

ONE OF MY DISCIPLINES AS president of the GTU is to scan the thick magazines published by universities, colleges, and theological schools to monitor the evolution of education. There are an incredible number of stories about students, faculty, and whole academic fields seeking to impact specific global issues.

Recently, the GTU secured a grant from the Arthur Vining Davis Foundations to encourage research that seeks to address particular global challenges. Through this new program, cohorts of students, with a faculty mentor, can apply for \$5,000 grants to encourage their research into a persistent, perplexing problem (such as religious conflict, status of women in the world, or climate change). Each cohort must be interreligious, and each project must engage a grassroots organization focused on the same concern and offering practical solutions. Each group must also find a way to share the outcome of its research with wider publics at the GTU and beyond.

Our hope is that these small grants will further the kind of work that is already occurring throughout the GTU. Across the entire consortium, students and faculty are busy probing critical social issues and bringing to bear the clarity of critical thinking, ethical values, and theological considerations. These small grants will, we hope, promote the value of our new interreligious and interdisciplinary work and underscore how our religious and wisdom traditions can shape solutions to perplexing and persistent problems. Although religion is often perceived as a source of conflict in our world, solutions often come from people who believe their faith calls them to bear special responsibility for the care of human and non-human life, and indeed the whole planet.

A week ago, our GTU community was visited by several members of the International

Society for Krishna Consciousness, including His Grace, Gauranga Das, President of Govardhan Eco Village, located outside of Mumbai. In his public presentation, Gauranga Das introduced us to this village of 300 people that reuses everything in an effort to create a completely sustainable cycle of life. The village has utilized inventive engineering and science to attain its systems, but the principles and values energizing this village derive from the reading and study of ancient sacred texts.

Dr. Devin Zuber, Associate Professor of American Studies, Religion, and Literature at the Center for Swedenborgian Studies (a GTU affiliate), offered a response to the presentation. Having freshly returned from a sabbatical in Europe where he visited and studied eco-villages in Germany, Zuber was able to explain that in Europe, these efforts are often undertaken by people living in urban or rural enclaves who are intent upon holistic and sustainable living practices.

These ideas and efforts press upon us urgently given the mounting evidence of climate change, the scarcity of potable water, and our awareness of the finitude and extinction of natural resources. At the GTU, we believe the theological education process is not only to enlighten and prepare scholars, educators, and community leaders, but to create individuals who will be intentional about a vocational life devoted to positive change. We will be eager to see which issues our students choose to address through their projects and what results from their engagement. We look forward to sharing their stories with you.



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Russ Patterson