

**Global Institute of Theology  
Chicago – Grand Rapids**

**4 – 29 June 2010**



**World Alliance of Reformed Churches**

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*Semper reformanda*

**Uniting General Council  
Grand Rapids 18 – 28 June 2010**



**World  
Communion  
of Reformed  
Churches**

# **WARC GIT 2010**

## **Living and Learning in the Context of a Unique Worldwide Reformed Gathering**

The World Alliance of Reformed Churches (WARC) will hold its second Global Institute of Theology in the United States of America, June 5 – 29, 2010. The Institute will be held in collaboration with, and under the academic auspices of, McCormick Theological Seminary, Chicago, Illinois, and Calvin Theological Seminary, Grand Rapids, Michigan.

The purpose of the Global Institute of Theology is to give theological students and faculty from all over the world the opportunity to learn, teach, and do theology in an inter-contextual and ecumenical way, situating the theological task in local, regional, and world contexts.

The Global Institute of Theology will be held in conjunction with the Uniting General Council in Grand Rapids (MI) USA. In this gathering the World Alliance of Reformed Churches and the Reformed Ecumenical Council will unite and form a new organization—the World Communion of Reformed Churches. Around one thousand participants, including six hundred fifty delegates, will gather from more than two hundred member churches in over one hundred countries.

The specific goals of the Global Institute of Theology are fivefold:

1. To build a community of learning and faith as students and faculty work together on vital themes in Bible and theology today and create for ourselves an immediate international context;

2. To reflect biblically and theologically on the theme of the Uniting General Council, “Unity of the Spirit in the Bond of Peace” (Eph. 4.3). As the WARC and REC enter into a new unity characterized as a communion, the courses of the Institute will examine the relationship between communion and mission. The covenanting process already begun in the WARC will also be taken into account as churches respond to economic injustice and ecological devastation;
3. To encounter contemporary biblical and theological approaches in their inter-confessional, intercultural, and interreligious dimensions, and to discern their relevance to the council theme. This will include the study of lived and living missiologies and the ongoing WARC study on Reformed identity and mission;
4. To introduce the varying contextual perspectives on the Christian witness of the global Reformed family—bearing in mind our understanding of God’s mission in every continent, and being aware of what all our churches have to learn from Reformed witness in every land;
5. To strengthen global networks of sharing and reflection among theological students and faculty, church workers, theological institutions, and churches for continuing action and reflection in the new WCRC. This will also contribute to the ecumenical formation of a new generation of church leaders.

These five goals will be reflected in the way in which we organize the institute. We will be meeting in North America, one of the power centers of globalization, and following a time of financial crisis in which uncritical confidence in unrestrained forms of capitalism has been shaken. We will be meeting in the context of the world's largest and most influential economy, and in a country that orients its public life to grand religious ideals. What a privilege it will be to learn from the perspective and experience of scholars who come to the Institute from this context and radically different contexts!

### **The Global Institute is intended for theological students and pastors beginning their ministry**

WARC is concerned with the intercontextual formation of new generations of Reformed leaders who are fully aware of the faith dimension of contemporary challenges such as economic injustice and environmental destruction and committed to interfaith solidarity, spiritual renewal, church inclusiveness, and Christian unity.

The Global Institute of Theology is intended for

- a. female and male students—up to 70 from all continents—preparing for the Christian ministry at a theological seminary related to a WARC/REC member church, or
- b. pastors in their first years of ministry recommended by WARC/REC

Applicants should have a particular interest in ecumenical theology and mission. Efforts will be made to select a student body and faculty that will reflect gender and

regional balance, and thus the diversity of the Reformed family in the world today.

Through lectures, seminars, exposures, contextual experiences, the sharing of stories, and participation in the life of the churches in the USA, the Global Institute of Theology will explore the theme of the General Council and related subjects.

The Students will also fully participate and critically reflect upon the life of the Uniting General Council, through Bible studies, worship, attendance at plenary and study sessions, and other events.

Students and faculty will meet regularly together both inside and outside of the classroom, both during the General Council and in our time preceding and following the council.

## **CURRICULUM**

All students will be required to take a core course (for 2.0 credits) and two of four possible elective courses (for 2.0 credits). Academic credit according to international standards will be granted by McCormick Seminary Chicago and Calvin Seminary Grand Rapids. The language of instruction of the Global Institute of Theology will be English.

### **Core Course**

**Unity of the Spirit in the Bond of Peace: in the Churches... in Civil Society... in Creation.**

The theme of the Uniting General Council will be: "Unity of the Spirit in the Bond of Peace." This theme has also been chosen from the perspectives of community and justice. The Global Institute of Theology is the place where this theme will be reflected upon in a deeper sense than is possible at an ecumenical gathering. Three faculty members will develop and teach this core course from the aspects of creation, civil society, and creation. Within this course draft documents being prepared at the General Council will also be analyzed, and key delegates to the council will be invited for conversation.

### **Elective Courses**

#### **1. Reading the Bible in Context**

Reading the Bible without being aware of the contexts wherein the texts were written and are being read today is, in fact, impossible. On the other hand understanding these

contexts can only be done in a process of (self-) critical reflection. This course will be part of that process.

## **2. Interfaith Dialogue**

Today theological education cannot fruitfully be done by ignoring the fact that there is an interreligious context everywhere in the world. The pattern of these contexts is very diverse. The GIT offers an unique opportunity to reflect on the interfaith dialogue in an atmosphere of a global gathering of students and faculty.

## **3. The Book of Ephesians**

The theme for the Uniting General Council “Unity of the Spirit in the Bond of Peace” comes out of Ephesians 4. In this course the theme will be studied in the context of that chapter and the whole letter to the Ephesians.

## **4. New Directions in Mission for the 21st Century**

The urgent need for a fresh understanding of the *missio dei* in the 21st century is the subject of this course. We will analyse the involvement of WARC in mission through its mission project of the past years and from the diversity of our contexts offers theological perspectives and tools to enable students to develop new approaches to mission and evangelism in their churches.

### **Coordination and faculty**

The Global Institute of Theology will be coordinated by an international team which will bear responsibility for all matters related to the curriculum, administration, and

financial arrangements. The co-ordinating team will also appoint an international faculty.

**Dr. Ofelia Ortega**

President of the Global Institute of Theology  
Moderator of the network for Theology of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches  
Rector of the Evangelical Theological Seminary (SET) in Matanzas, Cuba 1996-2004

**Dr. Peter Wyatt**

Dean of the Global Institute of Theology  
Associate professor emeritus and immediate past principal Emmanuel College, University of Toronto, Canada

**Annette Mosher**

Dean of Students and Academic Affairs of the Global Institute of Theology  
Director of International Students, Faculty of Theology/Philosophy, VU University Amsterdam, The Netherlands

**Rev. May Tan**

Chaplain of the Global Institute of Theology  
Member of the network for Theology of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches  
Executive Secretary for Synod Development of the Presbyterian Church of Singapore

**Dr. Douwe Visser**

Secretary of the Global Institute of Theology  
Executive Secretary for Theology of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches

**Dr. Lyle D. Bierma**

Jean and Kenneth Baker Professor of Systematic Theology, Calvin Theological Seminary, Grand Rapids, Michigan, USA

Representative of Calvin Seminary in the Global Institute of Theology

**Luis Rivera-Rodriguez**

Dean of the Faculty and Vice President for Academic Affairs and the James G.K. McClure Professor of Theological Education, McCormick Seminary, Chicago, USA

Representative of McCormick Seminary in the Global Institute of Theology

In addition faculty members from theological seminaries all over the world will join the community of the institute.

## **A Global Institute of Theology in Cooperation with Theological Institutions from around the World**

Through the Global Institute of Theology, the World Alliance intends to strengthen its ties with theological institutions related to its member churches as well as facilitate further communication and cooperation among theological schools from different regions of the world.

Significant aspects of the institute such as the recruitment of prospective students, securing the financial resources necessary to enable students from countries in the South to participate, and the general academic requirements for its operation will be considered in consultation with supporting theological institutions.

The World Alliance is submitting three requests to theological institutions related to WARC/REC member churches: 1. That each school pray for the work of the Global Institute of Theology; 2. That each school approached appoint up to three students to attend the institute, and if necessary facilitate their participation; 3. That each school approached by WARC help to facilitate the participation of Reformed students from the South.

### **Further Information and Applications**

Information on the Global Institute of Theology is available from the WARC member churches and supporting theological institutions.

Applications for the Global Institute of Theology should be submitted no later than December 1st, 2009, and sent to:

**Drs. Annette Mosher**

Dean of Students and Academic Affairs  
Global Institute of Theology  
c/o Faculty of Theology  
VU University Amsterdam  
De Boelelaan 1105, Room 13A171081 HV Amsterdam  
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e-mail: [ak.mosher@th.vu.nl](mailto:ak.mosher@th.vu.nl)

Further information on the Global Institute of Theology may be obtained from:

**Dr Douwe Visser**

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World Alliance of Reformed Churches  
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