

NETWORK OF THEOLOGY AND RELIGIOUS STUDIES

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**INSTITUT LUTHÉRIEN DE THÉOLOGIE
CAMEROUN**

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ETHIOPIA**

**LUTHERAN GRADUATE SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY
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**DEPARTMENT OF RELIGIOUS STUDIES
MAKERERE UNIVERSITY, UGANDA**

Sixteen Ph.D. projects in ten years!

By Knut Holter, MHS School of Mission and Theology

The previous issue of this newsletter (# 20, December 2010, web version: http://www.mhs.no/uploads/network_newsletter20.pdf) tried to draw some general lines in our ten years of collaboration. The present issue will follow this up, by focusing on one specific aspect of the academic interaction between the seven network institutions: the fact that not less than sixteen Ph.D. projects have been initiated – and in some cases already completed – within and around the network. This is a very high number, and it certainly deserves some attention. The following is therefore a brief presentation of the institutional context of these sixteen projects, with a few additional comments.

Projects

Cameroun: Institut Luthérien de Théologie, Meiganga:

- Reuben Ngozo, lecturer at ILT, Meiganga, is writing a thesis (MHS, Stavanger) on monotheism and the danger of idolatry in Philo and Paul. The project is funded by the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

Ethiopia: Mekane Yesus Theological Seminary, Addis Ababa:

- A program with two Ph.D. projects in Practical Theology, as a sandwich model between MYTS, Addis Ababa and MHS, Stavanger, has recently been granted funding by the Norwegian Mission Society and the Norwegian Lutheran Mission. The program is directed by Professor emeritus Øyvind M. Eide (Stavanger), and screening of potential candidates will be made in the second half of 2011.

Madagascar: Lutheran Graduate School of Theology, Fianarantsoa:

- Georges Razafindrakoto, professor of Old Testament studies, SALT, Fianarantsoa, completed in 2006 a thesis (University of South Africa, Pretoria) entitled “Old Testament texts in Malagasy contexts: An analysis of the use of the Old Testament in three religious contexts in Madagascar”. The project was part of a sandwich-modelled program on “Africanization of Biblical Studies” organized by MHS (Stavanger) and Makerere (Kampala), and funded by NUFU: Norwegian Programme for Development, Research and Education.
- Jean de Dieu Rafalimanana, lecturer in New Testament studies, SALT, Fianarantsoa, is writing a thesis (MHS, Stavanger) on Ephesians 2:11-22 with reflection of its value to the Malagasy meaning of reconciliation and peace. The project is funded by the Norwegian Mission Society.
- Olivier Randrianjaka, lecturer in Old Testament studies, SALT, Fianarantsoa, is writing a thesis (MHS, Stavanger) on a semantic study of ritual and moral terminology relating to sin, purification and atonement in Leviticus. The project is funded by the Norwegian Mission Society and Danmission.

Norway: MHS School of Mission and Theology, Stavanger:

- Sigmund Edland, previously lecturer at SALT, Fianarantsoa (Madagascar), now professor emeritus at MHS, Stavanger, completed in 2006 a thesis (MHS, Stavanger) entitled “Evangelists or envoys? The role of British missionaries at turning points in Malagasy political history, 1820-1840: Documentary and analysis”.
- Hans Austnaberg, previously lecturer at SALT, Fianarantsoa (Madagascar), now professor at MHS, Stavanger, completed in 2006 a thesis (MHS, Stavanger) entitled “Shepherds and demons: A study of exorcism as practised and understood by shepherds in the Malagasy Lutheran Church”. A revised version of the thesis is published as *Shepherds and Demons: A Study of Exorcism as Practiced and Understood by Shepherds in the*

Malagasy Lutheran Church. New York: Peter Lang, 2008 (Bible and Theology in Africa, 6).

- Tomas Sundnes Drønen, previously lecturer at ILT, Meiganga (Cameroun), now professor in Stavanger, completed in 2007 a thesis (MHS, Stavanger) entitled “Communication, conversion, and conservation: The Dii meet the Norwegian missionaries: Northern Cameroon 1934-60”. A revised version of the thesis is published as *Communication and conversion in Northern Cameroon: The Dii people and Norwegian missionaries, 1934-1960*. Leiden: Brill, 2009 (Studies in Christian Mission, 37). The project was funded by the MHS, Stavanger.
- Kristin Fjelde Tjelle, director of MHS, Stavanger, completed in 2011 a thesis (MHS, Stavanger) entitled “Missionary masculinity: The case of the Norwegian Lutheran missionaries to the Zulus, 1870-1930”. The research was funded by the University Foundation of Rogaland.
- Tor Arne Berntsen, Chaplain at the Royal Norwegian Air Force Academy, is writing a thesis (MHS, Stavanger) on the moral discourse on forgiveness and justice in the peace process in northern Uganda. The research is funded by the Royal Norwegian Air Force Academy.

Tanzania: Makumira University College of Tumaini University, Usa River:

- Lechion Peter Kimilike, Coordinator, Njombe University College Project of Tumaini University, completed in 2006 a thesis (University of South Africa, Pretoria) entitled “An African perspective on poverty proverbs in the Book of Proverbs: An analysis for transformational possibilities”. The project was part of a sandwich-modelled program on “Africanization of Biblical Studies”, organized by MHS (Stavanger) and Makerere (Kampala), and funded by NUFU: Norwegian Programme for Development, Research and Education. A revised version of the thesis is published as *Poverty in the Book of Proverbs: An African Transformational Hermeneutic of Proverbs on Poverty*. New York: Peter Lang (Bible and Theology in Africa, 7).

- Emeline Ndossi, lecturer in Practical Theology, is writing a thesis (Makerere University, Kampala) on reintegration of female ex-child soldiers as a moral challenge to faith communities. The project is part of a sandwich-modelled program on “Reintegration of former child soldiers in Uganda and the Democratic republic of Congo”, and it is funded by NUFU: Norwegian Programme for Development, Research and Education.

Uganda: Department of Religious Studies, Makerere University, Kampala:

- Philip Lokel, lecturer of Old Testament studies, completed in 2006 a thesis (University of South Africa, Pretoria) entitled “The importance and challenges of finding Africa in the Old Testament: The case of the Cush texts”. The project was part of a sandwich-modelled program on “Africanization of Biblical Studies”, organized by MHS (Stavanger) and Makerere (Kampala), and funded by NUFU: Norwegian Programme for Development, Research and Education.
- Helen Nkabala Nambalirwa is writing a thesis (MHS, Stavanger) on Old Testament motifs in the rhetoric of the Lord’s Resistance Army in northern Uganda. The project is part of a sandwich-modelled program on “Reintegration of former child soldiers in Uganda and the Democratic republic of Congo”, and it is funded by NUFU: Norwegian Programme for Development, Research and Education.
- Christine Mbabazi is writing a thesis (MHS, Stavanger) on the use of religious rituals in the reintegration of female ex-child soldiers. The project is part of a sandwich-modelled program on “Reintegration of former child soldiers in Uganda and the Democratic republic of Congo”, and it is funded by NUFU: Norwegian Programme for Development, Research and Education.

Comments

This is not the time and place to make an in-depth study of the sixteen Ph.D. projects originating within and around the Network of Theology and Religious Studies. Nevertheless, a few comments ought to be made.

First, the total number of Ph.D. projects – sixteen – is surprisingly high. Admittedly, the number includes a couple of projects that have just found funding, and where not even the doctoral students have yet been identified. The number also includes two or three projects where the network as such has not been directly instrumental in the planning and organizing, but where at least two of the network institutions have been involved.

Second, one of the rather odd characteristics of our collaboration in the Network of Theology and Religious Studies is that the network *per se* has no funding or money. This means that every single project and program – from large scale exchange or research programs to small scale *ad hoc* projects – have to find their own funding. This also includes the Ph.D. projects we have developed together; in each case we have had to convince donors and funding agencies that the projects we present are worthy of support. In some of the cases we have competed with other institutional networks about rather limited funds, and we have been very proud to succeed with some of our applications. The sixteen projects have found funding in the following sources:

- NUFU Norwegian Programme for Development, Research and Education has funded *six* of our Ph.D. projects, in two programmes: “Africanization of Biblical Studies” (2002-2006) and “Re-integration of female ex-child soldiers in Eastern Africa (2007-2011).
- Mission societies and churches have funded *five* of our Ph.D. projects: two and a half by the Norwegian Mission Society, a half by Danmission, one by the Norwegian Lutheran Mission, and one by the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.
- Norwegian universities and university colleges have funded *four* of our Ph.D. projects, partly as scholarships and partly in staff development programs.

Third, as far as the content of the projects is concerned, one can see a preference for traditional theological disciplines, but then – in most cases – with a contextual focus.

- Biblical studies: *seven* projects, stretching from predominantly exegetical ones, although with some contextual attention (Lokel, Ngozo, Rafalimanana, Randrianjaka) to more hermeneutically and contextually oriented ones (Razafindrakoto, Kimilike, Nambalirwa).
- Church history: *three* projects, all investigating aspects of African church history (Edland, Drønen, Tjelle)
- Ethics: *two* projects, both related to the child soldier program (Berntsen, Ndossi).
- Missiology: *one* project, related to Madagascar (Austnaberg).
- Practical theology: *two* projects, in Ethiopia, about to be started.
- Religious studies: *one* project, related to the child soldier program (Mbabazi).

Seven of the sixteen projects have till now been completed. Around half of the remaining nine projects are expected to be submitted in 2011/2012, whereas the other half are about to start or have just started.

Librarian's corner

By Annalise Zaverdinos

Lutheran Theological Institute, Pietermaritzburg, South Africa

As African academic institutions working with theology and religious studies, we share a number of similar challenges. Through working within our Network of Theology and Religious Studies we can, however, alleviate these difficulties by sharing information, advice and resources with one another through email.

Therefore, I would like to ask each institution to please send through the name of their librarian and the email and /or fax number where they can be reached. It can be sent to: annalise.z@live.com

Here are a few examples of interesting links related to theological libraries:

- This link allows theological libraries to receive a book grant for free books which are also posted to you free of charge:
<http://www.langhampartnership.org/literature/literature-programmes/all-programs/library-grants/>
- Here is another very useful website with freely available articles on theological libraries:
<https://journal.atla.com/ojs/index.php/theolib/issue/archive>
- And here is a link to the Association for British Theological Librarians www.abtapl.org.uk. They have a very good document on how to run a theological library.

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