



focus germany

NEWSLETTER OF THE GIESSEN SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY
 FREIE THEOLOGISCHE HOCHSCHULE GIESSEN

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The Day After

Films about epidemics, disasters, and even zombies are all the rage on Netflix these days. For instance, *The Day After*, which debuted in 1983 and purported to be a true-to-life



Dr. Joel White

portrayal of the consequences of an all-out nuclear war, is currently popular in Germany. The older ones among us will remember the fear and apprehension this caused among family members and friends. Why is it that we're drawn to these sorts of stories in times like this? You'd think people would get enough of an adrenalin rush from daily life during the Corona pandemic! Human beings want to understand the causalities that lead to calamities, and even more than that, they want to find metaphysical meaning in suffering. Sometimes, the former is possible, but usually not the latter. We simply lack the divine perspective that would allow for certain knowledge of why God sometimes sends blessing and sometimes scourges. "It is not for you to know times and seasons," Jesus said to his disciples (Acts 1:7). There is much that Jesus chooses not to tell us, but he did tell us this:

*"I will never leave you
 nor forsake you."*

Hebrews 13:5

Dear friends,

"Corona" has the whole world in its grip. A "global pandemic" has changed everything. Here in Germany we hear the reports of infection and death rates with heavy hearts. We had to shut down the GST from



Dr. Stephan Holthaus

one day to the next and send home all our students. We had to help many students who were doing missions internships find a way back to Germany. We have seen giving drop off dramatically. Churches have cancelled all their services. "Social distancing" is now a phrase every German knows. People are afraid and uncertain about what the future holds.

"Corona" means "crown", which strikes me as a strange name for a virus. And yet it does feel like this one has mounted the world's throne and rules it with an iron fist. The epidemic is the only thing anyone talks about anymore. It influences our thoughts and actions in every aspect of life.

But Corona doesn't rule the world. Even if this pandemic were to take on the dimensions John foresaw in the Book of Revelation, even then Jesus sits on the throne, not some virus. He warned us that times of tribulation were coming. But he has promised

to take care of us and comfort us in such times. We must not lose heart. "When these things begin to take place", say Jesus, "then lift up your eyes and raise your heads, because your salvation is near" (Luke 21:28).

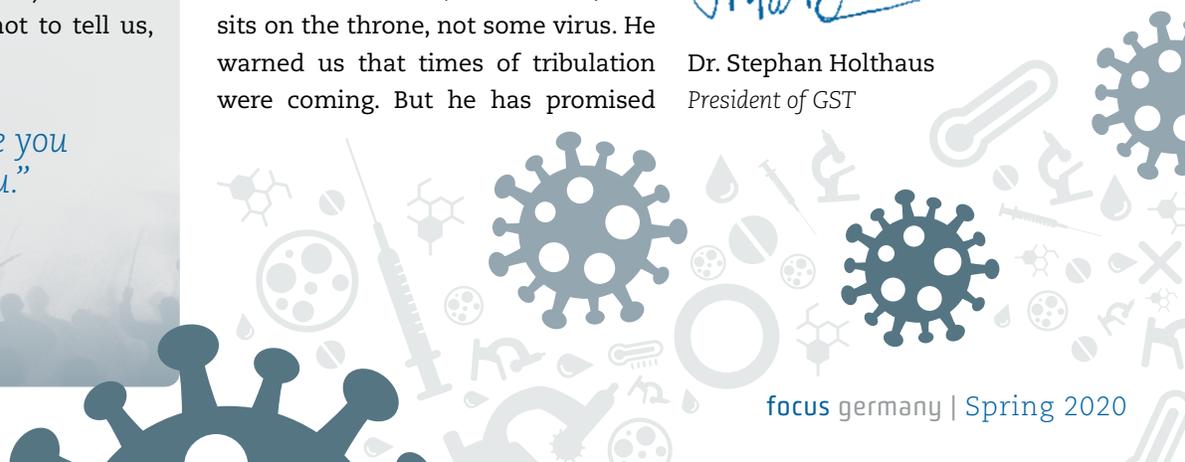
More than anything, we need

to look to Jesus in these days. And he has given us a job to do – pray for our government leaders, make sure the lonely know they're not alone, offer practical help to the weak and needy among us, encourage health care workers and others who are working round the clock.

Corona is not only a crisis; it is also an opportunity for us to remember how dependent we are on God, who cares for us and carries us always, but especially in times like these. Europe needs revival. Perhaps Corona will open the eyes of people here, so that they can see who really wears the crown and rules the world.

With warmest greetings,

Dr. Stephan Holthaus
 President of GST





Life at the Giessen School of Theology *during Corona*

“Beware the ides of March”, warns a soothsayer in Shakespeare’s *Julius Caesar*. This year on the ides – the 15th – of March, life in Germany came to a grinding halt. Germany closed its borders, and the government announced wide-ranging and drastic measures to combat the spread of the Covid-19 virus, better known as “Corona”. From one day to the next everything changed at the GST. Normal operations were shut down, including the library, and students were urged to remain at home. Thankfully, we were on our month-long break between

the winter and summer semesters, so we had some time to adjust to the new reality. We hope that we’ll be able to start up regular classes for the summer semester, which goes into July, by the end of April, but we may have to go to online classrooms. So, even though the campus is quiet, things are bustling behind the scenes.

In this time of confusion and uncertainty, we want to ask you to pray for us. Here are a few requests:

- For the physical, mental, and spiritual health of the entire GST community.

- For our financial situation. Like many Christian organizations we’ve noted a marked decrease in giving over the last month.
- For new student applications. We would love to see things start up with a big incoming class in the fall.
- For our interaction with others. Corona gives us new opportunities to share the Gospel in word and deed.

We are so grateful for your interest in and concern for the GST!



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Corona: Chances and Challenges

Our students’ lives have been dramatically affected by the Corona crisis. We thought we’d ask a couple of them to give us their perspective on the challenges posed by life under the corona regime and the opportunities it presents.



Anna Maria Reichmann

In the days of Corona, it’s a challenge to remain optimistic. Who would have thought before the crisis unfolded, that we would experience a time like this, where you’ve got to stay at home all the time and reduce your social life to a minimum? I was affected very early on in a personal way. Because there was the chance that I had been exposed to the virus, I was in quarantine for two weeks. It was hard to completely dispense with personal contact to my friends. And yet I learned early that the crisis afforded me with opportunities, as well. Via social media I had a lot of contact with people who were quite scared, and I was able to encourage them. I think many people are questioning whether they have any foundation to build their lives upon. Christians have more opportunities than ever before to share their faith and make people aware of different perspectives on life. We need to make use of them!

Anna Maria Reichmann, 2nd-year B.A. Student



Henrik Homrighausen

On the one hand, writing essays at home can be very difficult. I miss the inspiring atmosphere of theological discourse with others and the possibility of nearly absolute quietness in the library surrounded by hundreds of books. And behind the scene, the fearful question arises: What will seminars be like if the lock-down continues for a long time? Where and how will I write my MA-Thesis? On the other hand, it is a great chance for unexpected family time with the kids at home: getting new insights in their characters during this phase of homeschooling (which is normally not allowed in Germany), no external dates, sharing meals together, reading books and making music as a family. Finally, for an academic it is a real chance to discover that books alone are not enough. God created me for community, and I realize that I really miss having some friends around.

Henrik Homrighausen, 2nd-year M.A. Student

Check out our English Video!

Scan the QR-code or go to <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uKLMpBRvNjo>.



Check out our Viewbook in English

Some time ago the GST published an online viewbook that will give a great feel for what we’re about. We added a translation for you. Scan the QR-Code or visit www.fthgiessen.de/english





STUDENT IN FOCUS Andrew Ingram

Over the years I've been asked a lot of questions about my Christian faith that I couldn't answer. I wanted to attend a seminary that would prepare me to answer such questions from a biblical perspective with intellectual integrity.

GST is preparing me to do that. Our faculty offers diverse experiences and backgrounds in academia, theology, church planting and missions. Numerous books and articles written by our faculty members on display in our bookstore remind me of this. Class subjects spark my interest to study and read more. This spills over into topics of conversation with non-Christian friends and has piqued their curiosity about the Gospel message! However, there's more to the GST than just academic rigor. I value our seminary because I see our leaders living out what they teach. They are involved in their own churches, lead in chapel and, significantly, they are approachable throughout the semester for conversations unrelated to class material but pertinent to our personal journeys. Lastly, I'm thankful I get to study with a group of men and women who love God, love people and choose to invest not only in their studies but also in relationships.

Andrew Ingram is a first-year student in the B.A. program at GST



FACULTY IN FOCUS Dr. Christoph Raedel

I joined the faculty of GST in 2014 to teach Systematic Theology and have been happy to be part of the team ever since. I grew up in the German Democratic Republic (East Germany) in a Christian family and know what it means to live under a

communist regime from first-hand experience. The end of the GDR and the reunification of Germany are the greatest miracle I have experienced in my life.

I got in touch with the GST after formative years of study and a first professorship at a nearby University through an annual meeting of evangelical ethicists that took place in Giessen. To me GST is a place of excellence in scholarship and dedication to the Lord expressed in fellowship, Bible study and service. I love to be around people from a variety of denominational backgrounds who are eager to make a difference in their community's life. It is a privilege to accompany young Christians as they are training for church ministry and mission. I am glad to be here.

Christoph Raedel is Professor of Systematic Theology at GST



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