

NETWORK OF THEOLOGY AND RELIGIOUS STUDIES

NETWORK NEWSLETTER 16

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**INSTITUT LUTHÉRIEN DE THÉOLOGIE
CAMEROUN**

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UNIVERSITY OF KWAZULU-NATAL, SOUTH AFRICA**

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Network Challenges

By Knut Holter

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Our network was initiated at a consultation in Stavanger back in November 2000, and throughout the subsequent years we have succeeded in establishing quite a number of examples of academic and institutional interaction. Previous issues of the *Network Newsletter* provide a lot of documentation here. Still, there is still much to do, and let me point out some present challenges.

Key areas of collaboration

When we started back in 2000, we identified three key areas of collaboration: (i) exchange of students and academic staff, (ii) research collaboration, (iii) collaboration with regard to institutional development. The two former – exchange and research collaboration – have got much attention, whereas less has been achieved as far as collaboration with regard to institutional development is concerned. The following two issues should therefore be raised:

- *Library collaboration:* There should be some interesting potentials in closer collaboration between our libraries. Some of the libraries have a reasonable size, others are quite small, but we would probably all benefit from doing more together. Annalise Zaverdinos, librarian at the Lutheran Theological Institute, University of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa, raises this question in an article in the present newsletter.
- *Textbook program:* A few years ago we tried to establish a textbook program, enabling senior academic staff members to visit the MHS School of Mission and Theology and its research library for a period of two or three months, in order to develop their own lecture notes etc. into contextually sensitive textbooks. Only one textbook has till now come out of this program (in addition to a joint publication, a conference volume), but a new initiative is now taken to revive the program, and an application for funding is forwarded to the Norwegian Mission Society.

Administrative questions

The following administrative questions are raised vis-à-vis the leadership in each network institution:

- *Regional Network Coordinators:* At the network consultation at Makerere University in November 2005, it was decided that each of the seven network institutions should appoint one particular staff member as a regional network coordinator. The job of the Regional Network Coordinator is then – in close collaboration with the Head of her/his institution and with the General Network Coordinator – to keep students and staff members in her/his institution aware of the work of the network, and participate in its organizing. Some of the network institutions have not yet appointed a Regional Network Coordinator, and they are now kindly asked to do so, and report to the General Network Coordinator.

- *Network conference*: The time is probably ripe to start the planning of a new network consultation / conference. The first network meeting – in the form of a consultation – took place in Stavanger in 2000. The next time we met was in Kampala in 2005, then a combined academic conference and network consultation. A new consultation – preferably combined with an academic conference – should probably be organized in 2010. Invitations and/or ideas for program and funding are most welcome!

Library Collaboration

By Annalise Zaverdinos

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In August 2007 an idea was formed to create a closer relationship between the libraries of our Network of Theology and Religious Studies. Although we are spread across different countries and even continents, thanks to the Internet, it is now possible to communicate and assist one-another with advice, information and resources. Some ideas that could be investigated are:

- sharing practical tips (for example how to protect books from humidity)
- sharing information sources (such as websites and even journal articles: those of us with scanners can simply scan the required article and email it to our colleagues)
- sharing ideas on how to provide user-education for lecturers and students
- sharing information about new books that have been published and how to order them

When emailing, one create a “group” containing all our emails. Then we can send the emails to our “group” and when we reply, we can simply click “reply all”, thereby creating a group discussion.

A further idea is that of the <http://del.icio.us/LTI> website, which was discussed in the previous newsletter. This contains lists of useful websites under various headings (called tags). When any one of us finds more websites, they can be added to the lists.

Perhaps a starting point might be to share a list of journals that we subscribe to, as well as a brief outline of the kind of articles they contain. Another useful beginning is to list some of the courses/specializations of our universities, so that we can assist one another with suggesting appropriate resources that we know of.

New Books

The research collaboration of the Network of Theology and Religious Studies bears fruit, not only in the sense of academic degrees, but also as far as academic publishing. The following books exemplify this:

Knut Holter (ed.): *Interpreting Classical Religious Texts in Contemporary Africa*. Nairobi: Acton Publishers, 2007.

The book presents a selection of the papers read at an international conference on 'Interpreting classical religious texts in contemporary Africa', at Makerere University in November 2005. The conference was organized by the network, and most of the papers are written by academic staff members in our network institutions; a report is given in *Network Newsletter* 11 (2006) 3-7 (cf. http://www.mhs.no/article_297.shtml). Each network institution will receive a copy for its library. More copies can be ordered from Acton Publishers in Nairobi, www.acton.ke

Lechion Peter Kimilike: *Poverty in the Book of Proverbs: An African Transformational Hermeneutic of Proverbs and Poverty*. New York: Peter Lang, 2008 (Bible and Theology in Africa; 7).

The book is a revised version of Kimilike's Ph.D. thesis from 2006. Kimilike's thesis was part of the first large-scale research project in the network: 'Africanization of Biblical Studies Project'. The project as a whole is summarized in *Network Newsletter* 13 (2007) 3-4 (cf. http://www.mhs.no/article_297.shtml), and a project volume was published as: Knut Holter (ed.): *Let My People Stay! Researching the Old Testament in Africa*. Nairobi: Acton Publishers 2006. Each network institution will receive a copy of Kimilike's monograph for its library. More copies can be ordered from www.peterlang.com

Emeline Ndossi, Leif Gunnar Engedal, Øyvind Eide, Lechion Peter Kimilike will later this year publish three books in Pastoral Care: (i) *Restoring Life in Christ: Pastoral Care in Christian Communities: African Experiences*; (ii) *Restoring Life in Christ: Pastoral Care and Domestic Violence: African Experiences*; (iii) *Restoring Life in Christ: Pastoral Care and Human Suffering: African Experiences*.

The first book deals with theoretical perspectives, whereas the two others present and discuss case studies. The books are part of a network project on 'Africanization of pastoral care', described in *Network Newsletter* 15 (2008) 3-4 (cf. http://www.mhs.no/article_297.shtml).

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