

Building faith and training Christian leaders around the world through affordable, accessible higher education utilizing distance learning.

NATIONSUNIVERSITY®
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The Ministry of Transformation

By all outward appearances a monastery looks like a prison, but the difference between them lies within the heart of its residents. In prison we rejoice in the transformation of every single heart that breaks free from the conformity of a corrupted world.

When I arrived at the notorious French M. Robertson prison unit in mid-1994, its reputation for violence had already spread across the state of Texas even though it had only been in existence less than two years. Nothing in my upbringing prepared me for the carnage I witnessed on a daily basis. In 1996 six guards were indicted for murdering an inmate, and Paul Harvey announced to millions of radio listeners that the Roberson Unit was the worst prison in America.

Return to me, and I will return to you," says the LORD Almighty.

Malachi 3:7

In those bloodthirsty years very few dared to publicly acknowledge Jesus as their savior.

Christians were seen as easy prey. Evangelism came with great persecution.

An elder from a local church, Sessions Hammond, obtained permission to teach the Bible in an educational setting in 1996. Prior to that Texas barred religious teaching outside of their prison chapel. Suddenly, this opportunity opened up for the gospel message around the state's prison system not merely the Robertson Unit. Volunteers began to come regularly.

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Texas Prison Graduation Ceremony

On Saturday, October 10th, 2015, a graduation ceremony was held at the French M. Robertson Unit in Abilene, Texas. Warden Adam Gonzales welcomed families of those receiving the awards to the unit and emphasized how important both he and Senior Warden Ron Fox considered the achievement of these men and encouraged them and all NU students to continue their efforts to pursue education while they are incarcerated and beyond.

Two men were presented with degrees and five men were presented with certificates. Byron L. Graves was presented the Master of Religious Studies degree and Casey D. Corthron was presented the Bachelor of Religious Studies degree.

Receiving the Certificate of Religious Studies were Aaron E. Alexander, Kevin D. Bullard, Nathaniel D. Jennings, Matthew R. McCombs, and Kristopher K. Russell.

The graduation address was presented by Les Hammond, former COO and CEO of several Fortune 500 companies. In his address Mr. Hammond stressed the value of the education the men were receiving and assured them that its worth would only grow with time.

After the ceremony, the men were allowed to share a little extra time with their families and other guests.

Christmas Will Be Here Soon

This letter came in our mailbag earlier this year but we did not have space for it until now. As we approach the holidays take time to reflect, how will you spend your Christmas. Below is an excerpt of a report from an NU Ethiopian student who is now a missionary in Mali:

The eve of a New Year is the most important of holy days for the people of Mali and the Christians planned a big celebration. There is a small number of Christians in the town and in spite



Christians at worship in Mali

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Current Enrollment

Current through 10/1/15

Total Students: 1,910

Male - 1,650
Female - 260
Undergraduate - 1,595
Graduate - 315

Total Countries: 120

Top Ten Countries

United States	691
South Africa	200
Ethiopia	124
Nigeria	100
Kenya	85
Ghana	76
Iran	40
Zambia	39
Canada	38
Cameroon	33

Transformation, continued from page 1

Little did we know that while prisoners despaired over the loss of college opportunities with the de-funding of Pell Grants to inmates, NationsUniversity was being born. It was not long before Clay Whidden came to the Robertson Unit to be the proctor. Prisoners from every sector and custody level began hearing the good news about salvation. Gradually the violence abated.

Now the reputation of the Robertson Unit boasts the largest campus of NationsU students with over a hundred prisoners registered, half of which test on a weekly basis. Tutorial classes help these students improve their writing skills. More advanced students study with those who are only beginning. Men who had no hope of ever achieving any higher education now earn their bachelor degrees in religious studies.

I am one of those that polite society wrote off as unredeemable a quarter of a century ago. Warehoused with the lawless, my education stalled. Then I discovered NationsU and resumed my quest for knowledge. I graduated with a B.R.S. in the summer of 2015 and now pursue a masters.

A majority of the voting public still believe that violators of the law should be punished for their crimes. Those that cling to that philosophy resent any rehabilitation programs funded with tax dollars. Ironically, I once was one of those unforgiving people. In those days, I would never have volunteered for prison ministry. I had to be brought at gunpoint.

The Lord has certainly transformed my thinking. With the bad old days of bloodshed mostly behind us, we now pack Bibles and college textbooks across the prison yard where once everyone carried crude weapons. I see transformation all around me. With the help of NationsU we are transforming convicted criminals into missionaries, equipped to take the good news of Jesus Christ back to the broken homes from which they sprang.

Casey Cothron



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Tell Us Your Story

NationsUniversity® wants to know your story. If you would like to tell your story, write to *The Voice of Nations*, at info@nationsu.org

and keep the story to 500 words or less. We look forward to sharing your story

Out of the Inbox



Dear Staff,

May Jesus continually bless you and the education/ministry provided by NationsUniversity.

I'm very thankful for the opportunity to study and learn the

truth. While certificates and degrees would bring certain praises from men, it is truth and the obedience to it that I seek.

Without a doubt, the Lord has caused His mercy to work mightily in my life, which has been in this prison for over twenty five years. I've been given the opportunities that most in the church will never have.

It is so awesome what the Lord has blessed me to do and to experience. I look for His coming as I share the Gospel with others. Thank you for your help and service to the King of Heaven.

In His Service,
Bill

of insecurity of the area, the local Christians were very courageous to come together to have such fellowship. It was the largest gathering the Christians had after the liberation of the town from the control of extremist Muja'o (Al-Qaeda affiliated). This New Year's celebration was a great experience for us, and it was indeed very thrilling.

As the leader of the program began inviting the people to come to platform in order to sing songs to the Lord of all nations, by their appropriate languages, I started counting the number of languages, peoples and nationalities gathered in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ that night. The people came from six different countries: Ghana, Cameroon, Burkina Faso, Ivory Coast, Togo and Ethiopia. I assumed that as the church has no many local believers (members) because the presence of these nationalities comparing to the total number of participants. Therefore, amazingly our Lord Jesus Christ was praised by about eight different languages at this very night.

My reflections:

In this particular night I was greatly impressed when I heard the different songs in different languages which happily and colorfully presented to the **Almighty God of all Nations**. I started reflecting on God's word, especially the prayers of David from Psalm 67, and Revelation 5: 9-10.

David prays these prayers, - *"that may your ways be known on earth your salvation among all nations May the peoples praise you, O God; may all the peoples praise you. May the Nations be glad and sing for joy"*. This is the prayer of the expansion of the kingdom of Christ.

And Revelations 5:9-10 says *"you are worthy to take the scroll and open its seal because you were slain and with your blood you purchased men from every tribe and language and people and nation....."* It is very clear that the primary purpose of God of sending his only Son is to obtain praise, and worship from all nations. In deed He is worthy to be praised and worshiped by all nations, because the price He had paid to get them back to Himself is incredible.

But the reality is not that, still today more than half of the people of the world, do not know what was done for them by God through Jesus Christ our Lord. Most of the peoples are still in deep dark, far from understanding the truth, and strange to the truth of Good News, about Jesus Christ. In recent years the hostility of the truth (Jesus Christ) is increasing and persecution is becoming very serious among the people of the world.

We need to pray that may God give to the church thousands of passionate and committed missionaries and send them out to the harvest. And please also pray for us, as we are doing our best to reach out to Fulani people of Mali. They are still un-reached people group and are very attached to their traditions and religion.



Non-Christian children in Sunday School, Mali

May God Bless you all,
and have a blessed
Christmas!
Gashahun Nemomsa

Graduates

Since the Last Newsletter

Certificate In Religious Studies

- Phillip Womack, United States
- Lenny Martinez, United States
- Kevin Bullard, United States
- Shane Latson, United States

Bachelor of Religious Studies

- Egozue Daniel Obiajulu, Nigeria
- Diana Rachel Smith, India
- Estephede Charles, Haiti
- Akintayo Olugbenga Adewale, Slovakia
- Aaron Smith, RS
- Jennifer Colleen Cooper, US
- Marcel Montgomery, United States
- Joseph Webster, United States

Master of Theological Studies

- Annette MarieRose Chamness
- Master of Music, DePaul University,
United States

- Marcus S. Bell
- M.S., Embry-Riddle Aeronautical
University
United States

Master of Divinity

- Micah Powless
- B.S., Central Washington University,
United States
- Bohoussou Kouadio Paul Desire
- B.S., Institute of Evangelical Theology of
Abidjan
¹Ivory Coast



A Note From the Chancellor

Fee Structure Changes

Beginning January 1 2016, NationsUniversity will inaugurate a new annual tuition charge of \$960. This fee will apply to new students who reside in the top 25 developed countries—principally in Europe and North America. The tuition fee will replace the technology fee, which presently applies to students residing in the United States and who are not incarcerated.

Since the accredited Master of Theology (M.T.S.) degree is a new degree, students holding the M.R.S. from NationsUniversity will be able to pursue the M.T.S. with certain qualifications. Depending on the age of their credits, they may complete the M.T.S. with between 18 and 36 credits.

Students residing in the 25 developed countries are also subject to the \$960 annual fee but will not be charged the initial \$25 registration fee. Students holding a current Enrollment Agreement will see no change in their present payment schedule.

Mac Lynn,
Chancellor

Students & Social Media

Social media has evolved past just a simple form of entertainment or diversion. It has even advanced to more than communication with long lost friends and family. For many, it is a fun way to pass the time. Unfortunately, there is a dark side to these popular networks. Virus writers, hackers, and other Internet scammers go where the people are. That means, you are an easy target for some of the Internet's foulest cyber criminals.

Anytime you log into your social media account—whether personal or business—you must be on the lookout for potential fraudsters and internet scam opportunities. Here are some that you need to be careful with.

Downloading Apps--There are tons of apps available to make our social media experience more enjoyable. However, not all apps are from reputable suppliers. And even the ones that are genuine are susceptible to being hacked.

For example, a recent scam targeted people using WhatsApp. By directing visitors to a site that looked legitimate, hackers actually signed them up for a very expensive text message service.

Viruses in Messages--In your email correspondence, if you don't know who sent it or didn't ask for the information, DO NOT open it! Twitter users were recently hit by a stealthy virus. A direct message was delivered and the original sender appeared to be a follower. By clicking on the link in the DM, the twitter account was infected. Or worse, the user's identity was stolen.

Hackers and scammers are drawn to these types of unsavory behavior because of all the valuable information stored in apps on our phones.

Fake Accounts on Facebook--If you don't know the person and they are trying to friend you, DON'T do it. They typically use an enticing picture like a pretty girl to get your attention or put you at ease. You can browse their page and if they have only been a member of Facebook for a very short time, chances are they are looking to hack into your information and steal your identity.

Stay safe out there!

Blessings! NationsU Information Technology Team



Observing A Different City

It is Monday morning and my wife and I find ourselves in a very different city - San Francisco, California. We arrived late yesterday afternoon, checked into our hotel and had just enough time to make a brief walking tour of the Fisherman's Wharf (tourist) area. It truly felt like we had been transported to another world. And this world had none of the undertones of a Christian environment that we are so accustomed to back in our home city of Tyler in Texas.

A sea of blue jean, sneaker clad tourists filled the plaza in front of the ferry landing. Seagulls, the largest I'd ever seen, walked freely and fearlessly among them, feasting on discarded rolls of sourdough bread that lay in the street. As we strolled back to the hotel I noticed one sign of a Christian presence. There, on a corner among a small stand of trees, stood a large statue of either Christ or Saint Francis (It was not clear which had been intended), his arms stretched out in a cross-like loving embrace as he gazed toward the bay and the sea of tourists. One could not miss the artist's intent.

This morning I woke up very early, as we are two time zones away from home. It has been delightfully peaceful, some time during which I've thought of the Christian disciplines I try to practice. It strikes me that four activities characterize our walk: prayer, purification, study, and service. We "pray without ceasing", seek to overcome the flesh, study God's word, and follow Jesus in caring for others. That sounds pretty simple, but it can certainly be more difficult in practice!

The other point that came to mind was that while each of us can practice these four disciplines (or others), we will probably do them differently and with a different emphasis at different points in our lives. For example, it is much easier to spend more time studying the Bible after one is retired and no longer working long hours at a secular job. On the other hand the energy of youth may make acts of service more effective. So, this morning I ask, where are you in your spiritual walk? Do you pray, seek purity, study and serve? And how might these practices be changing as you move through the seasons of life? Think on it. You will be blessed!

"Do you need prayer? Are you experiencing spiritual distress? Life's problems? Email Chaplain Allen, chaplain@nationsu.org, and let him help."

www.chaplainscorner.org



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