

## His Story is Your Story - Share It!



Dr. Alan Cooper  
President

The Christmas season is a special time of the year. Across the globe, the story of the birth of Jesus once again takes center-stage, as the familiar account in Luke's gospel speaks peace and hope into a world longing for both.

The shepherds, who first heard of the birth of Jesus, spread the news of the baby, the Son of God

sent from Heaven as our Savior. Luke's account tells us that all who heard them were amazed. Now, more than 2,000 years later, we share the word of the Messiah and the peace and freedom that come from a life in Him. And people are still amazed at the telling.

Early Christians, for whom the details of Jesus' birth, death, and resurrection were recent history, knew the importance of recounting the story.

For many believers today, Christmas is the pinnacle of the entire year: a time for celebrating and refocusing attention on the One who "became flesh and dwelt among us" as the

apostle John reminds us. As you prepare for your own Christmas celebrations, I encourage you to consider what our Savior has done in your life and share the joy of the season with everyone around you.

As you renew ties with your family and your community, talk not only about the birth of Jesus, but also of His life, death, and the glory of His resurrection. Let the love of the Father and the Son flow from you to all whom you meet.

Many who read this are incarcerated. Others serve the Lord in spite of great physical danger. And some

search for deeper understanding of Scripture and what that can mean in their lives.

Whatever your circumstances in this physical life, you have found favor with the Father. The child born and announced to the shepherds is your Savior. God is firmly in control and has a plan for your future. Do not be afraid to answer the calling He has placed before you. Study His word and yield to His will. His blessings are always abundant.

*And there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night. An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified.*

*But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people. Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord. <sup>12</sup> This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger."*

*Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying, "Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace to those on whom his favor rests."*

Luke 2:8-14 NIV

***Regardless of your circumstances, know that He is your Savior today, tomorrow, and forever.***

# A Word of Encouragement

Although we do not know the exact date of Jesus' birth, it is good to have an annual point in time when the world population is reminded of him. Christians celebrate the *resurrection* of Jesus weekly or more often, as they study, contemplate, or worship God through him. But we could have had no resurrection had he not been born. And being virgin-born underscores the special and unique person of Jesus. His birth is a continuous testimony to the unfathomable love of God for his human creation. How could we but help being struck with awe and gratitude?

As we approach the time of year that is recognized as the day of Jesus' birth, whether December 25 in the West or January 7 in the East, we at NationsUniversity are intensely aware of what Jesus' birth means to our students. Allowing that each student perceives the world in a unique way, we believe the story of Jesus is precious to all. Even for those of you who are not Christians, you cannot help but be touched by the Christ event.

We are thinking especially of those of you who approach this season under difficult circumstances. First, we recognize that many of you are imprisoned. Because of your conviction, you are subjected to a rather harsh environment that has caused pain to your loved ones, put restrictions on your own lives, and scarred you permanently. You cannot go back and undo the past. Remorse does not set you free. You are in a physical prison for the duration of your sentence or the good will of the parole board. But a focus on Christ makes bearing your pain bearable. Through Christ, you have a type of freedom that is of higher value than what normally is associated with total human rights and freedoms. May God nurture you through these days, when you would prefer being most anywhere else than where you are.

Second, we know that many of you are oppressed because of your faith. This may include the incarcerated, but we have especially in mind those who suffer for the name of Christ in their own native lands. You were drawn to Christ over other ideologies, but you now find yourselves cut off from family and a threat to the custodians of public law. You became Christians at great cost and at risk of losing your livelihood, honor, and even your own lives. May God sustain

you and provide the right words to speak to all who harass you for Christ's sake. Keep the faith and rejoice always in the love of God and his promise of victory.

Third, we remember those of you who are not Christians. You may be searching and have yet to find the solution to your doubts. We can say assuredly, that we have found peace in Christ and hope for divine redemption. Life is more precious, relationships are more satisfying, and disappointments are accepted with greater ease. May God be with you as you decide on questions of ultimate worth.

Whatever your stance in life, may you experience peace and joy in your heart as you ponder the awesome gift of God coming to earth.



Mac and Marty Lynn

## The Voice of Nations

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## Current Enrollment

Current through 11/30/11

**Total Students: 4,931**

Male - 4,131

Female - 800

Undergraduate - 4,382

Graduate - 549

**Total Countries: 139**

### Top Ten Countries:

<b>United States</b>	<b>1,901</b>
<b>Ethiopia</b>	<b>422</b>
<b>South Africa</b>	<b>295</b>
<b>Nigeria</b>	<b>250</b>
<b>Kenya</b>	<b>205</b>
<b>Iran</b>	<b>150</b>
<b>Egypt</b>	<b>114</b>
<b>Cameroon</b>	<b>110</b>
<b>Austria</b>	<b>81</b>
<b>Canada</b>	<b>81</b>

# Greetings from Student Services

On behalf of all of our advisors, I want to express our appreciation for your steadfast diligence in pursuit of understanding and knowledge of God's Holy Word. We consider it a privilege to serve our God by advising, teaching, encouraging, and praying for each of our students at NU.



**Dr. Martell Souder**  
Director

Some of our advisors have been blessed by visiting the countries of students they advise, but several of our volunteers have never left their own country; thus, it is a blessing to serve God in places that we will never have the opportunity to visit. The second blessing is to know that so many of our students will use their knowledge and deeper faith to share the Good News with their family and neighbors. God's blessings have a way of spreading to people and places that we cannot imagine.

If this season finds you busy with celebrations and their preparations, remember to take some time for yourself. This may be a good time to take a rest from your studies. Taking college courses online (or through post for our incarcerated students) requires self-discipline and self-awareness of the best times for you to study and prepare for exams. Only you know

the best times and places for you to study, but balance is important in our lives. If you were enrolled in a traditional "brick and mortar" college at this time of year you would be looking forward to at least a two-week break from study. Consider your situation--maybe now is a good time for you to take a break as well.

On the other hand, life's circumstances may find you feeling depressed, hurt, anxious, or disheartened. Digging into your Bible study may be just the thing you need to do. We all find different ways to cope with difficult circumstances, but two things I know for sure: our God is able to overcome, and His Word provides comfort, reassurance, and courage to face those difficulties. My favorite passage for encouragement comes from Paul's letter to the Ephesians. May this message be a blessing to your life today:

*"Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, forever and ever! Amen."* Eph. 3:20, 21 NIV

## Graduates Since the Last Newsletter

### Certificate in Religious Studies

Sean Combs, United States  
Ubaldo Sierra Briones, United States  
James Gavo Boyo, Kenya  
Richard Mwatemo, Kenya  
Eric Palmros, United States  
Emmanuel Oritsetimeyin Ogbemi, Nigeria  
Carl M. Maddox, Jr., United States  
Stanley Langdon, United States  
Anonymous for security reasons

### Associate in Religious Studies

Anonymous for security reasons  
Richard Mwatemo, Kenya

### Bachelor of Religious Studies

Lori Ann Williams, United States  
Anonymous for security reasons  
Sean P. Terry, United States  
Peter Taiti King'ori, Kenya  
Benjamin A. Fathauer, United States

### Master of Religious Studies

Pradeep D. Shampur, India  
M.B.A., Ohio University  
Tariku Tolossa Jira, Ethiopia  
B.Th., Mekane Yesus University  
Ikponmwosa Uwahen Odeh, Nigeria  
B.Th., Immanuel College of Theology  
Hillary Essoka Misode, United Kingdom  
M.B.S., Bible University  
Jeffrey Brian Nickel, United States  
B.A., Washington University of St. Louis  
Anuar Elohim Talamas Acosta, Mexico  
B.S., University of Chihuahua  
Worku Jimma Horra, Belgium  
M.S., Ghent University  
Vincent Mukholosi Witinga, Kenya  
B.R.S., NationsUniversity  
**Master of Ministry**  
Stuart William Plaskett, Australia  
B.Th., Charles Sturt University

## Reminders

• **Incarcerated Students:** Please make sure to put the complete and correct exam identifier on each answer sheet. The identifier is found at the top of each exam below the course and module names.

Example: **Exam BRS 1-1G**

Delays and incorrect scoring can be the results of incorrect or incomplete identifiers.

• **All Students:** Please make sure ALL activities and essays have your name and student code at the top, even those uploaded to the website. This is especially important for prison students submitting activities and essays by post. A grade cannot be assigned and posted without your name and student code.

# A Special Note to Our Prison Students

## John Casteel, Director of Prison Enrollment

The staff of NationsUniversity aspires to provide each student with the best service possible. We are constantly looking for ways to improve or enhance our methods of assisting and meeting the needs of our global student body.

The fastest-growing segment of the NationsUniversity student body is the Prison Division. At this writing, NU has more than 1,300 prison-based students. Managing the volume of mail presents a challenge. While we intend to respond to each request, please bear in mind that the response time runs 2-4 weeks for surface mail.

Some of you have access to the CorrLinks e-mail service. We have been experiencing some issues with CorrLinks since late October; however, we believe these have been resolved. Even with the problems we have experienced, this is still the best way to contact me. Continue to use the service, but if you do not receive a response within three business days, send another e-mail. CorrLinks e-mails should be sent to [jac@nationsu.org](mailto:jac@nationsu.org). This is the address authorized to send and receive mail through the service.

Recently, several of you have sent requests from J-Pay e-mail. NU will not be accepting requests from this service as it requires us to set up a funded account.

For those of you without access to e-mail, you can have a family member or friend e-mail your requests, again to [jac@nationsu.org](mailto:jac@nationsu.org). Requests for materials or transcripts will be forwarded to proper personnel. I will handle requests for grades. If you ask someone to e-mail a request for you, please provide him/her with your student code and

password to include in the e-mail. This will verify that the individual has permission to act on your behalf and receive information regarding your courses and grades.

My office hours are Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. During this time, I can be reached by telephone as well, 405-385-7598. (This number will not accept collect calls.) Again, if a family member or friend calls me, they should be prepared to give your student code and password.

As the Christmas season approaches, I pray that each of you will seek encouragement from Scripture and share it with those around you. You are in my prayers daily.

*May the peace and joy of Christmas  
be with you now and  
throughout the coming year!*

*Alan, Anastasia,  
Joe, John, Joye,  
Lisa, Lora, Mac,  
Martell, Marty,  
and Melanie*



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