

Living together and learning as a global community in the context of the General Council of the World Communion of Reformed Churches

The Global Institute of Theology 2017 (GIT 2017), a programme of the World Communion of Reformed Churches (WCRC), will offer a unique opportunity for a community of students from around the world to live together and learn and do theology in a fully inter-contextual and ecumenical way, connecting theology from the local to the regional and world levels. The GIT 2017 will have two phases. The first phase (9-27 June) will be held in Wuppertal, Germany, in cooperation with the Theological College for Church and Diaconie (*Kirchliche Hochschule Wuppertal/Bethel*), the United Evangelical Mission (*Vereinte Evangelische Mission (UEM)*) and the Reformed Alliance (*Reformierter Bund*). The second phase will be in Leipzig (28 June-7 July) where the students will have the opportunity to participate in a significant way in the 2017 General Council of the WCRC.

THE THEME AND ITS SIGNIFICANCE

The theme of the GIT 2017 will be the same as that of the General Council, **Living God, renew and transform us**. The purpose of the Global Institute of Theology is to give theological students and faculty from all over the world the opportunity to delve deeper into the theological wealth of the theme and to explore its significance to the church in its mission in the world.

The first phase of the GIT 2017 will take place in Wuppertal, Germany. We will be near the small town called Barmen which is significant in church history. Here in 1934, in spite of the looming threat of the Nazi take-over of the German Church, Christians from all over Germany came together and made a courageous confession that only Christ is the Lord of the Church. This Barmen Confession became a symbol of the assertion that transformation comes only through the Word of the Living God. Therefore along with the General Council theme the GIT will also reflect on **confessions and confessing churches**.

environmental destruction, to gender justice and interfaith solidarity, spiritual renewal, an inclusive welcoming church and Christian unity.

The Global Institute of Theology is intended for a) women and men students—50 from all continents—preparing for Christian ministry at a theological school related to a WCRC member church or b) fresh theological graduates preparing for higher theological studies or pastors in their first years of ministry; recommended by WCRC member churches. Ten students will be drawn from Germany. Applicants should have a particular interest in ecumenical theology and mission. The student body and faculty will reflect gender and regional balance, and thus the diversity of the Reformed family in the world today.



Further information and applications

Information on and applications for the GIT are available from the WCRC at wcrch.git, its member churches and supporting theological institutions.

Completed applications for the GIT should be submitted no later than *15 November 2016* and sent to:

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World Communication of Reformed Churches
Knochenhauerstr. 42
30177 Hannover
Germany
Email: git@wcrch.eu
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GLOBAL INSTITUTE OF THEOLOGY 2017



9 June – 7 July 2017
Wuppertal & Leipzig, Germany

LIVING GOD
RENEW AND
TRANSFORM US



Called to Communion and Committed to Justice

The WCRC is comprised of 80 million Christians in Congregational, Presbyterian, Reformed, United, Uniting and Waldensian churches in 225+ churches in more than 100 countries around the world.

THE 2017 GENERAL COUNCIL

The students and faculty of the Global Institute of Theology will move to Leipzig on 28 June to join the some 1,000 participants at the General Council that will include 400 official delegates from more than 200 member churches in over 100 countries. Being held in the context of the General Council will give the students an opportunity to encounter the global church and to participate with Christians from all continents in studying the Bible and worshipping together.



The specific goals of the Global Institute of Theology are five-fold:

1. To build a community of learning and faith as students and faculty work together
2. To encounter contemporary biblical and theological approaches
3. To introduce the varying contextual perspectives on the Christian witness of the global Reformed family
4. To strengthen global networks of sharing and reflection to contribute to the ecumenical formation of a new generation of church leaders within the Reformed community
5. To reflect deeper on the theme of the General Council

These goals will be reflected in the way in which the institute is being organized. The first phase in Wuppertal will be composed of core courses related to the theme of the General Council. The second part of the GIT will take place in the context of the Council providing an opportunity

for the students to learn through encounters with church leaders, eminent scholars, theologians and activists who will be present at the General Council.

There will be four core courses which all students will be required to attend, and all students will be required to complete a paper (minimum 3000 words) on one of the core courses. Students who require credits will receive them from the *Kirchliche Hochschule, Wuppertal/Bethal*.

1. Confessing the Living God in the Creation Community

This core course will explore a theological paradigm of the creation community that compels us to view all forms of life as sacred. It will pose the questions: What does it mean to confess the living God within the context of the creation community? How can embracing the sacredness of all members of creation community renew and transform us, to confront all that desecralizes life?

2. Mission from the margins and the Reformed identity

Rooted in the historic Reformed faith traditions the Christian faith calls on us to respond to meet spiritual needs and foster justice for the transformation of the world through the life of Jesus Christ. This includes a new understanding of mission as rising from the aspirations of peoples at the margins. This course will explore how we can re-imagine mission and evangelism today.

3. Places of Epiphany: Reformed presence in the world

This course will look at the theology of Revelation in terms of its historical development and the specific contributions of John Calvin, Karl Barth and Jürgen Moltmann. While it is generally imagined that God's revelation comes to us in locations that we believe to be special and sacred this course will show how the revelation of the God of the Bible continually comes to us in sites we deem to be polluting and transgressing. By

doing this this course will demonstrate how revelation actually disrupts, disturbs and dismantles exploitative social relations. It will further look at the justice work of the Reformed churches as being transformative revelations in the world today.

4. Confessions in Context: Towards a kairotic understanding of Christian Confessions

This course will explore Confessions that are at the core of church history and are significant markers of the church's witness in the world. With commitment to a Reformation that continuously reforms, the churches have through their confessions over the centuries reaffirmed their faith in the sovereignty of God and their resolve to stand against evil and demonic rulers, systems and life-threatening processes at different times. Confessing is primarily an affirmation of the gospel truth and a language of resistance against untruth. Confessing is a denunciation of earthly unjust power based on a firm belief in a God who promises life in the new heaven and the new earth. Confessions are a celebration of the feast of life in kairotic times—the right and opportune moment to turn to the God of Life.

There will also be electives offered. Each student will choose to attend one from each section:

- A1. Gender Justice and the Ordination of Women
- A2. Diasporic Communities and the Church
- A3. Secularization: Challenges and Opportunities

- B1. Communion and Human Sexuality
- B2. Bible and the Empire
- B3. Christian Identity and Religious Diversity
- B4. Being Church in the Pentecostal Age

Who can apply?

The WCRC is committed to the inter-contextual formation of new generations of Reformed leaders fully aware of the faith dimension of contemporary challenges such as economic injustice and