

Spiritual Formation and Biblical Studies are at the center of CGI:

Christian spiritual growth is the primary reason for the institute's existence. It is assumed that those men and women who would desire to attend classes at the institute's center will have experienced a spiritual rebirth. They must have already experienced a sense of God's calling them to faith in Jesus Christ, to baptism, and to active membership in a Church of the Brethren congregation. Similarly, it is assumed that a person who senses God's call to the ministry studies the Scriptures and has an established life of prayer. Still, the students who come to participate in the Christian Growth Institute are motivated by a desire to come to a deeper spirituality.

The Christian Growth Institute (CGI), certified by the Brethren Academy in February 2003, recertified in July 2013 and in March 2020, prepares and equips men and women to serve in the ministries of Church of the Brethren congregations and mission projects. CGI is intended for those students whose life circumstances may prevent them from participating in seminary or traditional ministry training programs.

BIBLICAL PERSPECTIVE

Historically, the Bible and especially the New Testament have formed who the Brethren are and how the Brethren have become who they are. The Bible continues to shape us, our theology, our spiritual discipline, and our lifestyles. The following scripture passages reflect some of our beliefs about the Church, God, and our calling to serve by training others for ministerial leadership. This is by no means intended to be an exhaustive list. As the Christian Growth Institute grows under the leadership of the Holy Spirit, we may choose to add to this list.

- I Corinthians 12:27
- Ephesians 1:22-23
- I Corinthians 12:18

PROGRAM INFORMATION

The Institute's program of study is designed to be completed in four years. A supervised ministry experience is being piloted. Components of the program include:

- **Orientation:** a one day event for new students that introduces the CGI program; pre-licensed and/or licensed CGI students will be assigned a mentor.
- **Thirteen Courses:**
 - Biblical Studies Core:**
 1. Old Testament Survey
 2. New Testament Survey
 3. Biblical Interpretation
 - Practical Ministry Core:**
 4. Worship
 5. Evangelism/Outreach
 6. Preaching
 - History/Theology Core:**
 7. History of the Church
 8. Beliefs and Practices of the CoB
 9. Introduction to Theology
 - Leadership Core:**
 10. Teaching & Learning in the Church
 11. Ministerial Leadership & Admin.
 12. Introduction to Pastoral Care
 - 13. Written Communication (Writing) is offered each year for all students.

Each course includes SIXTEEN contact hours, required reading, and written or oral assignments such as research papers, book reviews, exegetical papers, sermons, tests, etc.

PROGRAM INFORMATION ~continued~

- **Portfolio:** an integrative tool intended to help evaluate a student's growth in ministry goals. Ministerial students will meet quarterly with mentors to review progress in areas ranging from a set of ministry goals for the student, spiritual disciplines, spiritual retreats, material used in ministry situations, representative class assignments, even a personal health plan.
- **Practice of Ministry Days:** annual day long events based on a specific theme such as rites and passages, death and grief, ministerial ethics, conflict and reconciliation. Provides an opportunity to bring in seminary teachers and other national leaders on specific themes.
- **Ministry Formation:** Three spiritual formation retreats will be required to enhance spiritual disciplines.
- **Supervised Ministry Experience:** goal is to allow a student to benefit from an on-site ministry experience under the direction of an experienced pastor.
- **Broader Church:** attendance of at least one Annual Conference, one district conference, and a significant ecumenical, interfaith or intercultural event.

Center Locations

The Christian Growth Institute has two teaching centers. They are the Roanoke Center and the Shenandoah Center. Courses are offered at different times at each center so that students can attend classes at either center.

The Christian Growth Institute is administered by a committee that is a partnership of the Virginia and Shenandoah Districts.

CHRISTIAN GROWTH INSTITUTE

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THE CHRISTIAN GROWTH INSTITUTE

An Adventure in Ministry Training and Leadership



Church of the Brethren

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Virginia District

Shenandoah District