



## BYLAWS OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES

### I. PREAMBLE

The Benedict XVI Institute for Africa (BIA, hereafter) is founded in response to the summons of Pope Benedict XVI during his visit to Cameroon in March 2009. In his address on the said occasion, the Supreme Pontiff said:

It would be well for your theologians today to continue to probe the depth of the Trinitarian mystery and its meaning for everyday African life. This century will perhaps permit, by God's grace, the rebirth, on your continent, albeit certainly under a different and new form, of the prestigious School of Alexandria. Why could we not hope that Africans today and the universal Church might thereby be furnished with great theologians and spiritual masters capable of contributing to the sanctification of those who dwell in this continent and throughout the Church?

*Pope Benedict XVI, March 19, 2009, Yaoundé, Cameroon*

Guided by this aspiration and invitation, the BIA is committed to the following:

#### 1.1. Mission and Purpose

Our mission is to form missionary leaders for the Church in Africa and the global Church, by cultivating and advancing theological scholarship, research and pedagogy of the highest order in the spiritual and intellectual tradition of Joseph Ratzinger / Pope Benedict XVI. Our purpose is to prepare our students to engage in rigorous research, dialogue and publication in Ratzinger Studies that will substantively contribute to ecclesial, cultural and scholarly discourse with Africa and the global Church.

#### 1.2. Vision

To achieve our purpose, the BIA will:

1. Develop scholarly communication platforms, namely our website and publications to disseminate research and institutional initiatives to raise awareness about the BIA.
2. Establish a permanent academic and administrative headquarters in Africa which will coordinate the international activities of the BIA to serve as center of advanced theological study for the continent of Africa in partnership with the US-based office.

3. Form strategic partnerships with established academic and ecclesial institutions dedicated to fostering and disseminating theological research and higher education with a focus on the heritage of Joseph Ratzinger/ Pope Benedict XVI.
4. Convene scholarly conferences and symposia featuring recognized theologians and researchers whose work contributes to the development of African theology in the light of the theology of Joseph Ratzinger/Benedict XVI with a focus on scholarship originating from Africa.
5. Develop and implement graduate-level programs and course curricula, including a Master of Arts in Theology with concentration in Ratzinger Studies, structured according to internationally recognized academic standards set or adhered to by The Vatican's Congregation for Catholic Education that focus on the theology of Benedict XVI, such as: Christology, Trinity, Ecclesiology, Mariology, Eschatology, Culture and Interreligious Dialogue, Biblical Hermeneutics, The Priesthood, African Faculties of Theology, Major Seminaries, and Religious Houses of Formation.
6. Invest in and award merit-based academic grants to seminarians, ministers, and religious followers who demonstrate exceptional scholarly promise in theological scholarship related to Joseph Ratzinger/Benedict XVI.
7. Create and direct the management of a peer-reviewed academic research journal entitled, Benedict XVI Journal for Africa, that will be dedicated to advancing original theological research in Ratzinger Studies.
8. Establish a permanent research and study center for the Benedict XVI Institution for Africa, which will serve as the principal site for all advanced theological scholarship, institutional and pilot programs and courses on the theology of Benedict XVI for the Church of Africa.

## **II. MEMBERSHIP**

### **2.1. Responsibilities**

The board is responsible for steering the BIA toward the attainment of its Mission by:

- 2.1.1. Offering scholarly and strategic leadership of recognized academic distinction in defining and overseeing the Institute's mission and long-term goals.
- 2.1.2. Overseeing the development and implementation of academic programs and curricula
- 2.1.3. Establishing policies and ensuring ethical and legal compliance.
- 2.1.4. Advocating for the institute within academic, ecclesial and professional communities.
- 2.1.5. The principle of subsidiary shall govern the relationship between the board and the constituent colleges and other members of the institute internationally.

### **2.2. Criteria for Membership**

- 2.2.1. Membership on the Board is by invitation and appointment only and is reserved for those with scholarly achievements who have received recognized distinction within theology or related fields such as religious studies and philosophy. A current Operational Member may nominate a

candidate for board membership whose work has received a high level of recognition within theology or a closely related field. The nomination shall be accompanied by a dossier including a record of:

- Professional history (Curriculum Vitae)  
Peer-reviewed publications (books, chapters, articles)
- Research reception and presentation (reviews, citations, media)
- Academic appointments or equivalent leadership
- Two written endorsements from established scholars

For Operational Members, particular attention is given to the candidate's intellectual leadership and capacity for institutional responsibility.

For Consultative Members, emphasis rests upon the depth, influence, and recognized contribution of their scholarship.

Admission requires a two-thirds vote of the Operational Members.

2.2.2. The Board of the Benedict XVI Institute for Africa shall consist of no more than twenty (20) members at any given time to preserve the integrity of the Institute's academic excellence and vocation. Fifteen (15) shall serve as Operational Members, entrusted with the active governance, academic oversight and strategic direction of the Institute. Five (5) shall serve as Consultative Members, who will offer scholarly counsel and intellectual support to the Institute's mission and may serve on committees.

2.2.3. There shall be two classes of members: Consultative (with an advisory role) and Operational (involved in the daily running of the Institute). Both classes shall be subject to the same standards of required distinction and formal vetting. Only operational members possess voting authority and serve renewable one-year terms. From among the Operational Members, there shall be a core Executive board composed of four officers who administratively lead the Board of Directors and serve renewable three-year terms: President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer.

2.2.4. Candidates for board membership must be formally nominated and confirmed by a current Board Member to be formally considered and undergo peer evaluation prior to election by a supermajority vote of Operational Members. Membership renewal requires continued scholarly engagement, ongoing contribution to theological research or leadership, and continued service for the full term.

2.2.5. All members must hold a terminal degree (PhD., S.T.D, or equivalent) in Theology or a related discipline with specialization in the theology or works of Joseph Ratzinger/Pope Benedict XVI or a substantially related field or possess expert competency in areas that serve the mission of the Institute. Candidates must demonstrate a strong reputation for their expertise and achievements with a record of outstanding scholarly accomplishment in the form of peer-reviewed publications, a history of presented research, participation in editorial or evaluative capacities, receipt of significant awards, and high commendation by colleagues in the field of Ratzinger studies, commensurate with their status as junior or senior scholars.

2.2.6. Board membership is honorary and uncompensated and continued services are contingent upon maintaining active scholarly engagement and professional standing consistent with the Institute's academic standards and may last for as long as the individual is willing to serve in the generous spirit of Ratzinger and in compliance to the vision and mission of the Institute.

### **2.3. Operations and Meetings**

2.3.1. The entire board acts vicariously through the Coordinator of the BIA and the operational members.

2.3.2. There shall be at least two ordinary meetings per year: Operational members must attend both meetings, and Consultative members may attend all meetings or make their views known by alternative means.

2.3.3. A quorum needed for a meeting is 70% of operational members at any given time.

2.3.4. Decisions and legislations shall be arrived at through votes, guided by Robert's Rule of Order.

### **III: AMENDMENT OF THE STATUTES**

3.1. The Statutes may be amended during annual meetings by a two-thirds vote of those present.

3.2. Proposed changes must be incorporated into the new document immediately and made known to all members.

Last revised March 3, 2026