



Commission on Central Conference Theological Education Fund

2017-2020 Quadrennial Report of the Central Conference Theological Education

The 2016 General Conference doubled the apportioned amount to \$10 million for the 2017-2020 quadrennium because it recognized the tremendous impact of the Central Conference Theological Education Fund (CCTEF) on the formation and education of pastoral leaders in the central conferences of Africa, Asia, and Europe. The CCTEF commission is grateful for this increased funding, which enabled central conferences to expand initiatives and innovations in theological education and leadership development.

While General Conference 2016 approved \$10 million for the fund, the General Council on Finance and Administration (GCFA) expected the World Service Apportionment Fund to pay out at approximately 90 percent. Therefore, the commission awarded \$2 million to applicants in 2017-2019. However, GCFA anticipates the available funds for 2020 will decrease to \$1.5 million due to reduced apportionment receipts.

Under the leadership of Bishop Pedro Torio and the support of the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry (GBHEM), the commission members met annually to review and award grant applicants in a spirit of mutual accountability with a shared commitment to the advancement of theological education and pastoral formation and develop guidelines with similar high standards of accountability for grant recipients in all central conferences in Africa, Asia and Europe. The commission continues to utilize regional screening committees from each central conference to review and recommend awards for qualified applicants.

In the first half of the quadrennium, the commission awarded 154 grants that increased the capacity of leaders in mission fields, developed contextual

resources and supported innovations in education and ministry, and enabled sustainable programs and practices.

Outcome and Impact of the CCTEF Initiative

The CCTEF directly impacts the lives of clergy and church leadership who are stakeholders in theological education in the central conferences. Such impact enables the Church to move forward in making disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world. After two cycles of the CCTEF program, the quality of theological education in the central conferences improved significantly in areas such as teaching, research, resource creation and networking.

Also, the number of well-educated theological professors, pastors and leaders of the church, particularly women clergy, who benefit from these initiatives increased substantially. The CCTEF helped advance theological education in all central conferences by strengthening theological institutions, creating networks among these schools, and increasing access to theological education.

The commission lifts these examples of CCTEF impact in four areas:

Capacity building

- The support for Courses of Study and continuing theological education programs resulted in an increase of trained pastors from approximately 50 to 90 percent in many annual conferences in Africa, including a significant increase in the number of women clergy, and a 95 percent increase in better-equipped pastors in the Philippines.
- In the case of the Moscow Theological Seminary, development funds for libraries enabled it to pass government inspection, while other independent institutions in Russia lost educational licenses.
- The growth of in-country training has led to more faculty teaching in theological institutions



of their countries rather than staying abroad after being trained in other countries.

- Re-focused competencies in Covenant Discipleship Groups integrated widespread ministry engagements with the poor through micro-finance and livelihood development in the Philippines.

Development of contextual education and resources

- Providing funds to produce materials and theological literature in local languages gives more access to theological education and resources, and encourages pastoral leaders to expand ministry to others.
- Events such as the African UM Clergywomen's Consultation and Women Coaching Women empower and equip clergywomen to flourish and find ways to balance their personal responsibilities and ministries.
- The preloaded devices provided by the E-Reader program in central conferences offer students wide access to theological books and resources, even if they do not have access to a well-equipped library.

New and innovative initiatives

- CCTEF funds helped add Methodist literature to the Global Digital Library for Theology and Ecumenism (www.methodist-studies.world) which is accessible worldwide.
- E-learning and modular programs in Europe and Eurasia, and the Union Theological Seminary Hybrid Online courses in the Philippines, make theological education and training accessible to more people.
- The Global Chaplaincy Training program provided chaplains in Africa with the knowledge and skills to minister in this specialized chaplaincy field.

- Revitalized radio ministries of southern Philippines exposed pastoral students to a public service of Gospel witness and advocacy of the UMC Social Principles.

Sustainability

- The CCTEF support of the Endowment Fund for Theological Education in the Central Conferences, contributes to sustainable long-term support of theological education in the central conferences.
- The requirement of a local contribution of at least 10 percent by any awarded project encourages ownership and responsibility in the projects.
- Utilizing a "train-the-trainer" format ensures long-term availability of leadership for theological education programs.

As The United Methodist Church in most of the central conferences continues to grow, the need for effective, contextual and sustainable theological education grows as well. In addition to empowering pastoral leaders in their local communities, high-quality theological education enables deeper cross-cultural dialogue within our denomination and beyond. The commission celebrates the impact and the difference that The United Methodist Church has made in the lives and ministries of pastors and communities through the CCTEF. With that confidence, the commission recommends that General Conference 2020 renew its approval of \$10 million for the Central Conference Theological Education Fund through the World Service Apportionment Fund.