

The Global Forum of Theological Educators holds second meeting in Crete

BY LISA KERN AND LESTER EDWIN J. RUIZ



The Global Forum of Theological Educators (GFTE) met May 20–24, 2019, at the Orthodox Academy of Crete, in Kolympari, Crete, Greece, for its second meeting focused on the theme Vision and Viability in Contexts: Theological Learning and Formation.

GFTE was designed to provide both a context and an opportunity for theological educators from diverse Christian traditions worldwide to meet and learn together through *koinonia* from those engaged in similar work but whose faith traditions might be different from their own.

The inaugural meeting of GFTE was held at *Familienferienstätte Dorfweil* in Schmitten, Germany, May 16–20, 2016, with 86 participants from 37 countries representing six different ecclesial families: Evangelical, historic Protestant, Independent Churches (Africa and China), Orthodox, Pentecostal, and Roman Catholic.

This year's forum gathered 64 participants from 29 countries still from the same six different Christian ecclesial families.

New to the GFTE process was the formation, this year, of a Listening Group. Eight participants from the conference were asked to be "silent observers" throughout the four-day meeting to help name what GFTE had been learning on its "shared journey." The full report, titled "What have we learned on the road?" and which identifies at least seven observations that reflected most of the experiences of the participants, is now available on the GFTE website.

Sharing worship, Bible study, table discussions, plenaries, and community meals, attendees participated as "individuals" rather than as "official representatives" from their institutions or organizations. Nineteen individuals from 13 ATS member schools (five Evangelical, one Roman Catholic, five Historic Protestant, and two Pentecostal) participated in the Forum. Of the 19, three were Roman Catholics, six were Evangelicals, six were historic Protestants, and four were Pentecostals.

"The theme of this year's consultation is timely," said Frank M. Yamada, executive director of ATS.

"Theological education is at a moment where both vision for what the future holds and the viability of our work are live questions. The current environment in many of our contexts requires centuries-old models of theological education to be rethought to better respond to contemporary realities that affect communities of faith."

ATS collaborates with GFTE as part of its Global Awareness and Engagement Initiative. For more information on the initiative, [email Lester Edwin J. Ruiz](#), director of accreditation and global engagement at ATS.



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