



NetACT- AGM and Conference on Community Development

How can theological institutions in the Presbyterian and Reformed tradition in Sub-Saharan Africa be assisted in preparing leaders for missional congregations, empowering the congregations to remain true to the *missio Dei* by utilising and improving their strengths to address challenges that face the continent?

NetACT is the Network for African Congregational Theology (<http://www0.sun.ac.za/netact/>) that offers a solution to this need. It was formed in February 2000 in Nairobi, Kenya and had up till 2014 15 participating institutions. Stellenbosch University acts as the central resource centre from where the network is administered and coordinated.

During the last week of January about 40 members from 35 seminaries across South-Saharan Africa, attended the AGM of an enlarged NetACT at Benoni, Johannesburg. The theme was Community Development and topics such as "Theology and Development: what's theology got to do with Development?" were discussed. During the meeting it was decided to expand the network to form three additional networks around three other universities in South Africa namely, Free State University, NWU and Pretoria University with institutions all over Sub-Saharan Africa.

Of the many speakers on the subject of Community Development was Dr Obadji Agbiji from Nigeria who spoke on "Engaging Christian faith communities on development in the context of violence", and Dr. Lisa le Roux who spoke on "Understanding the community: The Importance of research for community development."

One of the conference delegates was Santino Odong Othol who represented his seminary, the Nile Theological College in South Sudan. The devastation caused by civil war has a huge impact - not only on society, but also on important institutions. Their theological school was destroyed during the recent civil war and the entire seminary has now to be moved from Malakal to the capital, Juba.

During the conference, Prof Elna Mouton launched the book "LIVING WITH DIGNITY African perspectives on Gender Equality". The book is dedicated to the "Circle of Concerned African Women Theologians" and was received by Dr. Maria Frahm-Arp, representing the association. The book was the result of a project of NetACT of the previous three years. It can be downloaded or ordered from <http://www0.sun.ac.za/netact/index.php?content=resources>. NetACT plans to compile a new book on "Community Development" in the next three years through workshops and conferences.

Len Hansen took over from Jurgens Hendriks as the new executive director of NetACT since January this year while Jurgens is still very much involved as Programme Coordinator.

Contact Jurgens Hendriks at hjh@sun.ac.za for more information.