



President's Newsletter, May 2008

Dear Colleagues,

It is already more than a year since my last newsletter, and I would like to share with you what is happening in the Academy. In the past year, I have taken the opportunity to attend several conferences in our field to express the relationship of IAPT with other groups. Among these were the British and Irish Association of Practical Theology, the American Academy of Religion, and the International Society of Empirical Research in Theology. It is interesting to see differences in context, discipline, and approach, while at the same time there is a clear understanding of the need for practical theology in our conflict-ridden and divided world. Conflicts and disunity abound not only in the world as a whole, in and between nations, but also within the church. While claiming – or striving – to be the symbol of the Kingdom, the church itself suffers under fundamental controversies, injustice, and much more. Our challenge then is to contribute to processes of bringing peace, justice, and hope to a world in need. In IAPT, we do so by focusing on diverse practices, and by engaging in ministry formation, social action, and fundamental scholarly research. Whatever specific shape our practical theological work takes, we find each other in a dedication to live up to academic standards, a high degree of relevance for the societies in which we live, and a connection between our academic work and our personal, spiritual, motivations. At this time of writing – around Ascension Day and Pentecost – our inspiration to meet this challenge of our discipline may be renewed.

On dues and missing members

In the past year, the executive committee, notably James Nieman and Pam Couture, have worked hard to develop an up to date membership list and contact everybody to ask them to pay their dues. For that purpose we have established Paypal-accounts so that you can pay in Euros or Dollars (or any other currency using your credit card. All of you have been contacted about this and several of you have paid outstanding money. Some (retired) members have indicated that other priorities had become more central and that they would rather bid the academy farewell. We mention their names with gratitude: Dianne Bergant, Duncan Forrester, Gerben Heitink, Bernard Kaempf, Albert Ploeger, and Edward Wimberley. We obviously have thanked them for their contribution and exchanged best wishes. As we really need members' contributions to do what we want, we have decided that registration for the next conference will require up to date payment status. Those in default and not attending will be contacted and if needed removed from the membership. If there is any reason why you are not able to pay your dues, please let us know and we will act accordingly.

In working on these issues, we have found it very difficult to gather all the correct e-mail addresses of members. We therefore – again – ask you to check the following list of names. If you know (or can locate) the address for any one of these colleagues, please let us know. When we do not have reestablished contact by next summer, we will have to remove them from the membership. Please send your information to James Nieman at secretary@ia-pt.org.

Bremer, Margot
Corpas de Posada, Isabel
Greinacher, Norbert
Henkys, Jürgen
Higueros, Mario F

Kang, Hee-Chun
Kim, Jae Eun
Nemeth, David
Nontawases, Prakai
Park, Keun Won

Preul, Reiner
Rau, Gerhard
Rössler, Dietrich
ZerfaB, Rolf

On nominations for new members

According to our by-laws, you can nominate colleagues for membership until one year before the next business meeting, which will take place at our Chicago conference, July 30 – August 4, 2009. This means that the deadline for nominations is July 30, 2008. I have already received several nominations, but there is room for more. As you may know from the by-laws, the criteria for membership include the following qualifications:

- A. Individuals who subscribe to the purposes of the Academy as stated in its By-Laws.
- B. Individuals who are researchers and scholars in the practical theological fields and related disciplines.
- C. Individuals who have a distinguished record of publications with regard to the foundational issues of practical theology and its subdisciplines or who have made other recognized significant contributions to practical theology.
- D. Individuals with a Ph.D., Th.D., or comparable research and scholarly degree or a certifiable demonstration of serious research and scholarly accomplishments.

This is the moment to consider colleagues whom you feel would be an important contribution to the Academy. Let me add to that the consideration that the Academy constantly run the risk of losing its diversity in terms of regional, cultural, theological, and ethnic background. I therefore invite you to think particularly of colleagues from underrepresented groups or contexts. In some cases these colleagues need some help in funding participation in our conference, and it would be most helpful if you would also give some thought to possibilities of supporting your nominee.

Some other issues to reflect on

In the Executive Committee we have shared some thoughts on issues that may be discussed in Chicago in response to a full proposal. At this point I merely mention them briefly, but I am open to your suggestions and remarks.

1. We feel it would be a good step forward to include a copy of the conference volumes in the membership package. This may imply a raise of the dues, but as that hasn't happened since IAPT was founded perhaps this may be the time to do so. We also have some earlier volumes that we want to distribute among members.
2. We will not suggest a formal reduction of dues for retired members, but we will allow for individual discounts. All we request is that members contact us directly so that we can make a proper arrangement that suits the person's circumstances. This is because we feel the Academy needs some kind of commitment from its members on the one hand, and has to respond to individual situations on the other.
3. We are considering that guests to our conferences will pay the conference fee plus the dues requested from members in that year. This way our guests will contribute to developing the Academy and its aims.

I will post this newsletter at the forum on our website www.ia-pt.org. Please take a moment to post your comments. If you want to post anything else, like a recent publication, just let me know and I will be happy to post it on our website. Remember: a website like this only works when you make your contributions. Let me conclude by thanking you for being a member of IAPT and for doing you share in furthering our discipline and achieving the aims inherent to it.

Sincerely

Ruard Ganzevoort
president