

NETWORK OF THEOLOGY AND RELIGIOUS STUDIES

NETWORK NEWSLETTER 14

AUGUST 2007

**INSTITUT LUTHÉRIEN DE THÉOLOGIE
CAMEROUN**

**MEKANE YESUS THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY
ETHIOPIA**

**LUTHERAN GRADUATE SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY
MADAGASCAR**

**SCHOOL OF MISSION AND THEOLOGY
NORWAY**

**LUTHERAN THEOLOGICAL INSTITUTE
UNIVERSITY OF KWAZULU-NATAL, SOUTH AFRICA**

**MAKUMIRA UNIVERSITY COLLEGE
TUMAINI UNIVERSITY, TANZANIA**

**DEPARTMENT OF RELIGIOUS STUDIES
MAKERERE UNIVERSITY, UGANDA**

CHANGING OF THE GUARDS!

Key projects and programs in our network collaboration have continued to fare well in the first half of 2007 as this newsletter indicates. The intentional projects' focus that engages critically with reality of the challenges that face Christians and the community at grassroots in Africa is quite evident in the trend the old and new programs and projects are seen to develop. With a firm international, open and creative research framework the deepest academic aspirations of stakeholder institutions have been congenially served to the highest.

However, as we continue to live forwards this issue makes us look backwards to understand our progress. It is about the leadership changes that have happened in the meantime. Three old guards who were part of the founding signatories to the Network memorandum of cooperation in November 2000 have retired as heads of their institutions or departments. The Network congratulates and salutes them for their spiritual and moral commitment, perseverance, strength, resilience and discipline that have contributed so much towards the strengthening of our collaboration efforts. Certainly, then, they set a challenge to those who have succeeded them in continuing the right attitude towards this huge academic and institutional undertaking.

To all of us in the Network institutions let us accord the new leadership a warm welcome on board. 'Unity is strength; schism is weakness'.

Kimilike, Lechion Peter

PROGRAMS AND PROJECTS 2007

Interpreting classical religious texts in contemporary Africa: Kampala conference volume

Due to unforeseen circumstances the plans to publish the above collection of 2005 conference essays had been delayed. We are grateful one of the editors, namely Prof Knut Holter has now committed himself to start the editing process, and hopes to conclude it within November 2007. However, at some stage the process will involve the contributors of the essays. When such a need arise the Network of Theology and Religious Studies expects an earnest cooperation and immediate response from those responsible. Prompt provision to the editor of

further information, such as bibliographical references to the papers will be very much appreciated to fast-track the successful accomplishment of the long overdue project. After the edited versions have been confirmed by the authors the volume will then be published by Acton Publishers in Nairobi.

In order to remind the authors to be on the alert the preliminary outline of the book is as follows: Knut Holter (ed.): *Reading Classical Religious Texts in Contemporary Africa*

Hermeneutical contexts

1. J. Mugambi: What is a classical religious text and what is contemporary Africa? Some conceptual clarifications
2. K. Holter: Religious texts in critical contexts: The interpretation of classical religious texts in contemporary African academia
3. B. Mæland: Interpreting strange texts: Hermeneutics as distance overcoming
4. D.R.K. Nkurunziza: African hermeneutics in a global context

Classical texts

5. A.B.T. Byaruhanga-Akiiki: Reading African true and traditional religion in Uganda
6. P. Lokel: Moses and his Cushite wife: Reading Numbers 12:1 with undergraduate students of Makerere University
7. N.H. Nambalirwa: Reading biblical texts on *shalom* in contemporary Africa
8. T.H. Lubowa: Reading classical Islamic texts in contemporary Africa
9. M. leRoux: The Lemba: The 'People of the Book' in Southern Africa
10. M.D. Biyela: 'Children, do you have any fish?': Re-inventing the Kairos Document
11. M. Rugyendo: Reading Anglican provincial synodal texts in Uganda

Classical texts in dialogue

12. G.A. Razafindrakoto: The Old Testament outside the realm of the church: A case from Madagascar
13. W. van Heerden: It's on the old mat that one weaves the new one: The dialogue between African proverbs and biblical texts
14. P.L. Kimilike: 'The poor are not us!': An exploration into the transforming possibilities of Old Testament and African proverbs on poverty
15. S. Kahakwa: Reading African religion in contemporary Africa: A study of its impact and contribution towards an African Christianity
16. S. Kahakwa: Theology of ancestors from an African perspective
17. M. Masenya: Killed by AIDS and buried by religion: African female bodies in crisis

Postgraduate supervision as team work – a case study: The Africanisation of biblical studies project

Willie van Heerden and Magdel leRoux of the University of South Africa in Pretoria were to present a paper at an international conference in Stellenbosch in February 2007. The conference theme is 'Postgraduate supervision: the state of the art and the artists.' Their topic was: 'Postgraduate supervision as team work – a case study: The Africanisation of Biblical Studies Project.' The paper was to reflect on their experiences regarding the team supervision aspect of our very special four year project and all participants made a valuable input to the paper by responding to the following informative questionnaire:

- 1 General and background information
 - Name and surname, Gender, Institution, Country
 - Involvement in project (Underline one or more – student, promoter, co-promoter, organiser, co-ordinator)
 - How did you get involved in this project?
 - What would you have done differently as far as the structure of the project is concerned?
 - E g the four month study periods in Norway/SA
 - The eight month period back home
 - Practical aspects such as your family affairs back home
 - Financial aspects

- 2 The project as such
 - 2.1 If applicable, please list any positive aspects concerning your involvement in this project
 - 2.2 If applicable, please list any negative aspects (deficiencies) as far as the project is concerned

- 3 Group supervision/multi-voice/multi-perspectival supervision
 - 3.1 List ALL the opportunities during the four year period created by the project for group/team supervision
 - 3.2 How would you describe your experience of the group supervision/multi-voice/multi-perspectival supervision?
 - 3.3 What are the advantages of group supervision/multi-voice/multi-perspectival supervision? Give examples
 - 3.4 What were the disadvantages of group supervision/multi-voice/multi-perspectival supervision? Give examples
 - 3.5 List everything pertaining to the project that you experienced in a group context (more than merely student plus promoter)
 - 3.6 In hindsight, would you have preferred individual supervision (one promoter only, without the rest of the group)?
 - 3.7 Did you develop any skills during the supervision process?
 - 3.8 How did you experience emotional support?

- 3.8.1 From your peers
 - 3.8.2 From the groups members
- 4 Cross-institutional/-cultural/gender aspects of group supervision
- 4.1 Did cultural differences between project members living on different continents and different countries enhance or impair collaboration in the process of group supervision? List examples
 - 4.2 Did cross-institutional research pose any challenges or did it contribute to the supervision process? Substantiate your answer
 - 4.3 Did gender differences between project members enhance or impair collaboration in the process of group supervision? List examples
 - 4.4 List all possible future opportunities created by the project for you or your institution (as a result of the team work that took place)
 - 4.5 Anything else that you would like to add?

Hopefully such a precious contribution will be available for use in our network colleges in due time. In addition, a summary report of the Africanisation of Biblical Studies Project has been published by Professor Knut Holter of School of Mission and Theology, Stavanger: http://www.mhs.no/article_630.shtml

Reintegration of Female Ex-Child Soldiers in Eastern Africa: Religious, Ethical and Practical Perspectives (2007-2011)

The project which has been in the offing since early January 2007 officially started up in August 2007 with all students reporting at the School of Mission and Theology in Stavanger.

- Christine Mbambazi (Makerere University, Uganda)
- Helen Nkabala Nambalilwa (Makerere University, Uganda)
- Emeline Ndossi (Makumira University College, Tanzania)

Two research teams will be created around these three Ph.D. students, one in Kampala at Makerere University and one in Stavanger at the School of Mission and Theology:

Research team at Makerere University: Dr Robert Bakeine (Southern Coordinator), Dr Sr Tereza Tinkasiimire, Dr Deusdedit Nkurunziza.

Research team at the School of Mission and Theology: Prof Bård Mæland (Northern Coordinator), Assoc Prof Thor Strandenaes, Assoc Professor Gerd Marie Ådna, Assoc Prof Marta Høyland Lavik, Prof Knut Holter.

The Africanisation of Pastoral Care Project (2006-)

Despite managing quite a lot so far the evaluation on the progress of the project by the research team only gradually have come to realize that the project is much bigger and more complicated than was first thought. The project has turned out to be more than a book-project, but has the character of a research-project because of trying something not done before.

- The idea of inviting experienced pastors into the project was a masterstroke. They have given the project a most important raw material and enabled the researchers to see at close range Christianity at the grass roots and the way ministry is conducted.
- The methodology developed by the research team has enabled them to uncover the cultural and theological ideas imbedded in everyday ministry.

The two major issues lay bare the issues involved in contextualization as a demanding theological task that needs to be handled in a proper way as an important research theme in practical theology. As such the project has resolved to present its outcome in one English volume and two Kiswahili translations:

- It would represent an important contribution by Makumira as a university institution and a model for South-North research cooperation.
- For the School of Mission and Theology (Stavanger) and the Norwegian Lutheran School of Theology (Oslo) it will serve their deepest aspirations as academic institutions.

The Kiswahili versions will be faithful to the original vision of the project: to give support to the people in the field. The English manuscripts are well in progress and will be discussed in a consultative meeting scheduled between 29th October – 03rd November, 2007 at the Norwegian Lutheran School of Theology in Oslo.

Mission History Project – South Africa (2007-2010)

The School of Mission and Theology (Stavanger, Norway) and the Lutheran Theological Institute, University of KwaZulu-Natal (Pietermaritzburg, South Africa) have just started a joint research project in mission history. The project is part of a larger research project initiated by the School of Mission and Theology and the University of Stavanger, and funded by the Regional Research Fund in Rogaland (Norway). This larger project includes:

- a joint research project on literacy between the University of Stavanger (Stavanger, Norway) and the University of Toliara (Toliara, Madagascar), each with one Ph.D. student.

- a joint research project in mission history between the School of Mission and Theology (Stavanger, Norway) and the Lutheran Theological Institute (Pitersmaritzburg, South Africa), each with one Ph.D. student.

The latter project, which relates to our network, has started up now in 2007, with Professor Odd Magne Bakke (Stavanger) as project coordinator, and two researchers: Kristin Tjelle (Norway) and Bongani Zulu (South Africa).

NETWORK NEWS

Makumira University College (Tanzania): New Provost

In May 2007 the Chairperson of the Board of Makumira University College Bishop Paulo Akyoo was delighted to announce the appointment of Reverend Associate Professor Joseph Parsalaw to the task of providing great leadership for Makumira University as the next Provost. The Bishop was confident that Prof J. Parsalaw is a gifted scholar, educator and academic leader.

Professor Parsalaw, Joseph received a bachelor's degree in divinity from the then Lutheran Theological College, Tanzania in 1986 and a ThD in missiology from Friedrich-Alexander University, Erlangen, Germany in 1997. He has taught both undergraduate and graduate courses during his tenure since 1988 at Makumira and served as Deputy Provost Administration for the college for eight years. Chaired the Department of Systematic and Historical Theology and published his doctoral dissertation: *A History of the Lutheran Church in the Arusha Region from 1904 to 1958* with Makumira Publications in 1999.

The outgoing Provost Professor G E Mwakagali a New Testament scholar has served the position for eight years and now he resumes full-time teaching responsibilities in the Biblical Department.

Lutheran Graduate School of Theology (Madagascar): New Dean

Dr Lotera Fabien has been appointed new Dean at the Lutheran Graduate School of Theology in Fianarantsoa, Madagascar. Dr Fabien is Professor of Practical Theology, and has been lecturing in Fianarantsoa since the late 1980s. He is succeeding Dr Randrianasolo Joseph, who returns to a professorship in

Systematic Theology. Dr Razafindrakoto Georges, who is Professor of Old Testament Studies, has been appointed Vice Dean.

**Department of Religious Studies, Makerere University (Uganda):
New Head of Department**

Dr Abdu Katende has been appointed new Head of Department of Religious Studies at the Faculty of Arts, Makerere University, Uganda. Dr Katende a lecturer in Islamic studies succeeded Professor Serapio Kabazzi-Kisirinya, who was formerly retired in the end of 2006. The latter still continues to do some lecturing at Makerere University.

**School of Mission and Theology (Norway):
New Master's Programme in Global Studies**

Norwegian university authorities have accredited a new programme in the School of Mission and Theology, Stavanger, Norway. The programme is a two-year intensive Master of Global Studies, with three areas of specialization: Religious Studies, Christian Studies, or Intercultural Communication. Extract from the website:

The Master's Program provides students with awareness, insights and tools essential in diverse cultural relations and multicultural settings in Norway and abroad. At the end of the program the students should have developed a professional appreciation of international and intercultural challenges in a world experiencing various effects of ongoing globalization. The students may develop intercultural interaction skills and personal cultural sensitivity that will help them be employed in a variety of multicultural settings. International fieldwork, internships and dialogue with organizations and corporations during the studies will enhance the chance for future employment. The multicultural field is expanding in Norway, and students with a Master's Degree in Global Studies will also have opportunities as teachers of different subjects requiring professional global competence.

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