

BTI Programming and Activities

Introduction to the BTI

The Boston Theological Institute (BTI) is an association of ten university divinity schools, schools of theology and seminaries in the Greater Boston area, registered as a tax-exempt 501(c)3 organization. It is one of the oldest and largest theological consortia in the world. It includes as constitutive members schools representing the full range of Christian churches and confessions and a Rabbinical School as of January 1, 2011. Additionally, persons representing other religious traditions are present in many of our schools. The BTI is not a degree granting institution, but coordinates various administrative, program and academic activities so as to enhance the work of the member schools.

Through its history, the BTI has grown to meet the demands of a changing theological climate. Students, faculty, alumni and friends have been actively engaged in this collaborative effort, recognized in various ways such as through certificates of study -- currently in the areas of International Mission & Ecumenism, and in Religion & Conflict Transformation.

The BTI is also known for the sharing of faculty and resources. The schools' theological libraries together contain almost two million volumes. Cross registration widens the opportunity for more than 4,500 students to enjoy unparalleled opportunities in academic courses and programming. The BTI supports ecumenical and inter-faith work in areas of interest to its constituencies through its programs and special events.

** BTI is incorporated as a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization*

BTI Activities

BTI activity takes place under three headings: administrative operations, program facilitation, and academic development. The purpose of this collaboration varies with the participants involved. However, the general mission of the BTI is to pursue the truth in love, advance the unity of the Church, and bring closer the healing of broken humanity. (See the BTI Mission Statement.) Such activity includes the following:

1) Administrative Operations

Cross-registration: Most students first encounter the BTI through cross registration. Courses and directions for cross-registration are found on this website and are easily accessed. Each BTI school has its own internal schedule; so be sure to check with both schools if you cross register. (Directions to schools and maps are also available on this website as well as those of the schools.)

The Libraries of the BTI Schools: Students, faculty and staff of the BTI schools are welcome to use the books, other media and facilities of the libraries of consortium members through cooperative policies in place. (See the BTI and particular school library websites for details and hours of operation.)

Cooperation in Field Education: Field Education, or Mentored Ministry, in parish, Church and civic settings, is administered through the schools but on a cooperative basis. Students are welcome to pursue field education through sites administered by consortium schools in most circumstances.

BTI E-Newsletter, Website and Consortium-wide Calendar: The BTI website offers the widest listing of academic and religious news and activities in the Boston area, primarily as oriented to the BTI schools.

BTI Magazine (The Bulletin of the Boston Theological Institute), ISSN 1538-6597, is a bi-annual publication of the BTI. An additional series, The 21st Century Ministry Booklets (ISSN 1940-7866), publishes papers submitted by faculty, staff and students, in the areas of BTI programming.

Administrative Working Groups: The BTI Board of Trustees, Academic Deans, Deans of Students, and Registrars, meet on a regular basis. Other working groups meet periodically.

Courier Service: A weekly courier service among the schools is provided between libraries and central administrative offices.

2) Program Facilitation

The BTI facilitates programs on a continuing and periodic basis. They are accessed through faculty, students, website and internet media. Continuing programming has been consistent in the areas of: International Mission & Ecumenism, Science and Religion, Youth & Young Adult Ministry Studies, and Religion & Conflict Transformation. Additional programming has included work in Inter-Religious Dialogue, Religion and Ecology, Liturgy, Worship and the Arts, Restorative Justice and in Spiritual Formation. Generally where three or more schools are interested in common programming the BTI becomes involved as seems appropriate.

International Mission & Ecumenism: Periodic meetings occur around annual activities. **Fall:** Meeting of the American Society of Missiology – Eastern Fellowship; **Winter:** Costas Consultation on Global Mission; **Spring:** Graduate Student Conference in Ecumenism; and **Summer:** Overseas Seminar Workshop. Students are encouraged to attend the monthly Graduate Student Colloquium in Ecumenical Studies. A special feature of current programming is preparation for the centennial recognition of the 1910 Edinburgh Missionary Conference in November 2010.

Inter-religious & Inter-faith Dialogue: BTI schools and the consortium generally, have many programs that promote religious and faith dialogue. A special feature of current programming is preparation for the Parliament of World's Religions, December 2009, and a subsequent conference in the spring on educating religious leadership in the context of religious pluralism.

Religion & Conflict Transformation: This program, constructed on the strength of particular school interests with "docking" points at all BTI schools, begins with a fall workshop, supports efforts at prison ministry, conflict mediation and restorative justice. Yearly activity concludes with the international BTI seminar-workshop. A special feature of current programming is work with the Decade to Overcome Violence, of the World Council of Churches, and toward the International Ecumenical Peace Convocation in 2011.

Religion & Science: Student gatherings, seminars and work are organized around the theory and practice of religion in relation to the sciences. Particular work is being emphasized at this time in **Religion and Ecology**. Details about

the Student Essay Contest and The Journal of Faith and Science Exchange, are available on the website.

3) Academic Development:

Each BTI school sets its own policies and procedures. The BTI fosters conversation and development among the schools through academic and administrative working groups, as well as through additional venues. These include the following:

Faculty Colloquia: Faculty colloquia and *ad hoc* discussions occur in disciplines, such as: Old Testament/Hebrew Bible, New Testament, Patristics, Theology, Comparative Theology, Ethics, Psychology and Pastoral Theology, Field Education, Missiology & Ecumenism, etc.

International Workshop: The BTI organizes an annual seminar-workshop that crosses the interest areas of ecumenism, missiology, and conflict studies, in line with the BTI Mission Statement. Past workshops have dealt with issues of contemporary ecumenism, conflict in Northern Ireland, Europe and the Balkans, the Middle East, Africa, and India and the North Pacific.

BTI Certificates: BTI certificates are awarded currently in International Mission & Ecumenism and in Religion & Conflict Transformation. Students, visiting scholars, and others, have the opportunity of earning such certificates of study by virtue of matriculation in any BTI school either in a degree program, or as special students.

Continuing Education: Programming in this area is currently being run by individual schools and through continuing education departments. Occasional BTI programs are available for continuing education credits.

Other Opportunities: Additional academic opportunities are available to members of the consortium through the BTI, its member schools, or in the Boston area generally. See the biannual *BTI Magazine* for an overview of school activities and new faculty publications, or the weekly *BTI E-Newsletter* available on the BTI website, and as sent to consortium participants.

BTI Faculty Committees, Advisory Groups and Task Forces: Faculty Committees and Advisory Groups provide special direction and programming to particular initiatives. Four of these are described below. **Faculty Task Forces** arise and are disbanded according to particular needs and interests, such as in relation to requests to evaluate particular ecumenical documents. For example, task forces have considered documents for the National or World Council of Churches, such as *The Nature and Mission of the Church*.

International Mission and Ecumenism: A BTI Faculty Committee gives special attention to courses and programming in the fields of Mission and Ecumenism. In addition to supporting periodic meetings around annual activities, such as meetings of the American Society of Missiology – Eastern Fellowship, Annual Costas Consultation on Global Mission, and Graduate Student Conference in Ecumenism, a summer international workshop is sponsored that deals with contemporary issues confronting the churches. The workshop usually follows a course of preparation in the spring and can be taken for academic credit.

Students are invited to participate in this program by contacting the BTI Central Office. To date, courses have been organized around the following themes:

- 1991-1992 Protestantism and the Ecumenical Movement (Switzerland)
- 1992-1993 Roman Catholicism and Ecumenism (Vatican, Italy and Switzerland)
- 1993-1994 Orthodoxy and the Ecumenical Movement (Greece and Turkey)
- 1994-1995 Ecclesiology from a Non-Western Perspective (India)
- 1995-1996 The Struggle for Protestant Identity (Switzerland, Germany, and Czech Republic)
- 1996-1997 Reconciliation: Catholic and Ecumenical Witness (Northern Ireland)
- 1997-1998 Reconciliation: Orthodox and Ecumenical Witness (Fr. Yugoslavia and Greece)
- 1998-1999 Immigration, Refugees and the Church (South Africa and Ghana)
- 1999-2000 Identity, Instrumentality, and Inter-Faith Relations (Israel, Jerusalem, the West Bank and Ghaza)
- 2000-2001 Culture, Identity and Religion in the Caribbean (Jamaica and Cuba)
- 2001-2002 Issues of History, Religion and Identity in Russian Orthodoxy (Russia)
- 2002-2003 Restorative Justice for Community (U.S.A.)
- 2003-2004 Building Cultures of Reconciliation (Egypt, Israel and Palestine)



- 2004-2005 Lebanon: A Test of Multiculturalism: Religious Identity and National Recovery (Lebanon and Syria)
- 2005-2006 Christian Origins and Witness in India (India)
- 2006-2007 Forgiveness, Reconciliation and Peace (Volos, Greece)
- 2007-2008 Reconciliation in Church and Society (Seoul, South Korea)
- 2008-2009 Interfaith Workshop and Conference (Boston, Massachusetts)
- 2009-2010 Forgiveness and Restorative Justice: Lessons from South America (Bogotá, Colombia)

Science and Religion: A Faculty Advisory Committee supports Science and Religion programming in the schools of the consortium. Student gatherings, seminars and work are organized around the theory and practice of religion in relation to the sciences. Particular work is being emphasized at this time in Religion and Ecology. The Committee supports a Student Essay Contest and publication of *The Journal of Faith and Science Exchange*.

Youth and Young Adult Ministry Studies: Several schools in the consortium have focused programs that deal with Youth and Young Adult Ministry Studies. Faculties from these programs occasionally gather to promote programming, course development and shared events. Contact the BTI office for additional details.

Religion and Conflict Transformation: The program in Religion and Conflict Transformation works together with all of the BTI schools, in particular those that have dedicated programming in this area. It fosters a seminary-based program in theologically-informed conflict transformation, offering a concentration within the MDiv, STM and MTS degree programs at Boston University School of Theology. It makes a certificate available to students at any of the BTI schools who complete certificate requirements. (See information about BTI certificates on this website.) The program is aimed at training ministers and other religious leaders in the theology, theory, and practice of conflict transformation, and more broadly, putting the ministry of reconciliation at the center of the church's mission through the training of religious leadership.