

focus germany

NEWSLETTER OF THE GIESSEN SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY
FREIE THEOLOGISCHE HOCHSCHULE GIESSEN

SPRING 2022

Theology , Queen of Sciences

Everyone knows that you study theology to become a pastor or a Bible teacher, but what else can you do with a theological education? Many of our students come here with the goal of studying theology as a first step toward some other vocation. This may seem odd to us, but when universities were first founded in the late Middle Ages, that was the ideal. Theology was the “queen of sciences”, and lawyers, philosophers, and mathematicians viewed it as the starting point for their professions. There is still a lot to be said for that approach. A Christian who wants to make an impact in another field can benefit greatly from reflecting on its connection to theology since “all truth is God’s truth”. Here at the GST our primary task is training people for full-time Christian ministry, but we’re excited about those who want serve Christ effectively in another vocation and trust us to help them lay a solid theological foundation to build upon.

Dr. Joel White



Dr. Joel White

Dear Friends of the Giessen School of Theology,

Over the past few years, it seems like we have been riding a wave at the Giessen School of Theology. We’re enjoying a phase of expansion. Our student body has been growing, and we’re gaining more and more friends and supporters. Our building project is moving forward, and our new facilities will accommodate 250 students preparing for Christian ministry – more than ever before, but the need is great!

1,400: That’s how many alumni we have so far. They live in 45 countries. Half of them serve the Lord in pastoral ministry, and they are doing a great job. What many don’t know is that the other half work not in a church, but in some other capacity: as journalists, teachers of religion in



Dr. Stephan
Holthaus

the public schools, Bible translators, counselors, missionaries, theology professors, social workers, and much more. The GST trains more people for work in parachurch organizations than any other institution of higher learning in Germany.

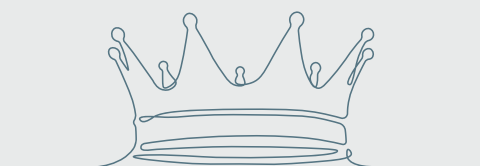
Some of our graduates have gone on to acquire other qualifications and work in business, law, psychology, or politics. They wanted a solid evangelical theology as the basis for their endeavors in other fields, and they are making a difference in our society.

Every graduate has a unique biography and calling, and we stand behind all of them. God calls his people to serve in many different capacities, both in the Church and in the world. Every person on the planet needs the Lord – small children and nursing home residents, remote people groups in Siberia and postmodern urbanites in Berlin. Our vision is to train dynamic messengers of hope for all kinds of people in all kinds of places.

Thank you so much for your prayers and gifts. Without them we couldn’t train so many eager young people who want to make a difference in the world for Christ!

With warmest greetings from the GST,

Dr. Stephan Holthaus
President of GST





Applied Theology

Not every GST student wants to be a pastor!



Church is all about fellowship and discipleship in daily life. I dream of creating spaces where people feel a sense of belonging and are reconciled to God, each other, and creation. My heart especially goes out to those living on the margins of society – the poor, the addicts, victims of abuse, etc. My wife and I are considering joining a community for needy people on a farm near Hannover. My job would be to serve as chaplain there.

Jonathan Altstaedt, 2nd-year M.A. student



I feel called to go the Democratic Republic of Congo to help with the theological education of pastors there. Good theology is the foundation for healthy churches. I think my studies at the GST, especially in missions and biblical exegesis, have prepared me well for this task, and I look forward to passing on what I have learned to pastors in the Congo, most of whom have very little training.

Maren Godau, 2021 B.A. graduate

others well on their faith journey. I hope to become a Christian counselor or life coach. Since I have always loved people and animals, I would like to specialize in approaches that make use of therapy animals.

Annalena Murphy, 2nd-year B.A. student



A few years ago, I became aware of the ongoing need for Bible translators. There are still over 2000 ethnic groups that do not have the Word of God in their mother tongue. That

caught my attention since I love languages. I already have a degree in linguistics, and I came to the GST to learn the biblical languages and optimally prepare myself for the task of making the Bible available to people in their own language so they can come to know Jesus.

Lisa Volk, 3rd-year B.A. student



When I'm done with my studies at the GST, I want to work with people who, whether due to illness or adversity, are not able to cope in daily life. I want to help them get back on track and become strong enough to function on their own again. I am here to gain a biblical foundation, so that I can lead

imprint

Freie Theologische Hochschule Giessen
Giessen School of Theology
Rathenaustasse 5-7
D-35394 Giessen, Germany
Tel. 0049 641 979700 / Fax 0049 641 9797039
FocusGermany@fthgiessen.de
Internet: www.fthgiessen.de

Editor: Dr. Joel White
Layout: spoon design, www.spoondesign.de
Photos: Private / Shutterstock.com



Building Project

Update

Last year we told you about our need for a new building. Our present facilities are not nearly large enough as the GST continues to grow. A plan was conceived to build one large facility that will house all the classrooms and offices that until now have been scattered among four smaller, run-down buildings. Last summer the ground was broken, and our new

building was quickly erected. During the winter construction went smoothly inside, and we hope to move into the new building by mid-summer. We've put together a brief film to give you a better feel for the place, which you can access via the QR code below or by entering the following URL: <https://youtu.be/SD-SOR8KFvGg>. Please pray that there will be no major delays and that the remaining funds needed will come in. Over 80% of the total has already been raised, but we still need about a million Euros. If you would like to help, you can use the form on the back page of this newsletter to contribute.



Support the GST by sponsoring a runner/walker/biker

After two cancellations due to Covid, the GST will finally be able to hold another "Sponsorenlauf" this spring. "Sponsorenlauf" literally means "sponsors' run", but the great thing is that the sponsors don't have to run; they get GST students to do it for them! On May 20, 2022, the FTH community will gather at 3:00 p.m. to run, walk, or bike as far as they can in 2



hours. Sponsors agree ahead of time to make a contribution per kilometer toward the building project. If you want to help out, contact us at sponsorenlauf@fthgiessen.de, and we'll link you up with a student who will run for you. You'll get to know one of our students, and we'll raise some money. Even the German's call that a "Win-Win-Situation" (really!).



Friends' Corner



In the last issue of Focus Germany, we informed you about a new non-profit based in Florida called "Friends of the Giessen School of Theology". A board was formed and met for the first time last summer. It is presently made up of four members: Joel White, Professor of New Testament at the GST, Jimmy Thomas, a business man in Tampa, Florida, and a longtime supporter of the GST, Suzan Hicks, missions pastor of a large church in Nashville, Tennessee, who spent several years as missionary in Germany, and Ditmar Pauck, a German national and a graduate of the GST who oversees the work of a Latin American mission from his base in Florida. At their first meeting the board laid out their purpose as follows: to help promote awareness of the Giessen School of Theology by recruiting students and raising up donors, encouraging travel to Germany to raise awareness of the spiritual needs there, and encouraging the faculty, staff, and students of the GST to carry out their calling faithfully and joyfully. The board will be visiting the GST in May to see how they can better serve the GST.



STUDENT IN FOCUS

Sophia Rudolf

2nd-year B.A. student

Hi! My name is Sophia Rudolf, I'm 22 years old, and I am a second year B.A. student at the Giessen School of Theology. I wasn't raised in a Christian home, but Jesus called me to be a part of his family when I was

18. Throughout my teenage years, I yearned to know whether God exists. I knew that if he did, then it would have a dramatic effect on me personally. When I finally did encounter Jesus, it was like coming home. My enthusiasm for him and his kingdom is boundless, and my heart is set on the most exciting calling I can think of: introducing other people to him. That's why I decided to study theology here at the GST. I'm very thankful for GTS's commitment to the authority of Scripture and its rigorous academic approach. The fellowship with other students here is incredibly valuable, too. Even now, I am often amazed that I have the chance to invest so much time in learning God's Word. It is a privilege that I hope I will never take lightly.



ALUMNI IN FOCUS

Joerg-Peter Koch

My name is Joerg-Peter Koch (aka "JP"), I'm 44 years old. I'm happily married to Nora, and we have two wonderful children: Leo, aged 10, and Eva, who is 7. I graduated from the Giessen School of Theology in 2004. It was there that my heart be-

gan to beat for missions. Both the mission prayer group and the mission and church-planting courses played an important role in shaping me. I enjoyed the good Bible teaching and the close fellowship of Christians, but they convinced me that I wasn't called to be a typical pastor; my gifts are more in evangelism, and I like to think "outside the box". I wanted to go somewhere, where few people have ever heard about Jesus. That's how we ended up with Overseas Mission Fellowship and moved to Japan in 2008. During the first phase of our ministry, we planted a church. For the last four years we have been living in a small fishing village, trying to live a "salty" life for Jesus so that others develop a thirst for him. I serve as a coach and mentor of Discipleship and Multiplication for young Christian leaders throughout Japan. My wife runs our "open house" and is a trusted friend and counselor of many women in our area.



If you no longer wish to receive this newsletter, please send an email with "Unsubscribe Focus" in the subject line to FocusGermany@fthgiessen.de, and we will remove you from our mailing list.



I wish to make a donation to the Giessen School of Theology (GST)

I want to make a ☐ one-time ☐ monthly ☐ annual
gift of ☐ \$50 ☐ \$100 ☐ \$500 ☐ other amount \$ _____

NAME:

ADDRESS:

CITY, STATE, ZIPCODE:

- ☐ check enclosed (Make your check payable to "Friends of the Giessen School of Theology")
☐ I would prefer an email receipt.

EMAIL ADDRESS:

Please print legibly for receipting purposes.

All contributions are tax deductible.

Please make donations at:

Friends of the Giessen
School of Theology

Bank of America

Account Number: 8981 2619 1380

Routing Number: 063100277

Or send a check to:

Friends of the Giessen
School of Theology

c/o Suzan Hicks, Treasurer

300 Yorkshire Circle

Nashville, TN 37211

USA

