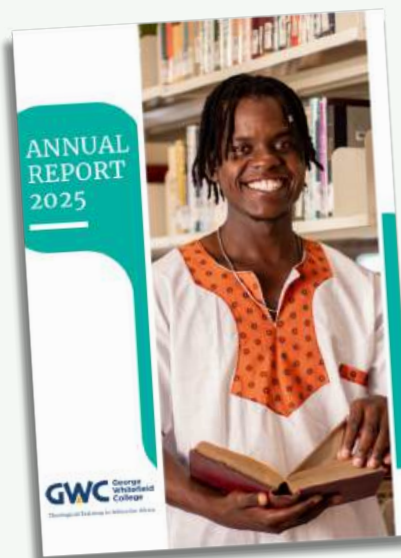
WE'RE EXCITED TO ANNOUNCE...

GWC'S NEW WEBSITE IS LIVE!

- ▶ FRESH **NEW LOOK**
- ▶ IMPROVED **NAVIGATION**
- ▶ NEW **EXPERIENCE**



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into the Story**



IS THE NEXT GWC SUNDAY AT YOUR CHURCH?



We'd love to hear from you!
For all church-related enquiries,
please contact:

Partner Engagement Officer,
Qukeza Xinwa: qxinwa@gwc.ac.za

Explore News

Connect • Pray • Build

GWC **Explore**
Theological Education in Africa



Explore Executive, Mawonga Celesi with Dumisani Theological Institute delegation and facilitators.

Visits to Explore partners play an important strategic role in strengthening relationships, listening to local needs and reaffirming our shared commitment to making theological education accessible in more communities.

Recently, Mawonga travelled to the Eastern Cape to meet with Explore partners and facilitators across the province. A key focus of the visit was Dumisani Theological Institute, Explore's principal partner in the Eastern Cape and an important hub supporting several satellite Explore groups in the region.

Time spent with Dumisani and local facilitators provided an opportunity to encourage those serving on the ground, strengthen existing relationships and reaffirm Dumisani's strategic role in the continued expansion of Explore across the province.

These partnerships are vital to the growth of Explore, helping extend theological training beyond the college campus and into local communities.



GWC's Explore team recently attended the IC3 Africa Conference in Cape Town, joining church leaders from across the continent for a time of encouragement, equipping and connection.

The team returned with fresh insights, practical tools and spiritual encouragement for ministry, while strengthening relationships with fellow brothers and sisters in Christ.

Former GWC Principal Dr David Seccombe honoured at book launch

Thank you to everyone who joined us for the launch of The Secco Collection, David Mansfield's new publication celebrating the life, ministry and enduring influence of GWC's former Principal, Dr David Seccombe.

It was a special afternoon of memories, stories and fellowship as we reflected on Dr Seccombe's contribution to the church, to theological education and to the many lives he influenced through his ministry.

The event was a wonderful opportunity to celebrate the fruits of Dr Seccombe's vision, faithfulness, and commitment to theological education in Africa tangibly seen in the richly diverse community that GWC enjoys today, with students drawn from across the continent and beyond. Visit gwc.ac.za to read the full article.



NEW

The Higher Certificate in Bible and Ministry (HCert Bible and Ministry)

is an **online qualification** designed to provide a theoretical foundation in biblical studies, theology, and Christian ministry for those interested in serving in their local church.

Applications for 2027 are open!



<https://www.gwc.ac.za/academics/hcert-bible-and-ministry>

