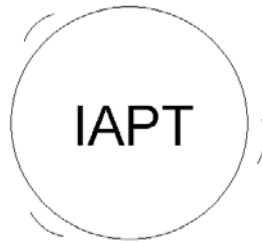


International Academy
of Practical Theology

<http://www.ia-pt.org>



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January 2015

Dear IAPT colleagues

Greetings from Pretoria.

We are at the beginning of what promises to be an exciting year for the IAPT. Our biennial conference, definitely the highlight on the IAPT's calendar, is now only six months away. The Local Host Committee and the Program Committee under the leadership of Malan Nel are working hard to ensure a stimulating conference. We look forward to meeting "old" and "new" members and a number of guests at our biennial conference in Pretoria in July.

In this newsletter you will find important information regarding the 2015 Pretoria conference, the 2013 conference publication and some administrative issues. Malan Nel gives more information regarding the theme and the keynote speakers. Our secretary, Robert Mager, shares some information regarding the establishment of the IAPT archives and Neil Pembroke, our treasurer, reminds us of some important issues related to the IAPT finances. The Executive Committee (EC) has been engaged in discussion on the future of the IAPT and in this newsletter we share some of our ideas. We look forward to your contribution to the discussion.

We learned with great sadness that Jeanne Stevenson-Moessner's son David died on January 10th in a tragic car accident in Jackson, Tennessee. On behalf of all members we extend our deepest condolences to Jeanne and her family.

The future of the IAPT

One of the projects of the current EC is to reflect on the future of the IAPT. The IAPT was founded in Princeton in 1991 after an initial meeting in Tübingen in 1990 (see <http://www.ia-pt.org/history/>). After more than two decades, 12 international conferences and numerous publications, we can thank the "founding fathers and mother" for their

vision and efforts. Many practical theologians have benefited over the years from this fine community of scholars.

Despite the many achievements we also experience some shortcomings. The IAPT has yet to fulfill its potential to become a truly international scholarly community representative of the diverse contexts, interests and groups of practical theologians world-wide. The difficult economic situation of most theologians and struggles over language certainly contribute to this situation. Other factors, such as the disparities in research cultures and opportunities, also make it more difficult for scholars from less privileged contexts to meet the membership criteria as stated in the by-laws. The emphasis on “a distinguished record of publications”, membership by invitation only, and the original vision of limiting the size of the academy perhaps contributes to a perception among non-members that the IAPT is only for the “academic superstars” or at least an elitist organization. Furthermore, although the original intention “was not to organize conferences but to facilitate international research projects as well as to create ongoing exchange on research intention” (Friedrich Schweitzer, one of the founding fathers, <http://www.ia-pt.org/history/>), the life and work of the academy has become almost solely focused on the biennial conferences. We are challenged to think of new ways in which we can cross these barriers.

Against this background, the executive committee started discussions on the “identity” of the IAPT and its future. Many members are now confronted with changing academic contexts, dwindling funds available for travel grants, many competing academic networks and societies, a growing emphasis on interdisciplinarity, and so forth. Practical theologians have to invest their time and money wisely in scholarly networks and societies. What does (or could) the IAPT contribute that goes beyond the networks and societies of the “sub-disciplines” such homiletics, religious education, pastoral care and counselling? Is there still a need for a forum that strives to promote practical theology as a discipline? What do we do to attract young and promising scholars to become part of this network? Does our membership criterion of ‘a distinguished record of publication’ exclude promising scholars or those from contexts where it is more challenging to publish? Is IAPT membership the crowning of a successful academic career, with a focus on past achievement, or is it meant to inspire and to facilitate scholarship among young and mid-career academics? Have we perhaps become a “sleeping” scholarly community that only wakes up for our biennial conferences?

In our deliberations it was evident from the start that we have different views on the issues and questions raised above, and that these ideas are thoroughly shaped by our contexts and experiences. We think that robust discussions about identity issues and diverse views are part of a healthy organization. Reading about the history of our Academy as described by two of the founding members, Riet Bons-Storm and Friedrich Schweitzer, it is clear that robust discussions about these “identity issues” were part of the founding of this Academy!

Despite our differences we more or less agree on the following points. Firstly, the EC believes it important to cultivate a spirit of *co-operation and collegiality* among the

IAPT membership in order to fulfill the academy's potential as a *community* of scholars. Perhaps it is time to reconsider what it means to be an international community of scholars and to think creatively of ways in which we can further the co-operation and collegiality among our members (e.g. by being a real community of scholars and not only engaging with each other at conferences). Pam Couture, our Vice President, captures our sentiment in this regard:

“...(T)he question is--how do we as a society help one another stand on each other's insightful shoulders, in order to see as far as we can into our academic and cultural future, rather than competing for the limelight? Standing on one another's shoulders means being an academy that works to strengthen each other's work. It means constructive criticism in order to make work better, as well as valuing different ideas. It means knowing each other's work and promoting it in various venues, through citation, through reviews, through conversation about work in progress. By knowing each other's work we create international opportunities, and that deeply enriches the lives of scholars who believe that being part of an international conversation, colleague and friendship group, enriches our lives. We are the school that we attend with the best colleague/teachers possible, in order to learn. That's why the publications are so important--it's hard to absorb it all during a packed meeting. And we are a place where we really want people to become part of and commit to an academic community, not just to be individual voices. We have done some of the above, but we could do better.”

Secondly, we agree about the importance of being a community of *scholars*. We have to keep in mind that one of the aims of the IAPT is to promote practical theology as a scholarly discipline at an international level. In the words of our treasurer, Neil Pembroke: “IAPT is not the only forum available to scholars in the PT field. IAPT is doing very valuable work in promoting Practical Theology as a genuine academic discipline that can take its place confidently in the academy.” It is thus part of our mandate as an Academy to ensure that our members are able to make strong intellectual contributions to the field of practical theology.

We invite all members to think about these issues and to send comments, ideas and suggestions to president@ia-pt.org before the end of March 2015. We see the participation of all our members in this discussion as an important step in becoming the academic community that we envisage!

New members

The Membership Committee (EC) carefully reviewed all the nominations received in accordance with the By-Laws, and also keeping in mind the recommendation of the previous EC to admit at least 20 new members and to pay particular attention to geographic, gender and ecumenical profiles. It is with much pleasure that we can now announce that the following 24 scholars accepted the invitation to become a member of the IAPT. Their membership will take effect at the first IAPT conference that they attend, and the

majority indicated that they plan to attend the Pretoria conference. We look forward to their active participation in our Academy.

1. Acolatse, Esther (Duke Divinity School, USA)
2. Bauer, Christian (University of Innsbruck, Austria)
3. Bieler, Andrea (Kirchliche Hochschule Wuppertal/Bethel, Germany)
4. Cameron, Helen (The Salvation Army, UK)
5. Charbonnier, Lars (Führungsakademie für Kirche und Diakonie Berlin, Germany)
6. Cronshaw, Darren (Baptist Union of Victoria, Australia)
7. Gustafsson-Lundberg, Johanna (University of Lund, Sweden)
8. Hodge, Joel (Australian Catholic University, Australia)
9. Kiiski, Jouko (University of Eastern Finland, Finland)
10. Kim, Nahamm (Evangelische Hochschule Tabor, Germany)
11. Kirchhoffer, David (Australian Catholic University, Australia)
12. Knuutila, Jyrki (University of Helsinki, Finland)
13. McCarroll, Pam (Knox College, Toronto, Canada)
14. Meylahn, Johann (University of Pretoria, South Africa)
15. Moschella, Mary Clark (Yale University Divinity School, USA)
16. Nell, Ian (University of Stellenbosch, South Africa)
17. Niemelä, Kati (University of Helsinki, Finland)
18. Pae, Keun-joo Christine (Denison University, Ohio, USA)
19. Sheppard, Phillis (Vanderbilt University Divinity School, USA)
20. Slee, Nicola (The Queen's Foundation for Ecumenical Theological Education, UK)
21. Sremac, Srdjan (Free University Amsterdam, Netherlands)
22. Ste-Marie, Lorraine (Saint Paul University, Ottawa, Canada)
23. Vähäkangas, Auli (University of Helsinki, Finland)
24. Trygve Wyller (University of Oslo, Norway)

Slate of candidates for the election of the next EC

Another important task of the EC is to nominate candidates for the offices of the next Executive Committee. The election will take place during the business meeting at the Pretoria conference (By-Laws VII.F.)

In accordance with the By-Laws, we present the following slate of candidates to the membership.

President: Heather Walton (UK)

Vice President: Robert Mager (Canada)

Secretary: Annemie Dillen (Belgium)

Treasurer: Faustino Cruz (USA)

Member at Large: Constanze Thierfelder (Germany)

Member at Large: Casparus Wepener (SA)

We will provide more information about the slate in the next newsletter.

The By-Laws allow for the nomination of alternative candidates:

VII.E. Alternative candidates for one or all of the offices may be nominated by a petition containing ten signatures of current members. Petitioners shall ascertain, and indicate in their petition, that their nominee is willing to serve if elected. Petitions must be received by the President of the Academy three months prior to the next scheduled official conference of the Academy. The Nominating Committee (Executive Committee) shall present to the membership at the time of election (and earlier if it wishes), along with its own slate of nominees, the names of all persons properly nominated by petition.

Please note that the nominations of alternative candidates have to reach the EC (president@ia-pt.org) by the middle of April 2015.

IAPT conference, Pretoria, South Africa: 16 – 20 July 2015

We remind you that the theme for the 2015 Pretoria conference is *Practicing Ubuntu: Practical Theological Perspectives on Injustice, Personhood and Human Dignity*.

Everything is well on track for our next Conference in Pretoria. The local Hosting Committee and the two Universities hosting the conference, the University of South Africa and the University of Pretoria, are looking forward to receiving the Academy in our beautiful city. We invite you one more time to look at the Invitation to register on our website: <http://www.ia-pt.org/2015-conference/2015-conference-registration/>. We already have a good number of registrations, even though the deadline is only March 31, 2015. We are looking forward to have a well-represented group of members and guests at our conference.

The due date for the submission of paper proposals and abstracts was the end of December 2014. We received 68 paper proposals for the parallel sessions, and the process of reviewing them is well underway.

We also hope that you will make the most of your visit to our country by adding some sightseeing. Cape Town is almost a must on the itinerary of every visitor to South Africa. And so is a visit to a Game Reserve. We have given you the contact details in the abovementioned Invitation.

Scholarships for Pretoria Conference

A limited number of scholarships are available for members to assist with costs associated with attending the 2015 conference. Applicants need to email their funding request to the Treasurer (treasurer@ia-pt.org) and cc. the Program Chair (conference@ia-pt.org) by **January 31, 2015**. The request needs to include:

1. Affirmation that meeting attendance would otherwise be extremely unlikely for financial reasons.
2. A budget of anticipated expenses, indicating the amount you and/or your institution or external resources promises to contribute.

We would also like to draw your attention to the opportunity that all members have to **contribute to this scholarship fund**. If you are in a position to do so, we would urge you make a donation. You can do so by going to the IAPT website (<http://www.ia-pt.org/>) and then to the Membership tab, and then to 'Membership Fees and Donations'. Thank you for supporting this important work of our Academy.

IAPT Conferences 2017 and 2019

Although the venue and theme for the 2017 conference still have to be presented, discussed, and formally accepted at the Pretoria conference, you will understand that we have to plan for conferences at least two to four years down the road. We have started planning for the 2017 and 2019 conferences. Those who attended the 2013 Toronto Conference will remember that practical theologians of the “Nordic countries” (Finland, Iceland, Norway, Sweden) indicated that they are willing to host the 2017 IAPT conference in Oslo, Norway. The EC did not receive any other application to host the 2017, and thus proceeded with negotiations with representatives of the two host institutions, the University of Norway (Trygve Wyller) and the Norwegian School of Theology (Tone Kaufmann) and other colleagues from the Nordic countries. In order to ensure a more inclusive representation and greater involvement by practical theologians of the “Nordic countries”, the EC decided to recommend different chairs for the Host and Program Committee.

Chair of Program Committee: Auli Vähäkangas (Finland)

Chair of Host Committee: Trygve Wyller (Norway)

If Norway is formally accepted, these two Chairs will join the Executive Committee in accordance with the By-Laws.

The EC also decided to revisit a longstanding aim, namely to organize one of our biennial conferences in South America. The IAPT met in North America (1993, 1999, 2009, 2013), Europe (1995, 2003, 2011), Asia (1997), Oceania (2005) and Africa (2001, and the upcoming 2015 conference), but we have yet to meet in South America. This has proved challenging thus far, mainly due to the language barrier, but also the relatively low profile of practical theology as a distinct discipline in that context. In September 2014 I visited the theological school Faculdades EST in Sao Leopoldo, Brazil, with a mandate from the EC to investigate the possibility of a South American location for the 2019 IAPT conference. Fruitful discussions were conducted with colleagues from EST, in particular with Valburga Schmidt Streck, one of our long-serving members, and Julio Adams (not yet a member, but someone that is very active in promoting practical

theology and homiletics in the South American context). These colleagues will now further investigate the possibility of hosting the 2019 conference. We hope to get clarity on this before we meet in Pretoria in July.

Conference volume

The volume of essays deriving from the conference in Toronto promises to be exciting and will be available in July in Pretoria. It will be published by Lit Verlag in the Series *International Practical Theology* (<http://www.lit-verlag.de/isbn/3-643-90509-3>):

Pamela Couture, Robert Mager, Pamela McCarroll & Natalie Wigg-Stevenson (Eds.), 2015, *Complex Identities in a Shifting World: Practical Theological Perspectives*, Lit Verlag.

It includes essays from all keynote speakers, from selected members and guests, and visual images of much of the artwork collected for the conference art exhibit. A CD of the music prepared especially for the conference will accompany the volume and will be available at no cost to all people receiving the book in South Africa. It may also be ordered at a nominal cost from Emmanuel College by those receiving the book by mail and by the general public.

IAPT archives

After close to 25 years of life, the Academy needs to put its archives together. Documents from the 1990s and early 2000s are hard to find (conference programs, business meeting materials, minutes of executive committee meetings, etc.). If you happen to have some of these documents in your files, please contact the secretary, Robert Mager, at secretary@ia-pt.org.

2015-2016 dues now due

Lastly, a friendly reminder from our treasurer Neil Pembroke:

Members are reminded that the next round of dues (2015-2016) are now due. You can make your payment by going to the IAPT website (<http://www.ia-pt.org/>) and then to the Membership tab, and then to 'Membership Fees and Donations'. We all have the intention of paying up on time, but past experience indicates that it slips some of our minds. It would save the Treasurer quite a bit of time in following up people who have forgotten to pay if you would simply go to the IAPT site now and make your payment! Many thanks in advance.

We look forward to meeting many of you in Pretoria and wish you all of the best with the preparations for the conference. Please contact us at info@ia-pt.org or write to president@ia-pt.org if you have any questions, ideas or suggestions. We look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Jaco S. Dreyer', written in a cursive style.

Jaco S. Dreyer, South Africa (President)

On behalf of the Executive Committee:

Pam Couture, Canada (Vice President)
Robert Mager, Canada (Secretary)
Neil Pembroke, Australia (Treasurer)
Malan Nel, South Africa (Host/Program Committee Chair)
Constanze Thierfelder, Germany (Member at Large)
Faustino (Tito) Cruz, USA (Member at Large)