

Network of Theology and Religious Studies

Network Newsletter 9

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Lutheran Graduate School of Theology, Madagascar School of
Mission and Theology, Norway
Lutheran Theological Institute, South Africa
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NETWORK OF THEOLOGY AND RELIGIOUS STUDIES A PERSPECTIVE FROM UGANDA

By Susan Aloyojok

The Department of Religious Studies at Makerere University in Uganda has been in partnership with the School of Mission and Theology in Norway since 2000, when the first professor from the School of Mission and Theology visited Makerere to give lectures on the interpretation of the Old Testament in an African context.

The two institutions have since then been involved in exchange programmes. Partly in Master and Ph.D. programmes in the fields of Old Testament, New Testament, Church History, and Science of Religion. But partly also in a Bachelor programme on Intercultural Communication and Global Collaboration, as nine students from the school in Stavanger went to Makerere for a one-month course back in October 2004.

The first student to go to Norway on this ground of partnership was a Master student in the field of the Science of Religion in 2001. After him there have been three more students, focusing on Church History, Old Testament and New Testament.

The master programme has been operating in two ways; the first three students were in the old programme in which the School of Mission and Theology had a partnership with the University of Bergen pursuing a Master of Philosophy in Theology. The School of Mission and Theology has now developed a new programme for Master of Theology degree in which Makerere University has one student at the moment.

Makerere University also takes part in the “Africanisation of Biblical studies Project”, which is a four years project, where doctoral students from Uganda, Madagascar and Tanzania write dissertations that intend to participate in the development of an Africanised Biblical Studies. The Ph.D. student from Uganda focuses on the Old Testament portrayal of Africa and Africans.

The major advantage of the exchange programmes at Ph.D., Master and Bachelor levels is the student’s great exposure to the other side of the world, different cultures, experiences and knowledge got through the research and learning experience in the various Bachelor, Master and Ph.D. programmes.

This research and learning experience is of benefit to both the students and the university in the areas of new gained knowledge and co-operation. Above all it develops and strengthens the relationship between the School of Mission and Theology in Stavanger and Makerere University in Kampala.

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AFRICA – IN OUR HEARTS

By Øyvind Dahl

We would like to do this again! The meeting with Makerere University in Kampala, Uganda, was a very positive experience for nine students from the School of Mission and Theology (Stavanger), who did a four weeks visit there last October.

Earlier in 2004, Makerere University and the School of Mission and Theology signed an agreement which makes it possible for students from Stavanger to take parts of their program in Intercultural Communication and Global Collaboration at Makerere.

The Norwegian students are happy about the program. It is a very special experience to come from a small Norwegian university college with 300 students – to a major African university with 30.000 students. And it was a positive experience to be in a learning situation in a completely different setting from what they are accustomed to in Norway.

The courses they did at Makerere consisted of modules on African thought patterns and identity, African religious experiences, and the social, economic and political changes taking place in Africa today, especially as part of the general globalisation.

The students had lectures every day – from 9 am. to 5 pm., so there was hardly any time for reading and thesis writing. The theses had to wait till they came back to Norway. This will probably be adjusted for the next class.

One of the weekends was used to visit a local family. Most of the students had positive experiences here. Some of them experienced weddings and funerals (Christian and Muslim), others met ways of life different from what they are used to in Norway

There was also time to visit a royal tomb i the neighbourhood of Kampala. The source of the Nile, that is the place where the Nile starts from Lake Victoria, was also visited. The water from here runs no less than 6.695 km before it reaches the Mediterranean Ocean. The last weekend was used for a tour to Queen Elisabeth National Park. The students appreciated this tour very much, not only because it gave them an opportunity to see wild animals in their natural habitat, but also because the journey of six hours in each direction made it possible for them to see

other examples of landscape and nature than what they had experienced in and around Kampala.

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NETWORK NEWS

Makumira University College, Usa River: Rev Peter L. Kimilike, lecturer at Makumira and doctoral student in Stavanger/Pretoria/Usa River in the “Africanization of Biblical Studies Project”, was attacked by two armed robbers, on his way to the university library of University of South Africa (Pretoria), in September last year. A rib of his was broken, and the left lung collapsed. Still, he survived the attack, and after two months of hospitalisation he was able to return to his research.

School of Mission and Theology, Stavanger: There are negotiations between the School of Mission and Theology and the Norwegian Missionary Society – to find funding for a new consultation within our network. Four years have passed since the network was launched, and it is time to analyse what has been achieved throughout these years.

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