

Network of Theology and Religious Studies

Network Newsletter 6

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**Institut Luthérien de Théologie, Cameroun
Mekane Yesus Theological Seminary, Ethiopia
Lutheran Graduate School of Theology, Madagascar
School of Mission and Theology, Norway
Lutheran Theological Institute, South Africa
Makumira University College, Tumaini University,
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Programs and Projects: A Survey

When some of us came together in Stavanger back in November 2000 to discuss the launching of a network of theology and religious studies, we had – and tried to express – a vision of sharing, a sharing of personal, spiritual and academic resources and experiences. And we pointed out three areas of interaction for a facilitation of this sharing: exchange of students and academic staff, research cooperation, and cooperation with regard to infrastructure development. I would say that we already have achieved some of this sharing. And the following pages will present the current programs and projects in our network.

Knut Holter

Exchange

As far as exchange of students and academic staff is concerned, we have at present four exchange programs: exchange of professors, South>North; exchange of professors, North>South; exchange of students, South>North; exchange of students, North>South. For more general information about these four programs, cf. below, the program documents, attached as appendixes 1 and 2. Let me here make three remarks to these programs:

- The South>North exchange program for professors is funded by the Norwegian Missionary Society, and includes only those four African institutions with which the Society has a history of collaboration, i.e. those in South Africa, Madagascar, Ethiopia and Cameroun. The institutions are invited to send one professor each year according to the following schedule: spring term 2001 SALT (Madagascar); spring term 2002 MYS (Ethiopia); spring term 2003 ILT (Cameroun); spring term 2004 LTI (South Africa); spring term 2005 SALT (Madagascar). And so on.
- There is a need for a better planning of the exchange programs for professors, so that the various examples of exchange may fit more directly into the general needs and possibilities of the partner institutions. The ideal would be a pool of specialists, from which each partner institution could “borrow” competence.
- We have till now not been able to find funding for any South>South exchange programs (with one exception: the research project on Africa and the Old Testament, cf. below, has some South>South elements). This is very unfortunate, and all partner institutions are challenged to come up with ideas of how this can be solved.

Research

As far as research cooperation is concerned, we have till now been able to develop and get funding (Norwegian Council of Higher Education) to one research project, a sandwich-modelled project in biblical studies. The project was presented in the previous issue of this newsletter (no. 5, Jan 2003), and just the main lines should here be repeated:

- The project focuses on Africanization of biblical studies – from two perspectives: staff development (the training of three African doctoral candidates) and scholarly approaches (the development of theses that relate biblical studies to African hermeneutical experiences and concerns).
- The three Th.D.–students come from Makerere University (Uganda), Makumira University College (Tanzania), and Lutheran Graduate School of Theology (Madagascar). They do their research partly in Norway (School of Mission and Theology), partly in South Africa (University of South Africa) and partly in their home institutions.

Infrastructure

As far as cooperation with regard to infrastructure development is concerned, we have developed one program where a funding is secured, and one project where we till now have failed to find funding:

- A textbook program has been developed (cf. below, appendix 3, the program document) by the School of Mission and Theology, and the program is funded by the Norwegian Missionary Society. The background for the program is, on the one hand, the general lack of textbooks relevant to the individual theological institution (language, context, price etc.), and, on the other hand, the valuable experience many of the professors have in teaching their subjects. The scholarship enables the receiver to visit the School of Mission and Theology for a period of three to four months, with the purpose of writing a textbook that reflects the demands of that particular institution and church context. The program is restricted to those network institutions with which the funder, the Norwegian Missionary Society, has a history of cooperation: Institut Luthérien de Théologie, Cameroun; Mekane Yesus Seminary, Ethiopia; Lutheran Graduate School of Theology, Madagascar; Lutheran Theological Institute, South Africa. Till now one textbook has been produced as a result of this program. Professor Ngah Joseph (Cameroun) has published his monograph *La rencontre entre la religion africaine et le christianisme africain*. Ngaoundéré: Tello Editions, 2002. ISBN: 9956-35-001-X (258 pp.).
- A library cooperation pilot project has been developed by Makerere University (Uganda), Lutheran Graduate School of Theology (Madagascar), and School of Mission and Theology (Norway). The idea is to let the library of the Northern partner institution serve as a base for copying services of scholarly articles – for academic staff in the Southern partner institutions. Till now it has not been possible to find funding for this project.

Programs and Projects: A Survey of participants

	Cameroun	Ethiopia	Madagascar	Norway	South Africa	Tanzania	Uganda
Exchange							
South>North: Professors	X	X	X	X	X		
North>South: Professors	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
South>North: Students	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
North>South: Students	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Research							
Africanization of Old Testament Studies			X	X		X	X
Infrastructure							
Textbook	X	X	X	X	X		
Library			X	X			X

Appendix 1: Program Document – Exchange of Professors

The network consultation (Stavanger, November 2000) pointed out exchange of professors as a major challenge. Due to the infrastructural differences between the institutions (library services, research possibilities), it was agreed that the main purpose of the North>South exchange is to give intensive lectures, whereas the main purpose of the South>North exchange is to do research/scholarly work according to the individual researcher's needs. As a response to this, two programs for exchange of professors have been developed:

- A South>North exchange program, funded by the Norwegian Missionary Society
- A North>South exchange program, funded by the School of Mission and Theology

a) South > north

The Norwegian Missionary Society funds a program which each year invites a guest professor from one of those network institutions with which it has a history of cooperation (Institut Luthérien de Théologie, Cameroun; Mekane Yesus Seminary, Ethiopia; Lutheran Graduate School of Theology, Madagascar; Lutheran Theological Institute, South Africa) to visit the School of Mission and Theology for a period of approximately one month.

The purpose of the visits:

- To create scholarly interaction between the institutions.
- To offer a possibility for professors in the South to spend a limited period in a Northern research context.

The conditions of the visits:

- The guest professor is required: (i) to do research/scholarly work, (ii) to give two to four lectures (undergraduate, graduate and postgraduate students), (iii) to participate in the student and staff milieu, (iv) to send a report to the two institutions within two months after the guest professorship.
- The scholarship includes: (i) travel to/from Stavanger (cheapest air flight), (ii) housing (School of Mission and Theology), (iii) office with a PC, and full access to library services (School of Mission and Theology), (iv) an economic grant covering extra living expenses (approx. US\$ 600). The guest professor is expected to uphold his/her salary throughout the period.

b) north > south

The School of Mission and Theology funds a program which each year enables one or two of its own professors to visit other network institutions.

The purpose of the visits:

- To create scholarly interaction between the institutions.
- To give intensive series of lectures.

The conditions of the visits:

- The guest professor is required: (i) to give intensive series of lectures for two to four weeks, (ii) to participate in the student and staff milieu, (iii) to send a report to the two institutions within two months after the guest professorship.
- Travel expenses and extra living expenses are covered by the School of Mission and Theology. The guest professor is expected to uphold his/her salary.

c) procedure

The Dean/Rector of each institution is asked:

- To make the exchange programs for professors known amongst the faculty, and to encourage the faculty members to participate in the programs.
- To plan in due time about subjects and persons fitting into the program, in cooperation with the Network Coordinator, Professor Knut Holter, School of Mission and Theology, Misjonsvegen 34, N-4024 Stavanger, Norway; fax: +47 5151 6225, e-mail: knut.holter@mhs.no

Appendix 2: Program Document – Exchange of Students

The network consultation (Stavanger, November 2000) pointed out exchange of students as a major challenge. The wish to expose students in one network institution to studies of theology and religion in another network institution reflects the network's vision of sharing spiritual, academic and economic resources.

Two exchange programs for students in the network institutions are currently available, one for a long term South>North exchange, another for a short term North>South exchange. No South>South exchange program is currently available.

a) south > north

Candidates holding a B.Theol./B.A. degree from one of the other network institutions are invited to do a two years M.Theol. degree at the School of Mission and Theology, Stavanger.

- Funding: Norwegian Government, Department of Education.
- Number of scholarships: 5-6 new each year.
- Purpose: to do a two years M.Theol. degree, School of Mission and Theology.

b) north > south

Students at the School of Mission and Theology are invited to spend 4-8 weeks in one of the other network institutions.

- Funding of the flight (up to 70%): Norwegian Government, Lånekassa; funding of accommodation: School of Mission and Theology.
- Number of scholarships: 3-5 a year.
- Purpose: to spend 4-8 weeks in another network institution, to get impulses from its spiritual and academic context. The students are supposed to participate in the student milieu and to follow classes that are of relevance to their current study programs in Stavanger.

c) procedure

The Dean/Rector of each institution is asked:

- To make the exchange programs for students known amongst the students, and to encourage students to participate in the programs. All applications go through the home institution.
- South>North Program: to cooperate with the Dean of Studies, Einar Engebretsen, School of Mission and Theology, Misjonsvegen 34, N-4024 Stavanger, Norway; fax: +47 5151 6225, e-mail: enar.engebretsen@mhs.no
- North>South Program: to cooperate with the Network Coordinator, Professor Knut Holter, School of Mission and Theology, Misjonsvegen 34, N-4024 Stavanger, Norway; fax: +47 5151 6225, e-mail: knut.holter@mhs.no

Appendix 3: Program Document – Textbook Program

The network consultation (Stavanger, November 2000) pointed out the current textbook situation for theology and religious studies in Africa as a major challenge. As a response to this, the School of Mission and Theology has established a textbook program, funded by the Norwegian Missionary Society.

- The background for the program is, on the one hand, the general lack of textbooks relevant to the individual theological institution (language, context, price etc.), and, on the other hand, the valuable experience many of the professors have in teaching their subjects.
- The scholarship enables the receiver to visit the School of Mission and Theology for a period of three to four months, with the purpose of writing a textbook that reflects the demands of that particular institution and church context.
- The program is restricted to those network institutions with which the funder, the Norwegian Missionary Society, has a history of cooperation: Institut Luthérien de Théologie, Cameroun; Mekane Yesus Seminary, Ethiopia; Lutheran Graduate School of Theology, Madagascar; Lutheran Theological Institute, South Africa.

a) Application

There is no special application form. The application is expected to be a project proposal of two to three pages, which should include:

- A presentation of the demand: institutional priority of the textbook project, current textbook situation in this field.
- A presentation of the background of the applicant: academic degrees, teaching experiences.
- A presentation of the content of the textbook project: table of contents – with comments, e.g. on the number of pages of the finished work, and further the academic level and pedagogical approach of the project.
- A presentation of the status of the project: what has been done till now, and what will be done from now until the visit to Stavanger, in order to secure a satisfactory finishing of the project within the three or four months in Stavanger.
- A presentation of the infrastructure of the textbook project: (i) the number of students who are supposed to follow the course(s) / buy the book each year, (ii) printing costs for e.g. 300 copies, each on e.g. 120 pages.

b) Conditions

The scholarship includes:

- Travel to/from Stavanger: cheapest air flight; housing: School of Mission and Theology.
- Office with a PC; access to the School of Mission and Theology library services.
- An economic grant covering living expenses: approx. US\$ 600 a month.
- Printing subsidies for the book: approx. US\$ 1.300.

The receiver of the scholarship should:

- Complete a textbook manuscript within the three to four months period in Stavanger, so that it is ready for printing.
- Send a report from the project and ten copies of the published book to the School of Mission and Theology within six months after the period in Stavanger.

c) procedure

The Dean/Rector of each institution is asked:

- To make the textbook scholarship known amongst the faculty, and to encourage the professors to develop projects.
- To send one or several (then: prioritized) project proposals to: Dean of Studies, School of Mission and Theology, Misjonsvegen 34, N-4024 Stavanger, Norway; fax: +47 5151 6225, e-mail: enar.engebretsen@mhs.no

The project proposal(s) should be received in Stavanger by **October 15** for applications for the following year. The project proposals will be analyzed by the Research Committee (School of Mission and Theology), and the final decision will be taken by the Network Committee (School of Mission and

Theology / Norwegian Missionary Society). Decisive criteria are: needs, relevance, practicability, economy.

News

From South Africa:

Lutheran Theological Seminary at Umphumulo has been relocated to Pietermaritzburg, under the new name Lutheran Theological Institute (LTI). The relocation is part of a new scheme for the training of pastors within the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Southern Africa and the United Lutheran Church of South Africa. The training is now linked to the School of Theology in the University of Natal–Pietermaritzburg, and all pastors will eventually have a minimum qualification of a B.Th. Hon. degree.

The network partner institutions congratulate our colleagues in South Africa!

From Ethiopia:

Dr Yonas Deressa, Principal of the Mekane Yesus Theological Seminary, Addis Abeba, Ethiopia, passed away in early July, after a long time of suffering. Dr Yonas represented his institution at the network consultation in Stavanger in November 2000, where he played an instrumental role in the launching of the Network of Theology and Religious Studies.

The network institutions extend their condolences to Dr Yonas' family and to our colleagues at the Mekane Yesus Theological Seminary.



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