

**NETWORK OF THEOLOGY AND RELIGIOUS STUDIES**

# **NETWORK NEWSLETTER 18**

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**INSTITUT LUTHÉRIEN DE THÉOLOGIE  
CAMEROUN**

**MEKANE YESUS THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY  
ETHIOPIA**

**LUTHERAN GRADUATE SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY  
MADAGASCAR**

**MHS 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**

**This issue of the Network Newsletter** shows that the network itself and the network institutions are very much alive. The main focus of the present issue is the three academic conferences that have been taking place throughout 2009. None of them have included all institutions, but most of the institutions have been represented in one or more of the conferences. In addition to this main focus, the present issue also includes some information about individual institutions. These glimpses into our lives are important, I think, both as signs of life and as documentation of how we interact.

*Knut Holter*  
*General Network Coordinator*

**Africanization of Pastoral Care and Counselling  
International Conference, Makumira University College,  
Tumaini University (Tanzania), 3-6 August 2009**

*By Lechion Peter Kimilike, Tumaini University, kipeter@hotmail.com*

The 'Africanisation of Pastoral Care and Counselling Project' under the auspices of the Network of Theology and Religious Studies has been presented previously in our newsletter (cf. *Network Newsletter* 15 (2008) 3-4). Now, the project was finalized with a conference held at Makumira University College 3-6 August 2009.

This project which began in January 2006 has successfully been able to once again show the potential and possibilities in the mobilization of resources within and without through the collaborative activities of North-South. Two institutions of Norway (MHS School of Mission and Theology and MF Norwegian School of Theology), with two scholars (Professor Øyvind M. Eide and Professor Leif Gunnar Engedal), and one institution in Tanzania (Makumira University College), with two scholars (Dr. Lechion Peter Kimilike and Rev. Emeline Ndossi), made the research team and joint authors.

More than six Tanzanian pastors produced case studies used by the research team. The project managed to produce three books of relevancy

in the discipline of pastoral theology both for the grassroots and the academic circles by starting a new series under Makumira Publications: *Restoring life in Christ*.

- Restoring Life in Christ: Dialogues of Care in Christian Communities, An African Perspective.
- Restoring Life in Christ: Pastoral Care and Domestic Violence African Experiences.
- Restoring Life in Christ: Pastoral Care and Human Suffering African Experiences.

Earlier in 2006 and 2007 the research team held three seminars to acquaint and assess the progress of the project. The final conference brought together more than 40 delegates including the research team, Tanzanian pastors who produced case studies, chaplains of church hospitals and schools, university lecturers in the pastoral theology department and officials of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania head office. The aim of the conference was to present the results of the project by introducing the books to the Church and institutions. The delegates' contributions applauded the tremendous developments in pastoral care and counselling presented and argued theological institutions to integrate the books in their curricula in order to improve the discipline. The research project, the publication of the books and the conference had been facilitated financially by MHS School of Mission and Theology and the MF Norwegian School of Theology (Norway), Makumira University College and Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania (Tanzania), the Lutheran World Federation and Karibu Foundation, which are greatly appreciated by the Network of Theology and Religious Studies (Africa).

Other network institutions are invited not only to get the books for their institutions but to continue emulating the example set by this project as it is very enriching and empowering. The network would make efforts to have the books translated into French if need arises.

Finally, on behalf of the Network we are greatly honoured to give our appreciation to the research team for their tireless efforts to make a success of this project. Understandably there were problems and challenges emerging here and there but their commitment to the project overcame through perseverance.

# **Living Together**

## **International Conference on Inter-Religious Relations**

### **Makerere University (Uganda) 19-23 October, 2009**

*By Jan Opsal, MHS School of Mission and Theology, jan.opsal@mhs.no*

An international scholarly conference on interreligious relations with the title Living together took place at the Makerere University in Kampala, Uganda in the period 19<sup>th</sup> – 23<sup>rd</sup> of October 2009. Participants from Uganda, Malawi, Ethiopia, Tanzania, Kenya, Madagascar, Egypt, Germany, Bosnia and Norway received almost 30 presentations. The scholars also had first-hand experiences from studies and research from other countries like Thailand, Pakistan, Cameroon, United Kingdom and the USA.

The conference was organised jointly by the Department of Religious Studies at Makerere University (Uganda) and the MHS School of Mission and Theology (Norway), and made possible by using existing resources from these two institutions as well as by funding from external sources like the Norwegian Research Council. The Department of Religious Studies at the University of Malawi was represented by its Head, Mrs. Chimwemwe Katumbi and Dr. Raymond Likupe. The Mekane Yesus Theological Seminary in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia was also represented by its President, Dr. Belay Guta Olam, the Evangelical Theological Seminary in Cairo, Egypt had sent two researchers for the conference, Dr. Tharwat Kades and Dr. Tharwat Wahba.

There were both Muslim and Christian researchers represented in the conference, six of the researchers presenting papers were women. Seven participants originated from Europe, three from the Middle East and the rest from Sub-Saharan Africa.

The key note address on dialogue was given by Professor Badru Kateregga, among other things known for the classic book on Muslim-Christian dialogue: *Islam and Christianity: A Muslim and a Christian in Dialogue* (1980 and later versions). The main focus of the conference was on Christian-Muslim relations, but contributions also addressed issues related to African Traditional Religion(s) as well to the Eastern Religions with a contribution on Buddhist-Christian dialogue. Contributions were addressing general issues of interreligious relations, discussing the roles of sacred texts or analyzing experiences from specific contexts in Africa, the Middle East and Europe.

Some of the presentations were these:

- Mrs. Chimwemwe Katumbi: Christian-Muslim Relations in Malawi. Areas of Prospects and Concern
- Dr. Tharwat Wahba: The Interaction between Christians and Muslims in Egypt in the time between the two World Wars (1918-1939)
- Dr. Faruk Terzic: Understanding Religious Diversity from a Quranic Perspective
- Professor Knut Holter: Muslim and Christian interaction with regard to Old Testament interpretation in Africa
- Dr. Kari Storstein Haug: Reading together. Possibilities and Limitations of Interreligious Scripture Readings, Exemplified by Buddhist Readings of Old Testament Wisdom Texts.
- Hajji Muhammad Kiggundu Musoke: Religious Pluralism and Tolerance
- Sr. Dr. Therese Tinkasiimire: Women and interreligious dialogue in Uganda. Models of living together.

The plan is to publish an academic book with contributions from the conference. It is hoped that such a volume would be used as study material in institutions in Africa, the Middle East and Europe, as well as stimulating to further research in the important field of interreligious studies.

**Religion, Culture and the Reintegration of Former  
Female Child Soldiers in Northern Uganda**  
**International Conference**  
**School of Mission and Theology (Stavanger) 13-15 May 2009**

*By Knut Holter, School of Mission and Theology, knut.holter@mhs.no*

The reintegration of thousands and thousands of child ex-soldiers into the society of Northern Uganda – as well as other African contexts – represents tremendous social, moral and practical challenges, not least with regard to the reintegration of female child ex-soldiers, whose background and experience prove particularly difficult for society to

handle. In response to these challenges, the Network of Theology and Religious Studies has developed a research project on the role of religious communities in the reintegration processes. The project is organized by Makerere University (Uganda) and the MHS School of Mission and Theology (Norway), and it has managed to get funding from NUFU (The Norwegian Programme for Development, Research and Education). The project has three Ph.D. students, coming from Makerere University (Uganda) and Makumira University College of Tumaini University (Tanzania). A research group made up of these three students together with senior researchers from the three institutions aim to develop new knowledge about (a) the background of the phenomenon of child soldiers (with an emphasis on female soldiers), with particular reference to how religion is used for legitimizing purposes, (b) the potential of religious communities to provide religious rituals and narratives as means for the reintegration of the former soldiers, and (c) the reintegration of these young persons as an ethical challenge to religious communities.

As part of the project, an international conference on 'Religion, culture and the reintegration of former child soldiers in Northern Uganda' was organized in Stavanger (Norway), May 13-15, 2009, by Professor Bård Mæland. The conference had six sessions:

- Background issues, with papers by Milfrid Tonheim, Deusdedit Nkurunziza, Therese Tinkasiimire, and Kåre Lode.
- Social and cultural issues in the reintegration process (I), with papers by Chris Coulter, Christine Mbabazi, Emeline Ndossi, and Deusdedit Nkurunziza.
- Ethical perspectives on the research on former child soldiers, with papers by Kjetil Fretheim, Gerd Marie Ådna, Thor Strandenes, and Chris Coulter.
- Social and cultural issues in the reintegration process (II), with papers by Miranda Worthen, Robert Bakeine, Ragnhild Dybdahl, and Angela Veale.
- Old Testament perspectives on child soldiers and the LRA, with papers by Helen Nkabala Nambalirwa, Knut Holter, Marta Høyland Lavik, and Magnar Kartveit.
- Military means, moral agency, and peace building, with papers by Tor Arne Berntsen, Bård Mæland, and Robert Bakeine.

Professor Mæland is now editing a book based on some of the papers of the conference.

## **News from the network institutions**

### **Lutheran Graduate School of Theology (SALT), Madagascar:**

- SALT has started issuing a quarterly magazine "Voice of SALT" this year. Articles are written in Malagasy, with summaries in French or English. The aim is to transmit theological knowledge as well as information about SALT to church members and others. The teachings found in the articles are adapted to the present context. Thus, "contextualization" is emphasized in this magazine. Its fourth issue is presently being produced. It is a means of making church members aware of the existence of SALT and the importance of the training provided here to church leaders.
- SALT has a choir called "AMIFIKRI". It is composed of students, students' spouses and children as well as some members of the staff and their children. Singing is a powerful means of preaching the Gospel in Madagascar, due to the beautiful effect of singing in four different voices. The presence of "AMIFIKRI" at the latest National Youth Assembly in September 2009 which took place in Tolagnaro, in the southern part of the country, made young people realize that SALT students can do other enjoyable activities apart from studying!
- Two of our former students, namely Jean de Dieu Rafalimanana and Olivier Randrianjaka, are presently reading towards their Ph.D. degrees in view of taking over from elder members of the staff. They are researching on "Exegetical interpretation of Ephesians 2:11-22 with reflection of its value to the Malagasy context of Fampihavanana/Fihavanana" and "A Semantic Studies of Ritual and Moral Terminology in the Book of Leviticus 1-16" respectively. The students are linked to the Ph.D. programme at the MHS School of Mission and Theology (Norway), and the projects are operated in partnership with the Norwegian Mission Society (Norway) and Danmission (Denmark).

### **Institut Luthérien de Theologie (ILT), Cameroon:**

On September 1 this year, Dr Jean Koulagna took over as Dean at ILT after Dr Ngah Joseph. Dr Koulagna did his Ph.D. in Old Testament studies in Strasbourg (France) in 2007. A revised version of his thesis was published as *Salomon, de l'histoire deutéronomiste à Flavius Josèphe: problèmes textuels et enjeux historiographiques* (Paris:

Publibook, 2009). Dr Koulagna is presently part of a research project on textual criticism of the Old Testament.

Dr Koulagna has published four other books for the textbook market in Francophone West Africa, and earlier this semester he spent a couple of months at the MHS School of Mission and Theology (Norway) to work with a new textbook in Old Testament isagogics.

### **MHS School of Mission and Theology, Norway**

Professor Bård Mæland will take over as Rector of the MHS School of Mission and Theology from March 1, 2010, after Professor Knut Holter. Professor Mæland did his Ph.D. in Systematic Theology in Oslo (Norway) in 2001, and he was appointed Professor of Systematic Theology in the MHS in 2005. A revised version of his thesis was published as *Rewarding Encounters: Islam and the Comparative Theologies of Kenneth Cragg and Wilfred Cantwell Smith* (London: Melisende, 2003).

Professor Mæland has published widely on various systematic theological topics, including military ethics, and he is currently directing the network collaborative project on child soldiers in Eastern Africa (cf. the presentation above on the conference in May 2009).

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General Network Coordinator / Editor of the *Network Newsletter*:  
Professor Knut Holter, MHS School of Mission and Theology,  
Misjonsmarka 12, N-4024 Stavanger, Norway. Phone: +47 5151 6219. E-  
mail: [knut.holter@mhs.no](mailto:knut.holter@mhs.no)