

INTRODUCTION to CLI Formal Continuing Education and its BDiv Program

The Confessional Lutheran Institute (CLI) provides qualified pastors/professors within CELC African church bodies in Cameroon, Kenya, Malawi, Nigeria, Uganda, and Zambia advanced studies in all branches of evangelical Lutheran theology/practice. CLI offers two for-credit degree programs: **Bachelor of Divinity (BDiv)** and **Master of Arts in Theology (MA)**.

Bachelor of Divinity (BDiv) Program: A degree offered through Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary of Mequon, Wisconsin, U.S.A. (WLS), and taught by professors from WLS and CLI Director Daniel Witte. The degree is complete after 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, Pentecostalism in Africa

Courses take place twice a year, God willing, for a little over a week if in person. CLI coordinates dates, locations, and study topics. The current cohort—all pastors—began in 2020. Covid-19 caused delays, but the current cohort should finish their course work and final thesis by 2025.

That is, in 2025 other active CELC pastors will be invited to apply for 2026–2030 BDiv cohort. A maximum of 20 pastors will be enrolled.

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, he would discontinue BDiv studies.*)
- National synod leadership must approve all pastoral applicants to take the entrance exam, requiring:
 1. 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
 2. Second, a letter of recommendation from regional or district leaders within his church body.
 3. Pastoral applicants also must submit an application (available at <http://cliafrica.net>, or from CLI director Daniel Witte at dan.witte@wels.net or at WhatsApp +260770738505). The application should include the two letters of recommendation above.
 4. National synod leadership will set an appropriate date for BDiv entrance testing to take place in consultation with the Confessional Lutheran Institute Director (Pastor Witte, dan.witte@wels.net, or WhatsApp +260770738505).
 5. Synod leadership will let national pastors know 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. *(That page may be sent in before exam day.)*
2. A short essay on a theological topic along with a question-and-answer test. The 2020 test asked about on a recent sermon, a catechism section, and a given book of the Bible.
 - Written exams will be graded by CLI Director 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)

- **September 2020** — First BDiv course (*Research/Writing*—due to Covid-19, WhatsApp-based)
- **May, September, and October 2021** — Second BDiv course (*African church history biography*)
- **March 2022** — Third BDiv course (*Psalms*)
- **October and November 2022** — Fourth BDiv course (*Outreach*)
- **June 2023** — Fifth BDiv course (*the doctrine of Marriage and Family*)
- **October 2023** — Sixth BDiv course (*Pentecostalism*)

In coordination with pastors in the BDiv cohort, CLI selects and shapes courses to serve the needs of the church in Africa. In-person courses in the most recent cohort have been held in Sondu, Kenya, in Lilongwe, Malawi, and in Lusaka, Zambia.

For some after BDiv: CLI Master of Arts (MA) Entrance Requirements and Steps

CLI's Master of Arts studies are only for active pastors or theological educators in an African CELC synod.

1. **Have a BDiv from Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary complete** and "A-B" grade (minimum 88%) cumulative average for all of a pastor's BDiv courses.
 - What if a pastor has a bachelor's degree in theology from another institution? He should consult with Pastor Daniel Witte, who will in turn consult with his partners on the Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary Pastoral Studies Institute team.
2. **Have "A-B" grade (minimum 88%) on his final BDiv theological research paper.**
 - If the pastor's paper has not reached that level, one rewrite is allowed.
 - If a pastor has a bachelor's degree from another institution, he may submit his final paper or its equivalent after consulting with Pastor Witte.
3. **Score well on the computerized [Duolingo English Test](#).** (CLI will provide *English for Everyone* study books, suggested study schedule for those books, and Duolingo testing fees.)
4. **Submit a formal letter of application to WLS**, 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. Application letters should be emailed to the CLI Formal Continuing Education Director of the One Africa Team (OAT), Pastor Dan Witte (dan.witte@wels.net or WhatsApp +260770738505), with a copy to Harland Goetzinger (Harland.Goetzinger@wisluthsem.org).

Unlike BDiv, which has a cohort system, there is no set entry time for Master of Arts studies through CLI. Whenever a student has met all requirements, *including biblical character and competence requirements*, he may enroll in the introductory MA course and aim at more specialized studies.