



# **NETACT ANNUAL (ADMINISTRATIVE) REPORT AUGUST 2003 STELLENBOSCH**

## **1 INTRODUCTION**

This report is aligned to the minutes of the Executive Committee (EC, Dec 6, 2002) which in turn addressed the issues raised and tasks given by August 2002 Annual Meeting in Lilongwe, Malawi (see minutes). The Annual Meeting's agenda is based on the sequence of this report. The objectives set by the 2001 NetACT meeting, to be achieved by 2007, form part of this report as a way of helping us to see to what extent we are achieving our goals.

In general one can say that this was a very good year for NetACT. Real progress was made with regards to the objectives set by the previous meetings. The report will testify to that. The reports of the visits to the USA (Oct-Nov 2002) and Scotland (June-July 2003) will be dealt with after this one.

## **2 VACANCIES**

Since this report deals with the work done by the EC and the Executive Director (ED) it is apt to report that our Vice-Chairperson, Dr Mwanandi has retired. It is our Chairperson's second year. His term of office is from 2002 to end 2004 since he was elected in August 2001 in Lusaka; our secretary's term is 2003-2005 since he was elected in Aug 2002 in Lilongwe. We have to elect a Vice-Chairperson (for a 2004-2006 term) at the end of this meeting.

## **3 FINANCES**

The financial statements for the year Jan Dec 2002 as well as that for the six months of Jan-June 2003 are attached to this report. NetACT has the following accounts: Administration, NetACT house, Computers, HIV/AIDS Project, Annual & EC Meetings, Travels & Meetings, Lecturer Exchange and Scholarships. In 2003 donations amounting to US\$36,000 was received. This was less than the budget which put some strain on our work. We had to pay for lecturer exchanges from our Meetings and Travel accounts. If we do not receive funding for the projects we envisage for 2004 those projects will have to be frozen. The EC/ED will try to secure the necessary funds needed for our most urgent projects.

Specific funding projects: we should prepare a Proposal for the Church of Scotland to fund our "Preaching on Aids in Africa" book project (before mid Sept 2003) and the Cornerstone Foundation in the USA to fund the "Ethics in Africa" project. The Muskegan congregation may help us by providing money for the first set of copies of "Studying Congregations in Africa" needed in our seminaries in 2004 (see Report at point 12). We are trying to secure money for our

AIDS work from the AIDS bill funds in the USA. The committee appointed at Lilongwe, should take this matter further (Minutes 2002 23)

#### **4 NETACT OFFICE**

It is our vision that **NetACT** wants to have realized the following goals by 2007:

- an adequately staffed coordinating office for NetACT has been established.

Hannatjie Jacobs resigned Sept 2002 and Pieter van Santen was appointed by the EC as Project Manager for a three year period, annually renewed and dependent on funds being available (EC 16) from December 2003. There was a three month period in which there was nobody to do the administrative work. It took considerable effort to catch up. Pieter van Santen is a doctoral student in Practical Theology and Missiology. We want to welcome him to the office and appreciate what he has done in keeping all the projects in motion!

#### **5 NETACT HOUSE**

It is our vision that **NetACT** wants to have realized the following goals by 2007:

- a program for upgrading and further theological training of lecturers at the participating institutions as well as other pastors has been established;

It is easily recognisable that the NetACT house provided the necessary infrastructure to realize this goal.

Strictly speaking the house is a project of Stellenbosch University (SU). However, the NetACT office runs the house with the support of the International Office of SU. The Board will visit the house on Tuesday August 5. The house provides accommodation for postgraduate students from NetACT institutions and for other students from different parts of Africa who use it primarily for short periods. It is becoming very popular and we are experiencing problems with overbooking or more accurately with people just arriving without having booked their accommodation in advance. Since there is enough space at the back of the building serious attention should be given to raising funds to build a number of bachelor flats to supply in the growing demand for space.

#### **6 COMPUTERS**

It is our vision that **NetACT** wants to have realized the following goals by 2007:

- participating institutions have computer-facilities and are linked through e-mail and internet.

The EC minutes (18.1-18.5) should be read with this section.

In the 2002 report we mentioned that we experienced difficulties with the computer company who designed our computer project. The Dec 2002 EC minutes relate subsequent developments. The dream to have satellite communication did prove to be realistic. Our first realizable objective seems to be to help all institutions to have reliable computers and e-mail facilities. All computers and printers bought by SU were removed by the University's inventory and now belong to the various institutions. Our policy regarding Information Technology is to help institutions financially to have reliable e-mail facilities. Maintaining the technology is the responsibility of the institution. NetACT will also support all endeavours of institutions to raise the computer

literacy of their staff and students. The NetACT Program Manager managed to pursue a Stellenbosch firm to sell 15 Pentium 2 computers at a R1000 each. These computers are at the disposal of NetACT institutions and available for doctoral students from these institutions. Six of these were given to Nifcott, three are in the NetACT house and four are still available. Conveying the computers is the responsibility of the new owner. There is still a considerable amount of money in the Computer account and institutions may negotiate with the NetACT office to address their needs. The Board may also decide to transfer some of the computer money to another account or to help new members to have e-mail facilities.

## 7 LECTURER EXCHANGE

It is our vision that NetACT wants to have realized the following goals by 2007:

- an effective system of mutual consultation, lecturer-exchange and networking among the participating institutions is in place.

The EC minutes (19.1-19.5, 20) should be read with this section.

Several exchanges took place financed from our travelling account since we did not receive money for our Lecturer Exchange account. All institutions did receive visiting lecturers since the AIDS module was taught at all institutions and the Kingfisher Centre helped several institutions using their own funds for travelling.

- We regard this as an extremely important NetACT activity and should place it high on our funding agenda.
- As a matter of policy we should decide whether we are funding the exchange of lecturers between associated institutions or whether we are also going to use our funds to help institutions with lecturers from non-affiliated institutions.

## 8 SCHOLARSHIPS

It is our vision that NetACT wants to have realized the following goals by 2007:

- a program for upgrading and further theological training of lecturers at the participating institutions as well as other pastors has been established.

The EC minutes (21) should be read with this section as well as the 2002 minutes par 30.2.

We received \$10,000 which was allotted to the candidates mentioned in the EC minutes. This amount needs to assist them to complete their degrees. The Dutch Reformed Church (Western Cape) a number of people associated with NetACT institutions. They are at present helping more students that they can actually afford to help. Institutions can get the addresses of the PCUSA and Church of Scotland offices from the NetACT office to look for overseas help. In these cases institutions, not the individual, have to apply for scholarship money.

## 9 HIV/AIDS PROJECT

It is our vision that NetACT wants to have realized the following goals by 2007:

- at least one course on curbing the spread and the effects of HIV/Aids has been identified and/or developed, distributed and taught, and is in the process of being used in a substantial number of congregations linked with the participating institutions.

The EC minutes (23.1-23.5) should be read with this section.

Janet Brown's report on the work of this committee will deal with most issues. In addition we would like to say that working with World Vision is on the hold since we do not have any substantial contribution to make because of lack of funds. The good work done by this committee, however, contributed to a \$25,000 gift by the Department of Health and Human Services from the USA. The "Friends of the University of Stellenbosch" office in the USA (Mr John A Chettle) negotiated this gift. The purpose of the gift was to fund the Annual Meeting and related meeting and travel expenses to further the NetACT objectives dealing with AIDS. This office is trying to get substantial funding for the NetACT AIDS project directed at reaching congregations. This is really a project to pray for.

## 10 ANNUAL MEETING

It is our vision that NetACT wants to have realized the following goals by 2007:

- an effective system of mutual consultation, lecturer-exchange and networking among the participating institutions is in place.

The EC minutes (24.1-24.6) should be read with this section.

We would like to propose that no annual meeting be held in 2004. The EC will however meet and attend to all matters. The main reason for this proposal is twofold: it is very expensive to get everyone together and secondly we should invest our available resources in getting more people from our institutions involved in NetACT projects.

- We therefore suggest that the 2004 meeting be book-projects with the books on "Preaching on Aids in Africa" and "Ethics in Africa" as a priority. We should affirm Drr J Cilliers and Nico Koopman as convenors for the book projects. These convenors should provide a project proposal for their projects to the EC. The NetACT office will assist them in writing the proposals.
- Other than these, what are the most urgent textbooks required by the institutions?
- We should decide on a venue for the 2005 meeting. Lusaka again?

## 11 CURRICULUM COMMITTEE REPORT

The EC regard this aspect of NetACT's work as absolutely vital. "Upgrading academic standards and institutional capacity building" is one central to our mission statement. In our vision statement we said: NetACT wants to have realized the following goals by 2007:

- all institutions (as far as applicable) have taken measurable steps towards accreditation by upgrading academic standards and institutional capacity-building.

The EC minutes (25.1-25.6) should be read with this section. Members received correspondence and information in this regard from the NetACT office and the Curriculum Committee (CC).

The EC gave the chairperson of this committee permission to attend the International Council for Evangelical Theological Education (ICETE) In England (18-24 August 2003). ACTEA is a founding member of ICETE.

There is an ACTEA curriculum conference THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION IN CONTEXT: ADDRESSING THE AIDS REALITY 4-7 November 2003 in Pietermaritzburg, SA. We registered one person to represent NetACT and gave Janet Brown's name. The Meeting, however, has to discuss this and Janet should indicate if she is available.

## **12 PUBLICATIONS**

It is our vision that NetACT wants to have realized the following goals by 2007:

- handbooks on African Congregational Theology have been produced and are used at the participating institutions.

This meeting is editing the final draft of "Studying Congregations in Africa". The ED will take responsibility for the publication thereof. We hope to print 2500 copies. The book will be subsidized in such a way that we will be able to sell it at each institution at an affordable price for local students and ministers. Each institution has to order the specific number of books required for 2004 at this annual meeting. We may ask the Muskegan Congregation in Michigan USA to help us to pay for the first round of books required at the seminaries. As soon as we have a few printed copies, we will ask the PCUSA, RCA and Church of Scotland to contact specific congregations to help specific institutions. We need to find ways of making this personal, i.e. like providing photos of a class, giving names and having the people who receive the books contact the donors to say thank you and to report. In this way we can prepare the ground for help with the books that is to follow.

The urgency to proceed with the planning and writing of textbooks that address the contextual situation in Africa in all fields of theology needs to be pursued as a priority. This is addressed at the discussion above about the annual meeting of 2004.

## **14 GENERAL**

### **14.1 Project Africa:**

NetACT wants to have realized the following goals by 2007:

- at least one program/curriculum for training of congregational leadership in African Congregational Theology has been developed, has been distributed and is in a process of being implemented in a substantial number of congregations linked with the participating institutions;
- church-leaders at all levels, including women- and youth leaders, are targeted and included in the continuous training programs.

The EC minutes (26.1) should be read with this section.

Nifcott (Rev Msamgaambe) attended the 2003 workshop of Project Africa (with NetACT funding). Four excellent manuals on Preaching, Stewardship, Pastoral Care and Christian

Education were prepared by this organization. They are willing to present these courses in any country. These courses were developed to train congregational leadership on a congregational level.

The Kingfisher Mobilising Centre applied to become a member of NetACT (see application). They are specializing in addressing the abovementioned objectives and did several training courses in Malawi and Zambia during this year. They are also funding their own travel and other expenses. It seems natural that KMC should join the network and become a board member as they will help us to realize the objectives set in our mission. One condition for their approval should be that local leadership be trained to present and contextualize the KMC courses in due time.

#### **14.2 SU Faculty of Theology appointment to benefit NetACT**

The Faculty appointed our present chairman to be an extraordinary lecturer in this faculty. Part of his job description will be to be involved in NetACT and especially in the work of the AIDS committee. Such an arrangement has several benefits for NetACT since the Faculty of Theology has secured funds for his travelling and other expenses on behalf of NetACT. This will save NetACT a considerable amount of money.

#### **14.3 Long term NetACT prospects**

It is important to think in terms of NetACT's future. Donors and possible partners will be willing to cooperate if there is consistency, integrity and reliable resources associated with the network. Thus far we have managed to develop trust between the institutions and to keep a balance between on the one hand NetACT's independence, and, on the other hand, the role played by SU.

The EC wants to emphasize that NetACT's independence and its association with an established institution like Stellenbosch (and in future possibly other universities in SA) is integral to the long term future of NetACT.

The fact that SU is willing to contribute in several ways to the NetACT project and has set as one of its major commitments to be involved in Africa, has thus far helped us to secure funds in excess of R2 million that has benefited all institutions. As such Stellenbosch has been willing to be the "anchor institution" to NetACT. Donors and possible partners are, however, uncertain whether this is simply the dedication of a few people that will retire in a few years time after which the whole endeavour will fade away.

#### **We have to address this issue for the benefit of all institutions.**

The EC propose the following steps:

- In the first place we introduced membership fees. Even though member institutions in return receive tenfold and more benefits from NetACT, it is at least a token that prove that everybody is contributing something.
- Secondly, donors would be won over more easily if they see that SU (and hopefully other Universities in SA), is willing to contribute from their own research and other funds for NetACT projects. In this regard the EC made appointments for the Board to meet with the Rectorate of SU on Tuesday 5. The board member representing the donor community

(Dr Ron Hartgerink) has an appointment with the Vice-Rector, Prof WC Claassen, and with the Rector, Prof Chris Brink, on Monday 11 to address this issue. The Chair and ED will accompany him.

- Thirdly, the present ED is willing to commit himself to stay on after his retirement in March 2007 to serve NetACT fulltime for a period of five years under condition that the Board renew his appointment every three years as is the case with other EC members.

It may be important to illustrate the importance of this discussion by indicating that the \$25,000 that we received from the United States Government for the benefit of NetACT was negotiated by SU and donated because of the assurance that it will be dealt with in reliable ways. The same fundraisers are at present trying to secure major funding for NetACT's AIDS program from the money allotted by President Bush to fight AIDS in Africa.

#### 14.4 New Members

We spent some time at Lilongwe discussing the issue of new members (Constitution, Minutes points 9, 13). The EC wants to propose the following procedure to be followed in handling the applications of possible new members:

- 1 A letter of application addressed to the ED stating whether they accept the NetACT constitution (especially point 4.1.1.B), mission and vision. In this letter the institution should outline to what extent it will be willing to contribute to serve the mission and vision of NetACT.
- 2 Documents that outline their constitution, denominational association, history and full curriculum.
- 3 Applicants should attend one Annual Meeting as observers at the end of which the Board will vote, in the absence of the institution, whether or not to accept the institution.
- 4 Financial contribution: commitment to pay the annual membership fees and, if the institutions are relatively strong, an undertaking to pay for the travelling and other expenses of attending to meetings.

We have to deal with a few realities when it comes to membership. NetACT began as a network between SU and a number of Reformed / Presbyterian institutions whose lecturers were studying at Stellenbosch. At this stage other institutions want to join because of what NetACT is achieving and the benefits it will have for them. New members, however, have considerable financial implications. We want to propose the following **guidelines** in our decision making:

- 1 Our first goal is to be a network of Reformed / Presbyterian theological institutions in *Southern Africa*.  
**Implications:** it is important to try to help institutions in countries ravaged by war and pandemic to become members. This will add to the financial burden of NetACT since we will have to help the institutions of those countries to get on par with other NetACT institutions (see objectives in NetACT vision statement).
- 2 There are Reformed / Presbyterian institutions in South Africa who may want to join NetACT. They should be welcomed to apply but under condition that they are responsible for their own travelling and other expenses and they should be willing to contribute financially and with resources to the achievement of NetACT's goals.

- 3 There are a number of smaller evangelical theological training institutions in Southern Africa who wants to join NetACT. NetACT can only consider their membership if the long term financial sustainability of NetACT is secured.
- 4 Institutions like the Kingfisher Mobilising Centre (KMC) or similar parachurch organisations working in close relationship with Reformed / Presbyterian institutions and willing to help NetACT to attain its goals without causing any financial burden to NetACT, should be favourably considered.

The Board will have to consider the applications of KMC and Angola as well as the INSTITUT SUPERIEUR DE THEOLOGIE ET DE MISSIOLOGIE (ISTHEM) in Burundi and THE AFRICA CENTRE FOR THE GREAT COMMISSION in Kenya.

The EC asked the ED to contact Prof Kwame Bediako of Ghana where an institute like NetACT was founded that, amongs others, are also developing textbooks. The ED did not succeed in making contact with him but ask the Board to reaffirm the request.

#### **14.5 Workload NetACT office**

The office experienced frustrating difficulties in organising the Annual Meeting due to extensive problems in the e-mail system of SU. The problem seems to be solved now. The workload that the office (ED and Program Manager) has to carry is extensive. At this stage we are just mentioning this as a fact. One of our biggest difficulties is to get money transferred to other countries due to monetary regulations in SA. Assisting the AIDS committee in presenting the courses at the different institutions caused many a frustration. We apologize for delays in getting air tickets and in transferring money. We are working in finding ways of more effectively dealing with these challenges.

#### **14.6 Approval of Annual Meeting minutes**

The EC requests the Annual Meeting to grant it the authority to approve the minutes of the annual meeting (EC 6-12-03 point 14). The Annual Meeting approves its minutes on a day-by-day basis but is unable to approve the work done on the last day.

It was a privilege to serve in and through NetACT.

Jurgens Hendriks  
Amon Kasambala  
Pieter van Santen

01-08-2003