

Network of Theology and Religious Studies

Network Newsletter 4

August 2002

**Institut Luthérien de Théologie, Cameroun
Mekane Yesus Theological Seminary, Ethiopia
Lutheran Graduate School of Theology, Madagascar
School of Mission and Theology, Norway
Lutheran Theological Seminary, South Africa
Makumira University College, Tumaini University, Tanzania
Dept. of Religious Studies, Makerere University, Uganda**

Exchange of information

When we came together in Stavanger back in November 2000 to discuss a possible launching of a network of theology and religious studies, we committed ourselves to collaboration and interaction. An important aspect of this is mutual exchange of information. On this background the present issue of the network newsletter gives a few glimpses into the current situation in the seven network institutions. A lot of interesting information is given here, and it is especially encouraging to see that the network structures eventually are becoming visible in our institutions.

Knut Holter

Cameroun: Institut Luthérien de Théologie (LTI)

The Lutheran Theological Institute in Meiganga, run by the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Cameroun, is this academic year preparing the last class of “Baccaloréat en Théologie” for their diplomas. From now on the institute will only recruit student for its new Bachelor program. We have already seen that this program attracts students from other churches in Cameroun and in the Central African Republic, and for the next class we have received requests from Chad, Togo and Congo. This shows the need for a Lutheran institution offering university level degrees in Western and Central Africa, and it inspires us to continue our work with the development of the institute, both on an academic and on a spiritual level.

Our international reputations were also strengthened when we this year for the first time invited to a one semester program in Islamic Studies. In this program we had students from five different churches and three different countries, and we had lecturers from Cameroun, Madagascar, Canada, United States, France and Norway; the latter as part of the exchange program of our network of theology and religious studies. On this background we really felt at ease when we sang: “Seigneur, nous arrivons de quatre coins de l’horizon”, and we hope to continue this study as a one semester option for pastors with focus on islamic knowledge, evangelism and peaceful relations.

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Ethiopia: Mekane Yesus Theological Seminary (MYTS)

The Mekane Yesus Theological Seminary (MYTS), which is a residential, Christian training center in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, was established in 1960 to serve the needs of the Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus (EECMY). The seminary now consists of four departments: Theology, Leadership and Management, School of Music, and the national offices for Theological Education by Extension of the EECMY. The Theology Department offers a four years Bachelor’s of Theology while the others offer varying diploma programs ranging from two to three years.

The objectives of the Theology Department include getting to know and comprehend the Christian faith in the Evangelical Lutheran tradition in such a way that the students are able to 1) think critically on matters of theology; 2) articulate a competent knowledge of the Bible; 3) articulate the formative events of the church’s history; 4) more fully grasp the complexities of today’s world

and, in particular, Ethiopia, and finally 5) to effectively integrate theological reflection with challenges present in Christian ministry.

The four years training at MYTS integrates classroom learning with field experiences. Students are evaluated in both areas. The B.Th. degree does not include an extended internship year. Rather, all students have congregational assignments in their home areas or synods during the summer break and linked to congregations in the Addis Ababa area during the school year. This practical experience component is intended to provide the student with a seminary experience, which can shape them theologically and pastorally.

The present curriculum offers extensive course loads in all the key fields of theological education: church history, systematics, biblical studies, and practical theology. The newest addition to the theology curriculum is a Christian-Muslim Relations concentration. This new concentration allows students to follow a specialized curriculum in Christian-Muslim Relations after their second year. This is the first of its kind on the continent. The program will officially open in August of 2003. In addition, the Theology Department continues to evaluate new classes, which may more effectively meet the ever-changing needs of the church in Ethiopia. In response to this we have introduced a required course focusing on the problems of HIV/AIDS and the church's response to these problems.

The Theology Department is composed of lecturers from Ethiopia, Europe, and North America. Seven of the teaching faculty hold doctoral degrees. It is a priority of the seminary to maintain a proper balance between national and expatriate teaching staff. All are deeply committed to teaching in a manner which effectively contextualizes the material being taught. The Theology Department welcomes students, men and women, from all over the African continent and other continents and from various denominational backgrounds. Although the seminary has historically served the needs of the EECMY primarily, the theology department is very interested in broadening its recruitment base to include a larger percentage of non-EECMY students.

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Madagascar: Lutheran Graduate School of Theology (SALT)

This year is a year of harvest for the Lutheran Graduate School of Theology (SALT) and for the Malagasy Lutheran Church (FLM) as a whole. Indeed, the two classes that have been in our midst throughout the recent academic year (SALT 6 and SALT 7), had their respective theses written and defended. Both classes then had their graduation ceremonies at the Mahamanina Lutheran

Congregation last June 30, and the ceremonies took place during the Sunday morning service. Thousands of members from surrounding congregations came to glorify our Lord Jesus Christ for the occasion. Some even came from Antananarivo. Official representative authorities of the actual government honored the ceremonies.

The students of SALT 7 will finish their studies at SALT in the end of the academic year 2002/2003, whereas those of SALT 6 have now returned to their respective synods to do pastoral work. We had 46 students this past academic year, and our staff received two new members: one professor of English and one of French.

Despite the violent political troubles in Madagascar and not least in Fianarantsoa for the first five months of 2002, we managed to finish our duties in the midst of gunshots. Financial shortcomings augmented the pressure, as a logical consequence of instability. Thanks for your prayers!

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Norway: School of Mission and Theology (MHS)

The School of Mission and Theology in Stavanger, Norway, was established in 1843, with the purpose of training missionaries for the Norwegian Missionary Society, which is the oldest and largest Church of Norway missionary organisation. Throughout the 19th and 20th centuries, the School of Mission and Theology was a major missionary training institution in Scandinavia. However, quite a few African and Asian candidates also did their theological studies in Stavanger; the first South African and Malagasy candidates graduated already in the 1860s and 70s, that is almost a century before any other Norwegian institution of higher education offered studies for Africans.

In the 1970s, when most traditional mission schools in Europe either closed down or reduced their programmes to short courses, the School of Mission and Theology went in the opposite direction, and gradually the school developed into an independent university faculty, offering university degrees accredited by the Norwegian Ministry of Education. In consequence with this the student number increased from 20-25 in the early 1970s to 200-250 today, of which approximately 45% are female. The total number of teaching staff is 20.

In the recent couple of years Norwegian universities and institutions of higher education have been challenged to internationalize their programs with regard to structure as well as degrees. As a consequence of this, the School of Mission and Theology has transformed its traditional 6-7 years cand. theol. program into new Bachelor's and Master's programs in Theology, together with

a diploma course in Practical Theology. At the same time its diploma courses in Religious Studies and Intercultural Communication have been organized as a Bachelor's program, and its post-graduate diploma courses in Health Ethics are currently being developed into a Masters program. And finally, the School of Mission and Theology doctoral program, which used to be run in affiliation with the University of Oslo, has been accredited by the Ministry of Education as the school's own Ph.D. program in Theology. Today the School of Mission is therefore able to offer the following programs:

Theology:

- Bachelor of Theology (three years)
- Master of Theology (two years, built on a Bachelor of Theology)
- Diploma in Practical Theology (one year, built on a Master of Theology)
- Ph.D. in Theology (four years, built on a Master of Theology)

Arts:

- Bachelor of Religious Studies and Intercultural Communication (three years)
- Post-graduate diploma courses in Health Ethics (two years, built on a B.A. in health-related studies) are currently being developed into a Master of Health Ethics degree.

As noticed above, Norwegian universities and institutions of higher education have in the recent couple of years been challenged to internationalize their programs with regard to structure as well as degrees. The School of Mission and Theology has been in the forefront of this development, not least due to impulses from our network partners in Africa.

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South Africa: Lutheran Theological Seminary (LTS)

Due to the changes that are taking place in the field of education as a whole in South Africa, and indeed throughout the whole world, the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Southern Africa (ELCSA), too, has had to take dramatic steps with regard to her training of pastors.

The General Assembly of ELCSA decided a few years ago to relocate the Lutheran Theological Seminary (LTS) to the vicinity of the University of Natal-Pietermaritzburg, in order that her pastors from now henceforth should have a minimum qualification of a B.Th. Hon. degree. ELCSA will together with the United Lutheran Church of South Africa (UELCSA) form what will be known

as the Lutheran Theological Institute (LTI), to cater for the theological education of pastors within the university. This programme is set to start at the beginning of 2003.

It is quite sad that Umphumulo College, which has served as a teacher training institution (from c. 1912) and as a theological seminary (from 1965) is coming to an end. LTS will have her last graduating class at the end of 2002. At the moment it is not known what will happen to all those administration buildings, classrooms, the village for married students, the lecturers' houses and many other houses there. However, Umphumulo will be remembered and cherished for being a catalyst in moulding the lives and shaping the future of many who have entered her premises.

Rev Zipho I. Ntuli, Lecturer, Lutheran Theological Seminary, South Africa, presently doing a Research Master's in Stavanger, Misjonsvegen 34, N-4024 Stavanger, Norway.

Tanzania: Makumira University College (MUCO)

Makumira University College (MUCO), one of the Tumaini University Constituent colleges possesses an HEAC Certificate of Full Registration in the process of the Tanzania Accreditation of Universities. In terms of programmes, MUCO offers courses for the award of:

- Bachelor of Divinity (B.D.)
- Master of Theology (M.Th.)
- Diploma in Theology (Dip.Th.), run in Mwika and Ruhija

MUCO have just completed a Ph.D. programme proposal which is awaiting the approval of the Tanzania Higher Education Accreditation Council (HEAC). This programme has been prepared in collaboration with Copenhagen University. MUCO is also in preparation for the establishment of a Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences which will house six departments: Languages, History, Geography, Music, Social Sciences and Education. We shall offer a B.A. general and B.A.Ed. We are now writing a curriculum and erecting more buildings; for information, please, cf. our website: <http://www.makumira.ac.tz>. The total number of teaching staff at MUCO is 25, out whom 6 are on scholarship. At the training centres (Mwika and Ruhija) there is a total of 15. The student body is 145 (MUCO) out of whom 18 are women and 4 are exchange students. At the training centres: (Diploma) Mwika 57; Ruhija 36; i.e. a total of 93, out of whom 7 are women.

International Collaboration: MUCO has academic collaboration with Copenhagen University (Denmark), Helsinki University (Finland); Trinity

Lutheran Seminary (USA), University of Namibia (Namibia), and certainly the six institutions in our network. In all these collaborations we exchange students and where possible, faculty members. Since we received three students from Stavanger (Norway), we are looking forward to receiving some more, even from other institutions in our network of theology and religious studies. We are also looking forward to receiving teaching staff. At present we are in need of a New Testament scholar! We are also looking forward to send our staff and students to the network institutions.

Finally, as for future plans, it should be mentioned that MUCO is in the process of automating her library so that our resources can be accessible to the world through internet.

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Uganda: Dept. of Religious Studies, Makerere University (MU)

The history of Makerere University goes back to 1922, and the Department of Religious Studies was established in 1962. The department embarked on a Certificate of Theology to enhance the standards of theological colleges in the region, followed by forming the African Association of Theological Institutions (AITEA). AITEA embarked on the Diploma of Theology in the 1970s, and in the 1980s several theological colleges in Eastern Africa were affiliated to Makerere.

The department has recently developed a M.A program in “Peace and conflict studies”. This program still awaits a final approval by the University Senate. In this connection too, a biannual publication called *The African Journal of Leadership and Management* has been launched. The maiden volume is available at the department at a cost of US\$10 plus US\$5 for overseas handling and postage by air-mail.

The Department of Religious Studies has been part of the network of theology and religious studies since its launching a couple of years ago. The following are the fruits of this collaboration:

- Two students from the Department have obtained scholarships and are currently doing post-graduate studies in Stavanger. They are Mr Mugenyi Justice (Science of Religion, 2001-2003) and Ms Nambalirwa Helen (Biblical Studies, 2002-2004).

- The project of the Africanization of Biblical Studies, which is funded by the Norwegian Council of Higher Education, is also in progress now: Fr Philip Lokel has recently embarked on the D.Th. program in Biblical Studies (2002-2006), and he is currently on his orientation session with the two other candidates in Stavanger of the same project, one from Madagascar (Luheran Graduate School of Theology) and one from Tanzania (Makumira University College).
- A library project has been submitted to the Norwegian Council of Higher Education for consideration. This project aims at linking the Department of Religious Studies to the library of School of Mission and Theology, as well as the Association of American Theological Libraries.

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