

CONFESSIONAL LUTHERAN INSTITUTE (CLI)

Equipping, Enhancing, and Enabling Pastor-Theologians Throughout Africa

Besides 1) Informal Continuing Education and 2) Seminary Consultation, the WELS One Africa Team's *Confessional Lutheran Institute* (CLI) offers 3) **Formal Continuing Education** for *ordained called workers*, that is, for pastors and theological teachers in Africa actively serving congregations and synods in the Confessional Evangelical Lutheran Conference (CELC).

INTRODUCTION to CLI Formal Continuing Education

The Confessional Lutheran Institute provides qualified pastors/professors within church bodies affiliated with the CELC the opportunity for advanced studies in all branches of evangelical Lutheran theology and practice by offering three levels of for-credit certification and degree programs:

Pre-Bachelor of Divinity Certification: Formal courses to prepare pastors to apply for enrollment in the Bachelor of Divinity program.

Bachelor of Divinity (BDiv) Program: A degree offered in partnership with Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary (WLS) to those who successfully complete 1) the four-year BDiv program of eight theology courses, 2) one research and writing course, and 3) a final thesis.

The eight BDiv classes come from four areas (two of each):

- **Exegetical Theology** — study of a Bible book or group of books
— example, 1 John
- **Historical Theology** — study of part of Christian church history
— example, the relevance of the church fathers for Lutherans today
- **Pastoral Theology** — study of a part of how to serve a congregation
— example, evangelism
- **Systematic Theology** — study of a specific Bible doctrine or false doctrine
— example, the Lord's Supper

Courses take place twice a year, God willing. CLI coordinates dates, locations, and study topics. Active pastors are invited to apply for the 2026 BDiv intake. See entrance requirements below.

Master of Theology (MTh) Program: An advanced three- to five-year post-BDiv research and writing program offered with Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, consisting of on-field and online course work and research leading to a master's thesis or project in a chosen field of study.

Course work comes from the same four areas as above, but students choose one area in which to specialize. An advisor from Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary helps a pastor in this special area, both before and during his work on his thesis or project.

BDiv and MTh degrees are offered through Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary of Mequon, Wisconsin, USA. Classes are generally taught by professors associated with WLS or Martin Luther College of New Ulm, Minnesota, USA.

Formal Continuing Education Director: The WELS One Africa Team in 2019 brought a new missionary to Lusaka to coordinate Formal Continuing Education and teach some of the BDiv and MTh classes. He is Pastor Daniel Witte (dan.witte@wels.net or WhatsApp +260770738505).



POST-SEMINARY: CLI BDiv Entrance Requirements and Entrance Process

- Applications will only be received from CELC Africa pastors/professors—seminary graduates. (*If someone in CLI's BDiv program leaves called CELC ministry later, he would discontinue BDiv studies.*)
- National synod leadership must approve all pastoral applicants to take the entrance exam, requiring:
 - ▶ First, a letter of recommendation from the church council of the congregation or parish which he is serving, or his calling body if as a theology teacher he is not serving a congregation, and
 - ▶ Second, a letter of recommendation from regional or district leaders within his church body.
- Pastoral applicants also must submit an application (available from dan.witte@wels.net), and include the two letters of recommendation above.
- National synod leadership will set an appropriate date for BDiv entrance testing to take place in consultation with the Confessional Lutheran Institute Formal Continuing Education Director (Pastor Witte, dan.witte@wels.net, or WhatsApp +260770738505).
- Synod leadership will also communicate to national pastors entrance testing requirements and date.

After applying, a pastor brings his Bible to the BDiv entrance exam. It will consist of parts such as:

1. Introductory questions to help CLI get to know the pastor and learn why he wishes to participate in the BDiv courses, including ministerial goals. (*Page may be written and sent in before exam day.*)
2. A short essay on a theological topic.
3. A question-and-answer test on a recent sermon, a catechism section, and a given book of the Bible.
 - Written exams will be graded by Pastor Witte and a WLS professor.
 - CLI will select a maximum of 20 top pastoral participants for the upcoming cohort of the BDiv program on the basis of a pastor's application, his letters of recommendation, and the results of the entrance exam.

Recent and Upcoming CLI BDiv Timeline (revised partly due to COVID-19)

- **June 2020**— Pastors take entrance exam. Exams are graded by CLI leadership.
- **July 2020** — Twenty pastors are informed of acceptance.
- **September 2020** — First BDiv course (*Research/Writing course, online, due to Covid-19*).
- **May, September, and October 2021** — Second BDiv course (*African church history biography*)
- **March/April 2022** — Third BDiv course (*Psalms*)
- **November 2022** — Fourth BDiv course (*Outreach*)

POST-SEMINARY: CLI MTh Entrance Requirements and Process

1. BDiv complete and "A-B" grade (minimum 88%) cumulative average for all of a pastor's BDiv courses.
2. "A-B" grade (minimum 88%) on his final BDiv theological research paper. (If the paper has not reached that level, one rewrite is allowed).
3. Score well on the computerized [Duolingo English Test](#). (*English for Everyone* study books, suggested study schedule for those books, and testing fees will all be provided by CLI.)
4. Submit a formal letter of application to Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, clearly stating his reasons for wishing to undertake this program of advanced theological study and telling how he feels it will benefit his ministry and his national church body as a whole. Application letters should be emailed to Dr. Jon Bare (Jon.Bare@wisluthsem.org), with a copy to the CLI Formal Continuing Education Director of the One Africa Team (OAT), Pastor Dan Witte (dan.witte@wels.net).
5. There is no set entry time—whenever a student has met all requirements, he may enroll in the upcoming MTh course.