

Introduction

At its 2013 Perth meeting SNTS appointed William (Bill) Loader to be the successor to Bernard Lategan as Assistant Secretary for International Affairs (ASII). He formally took up this position 1 January 2014. The Perth Meeting already expressed appreciation to his predecessor, Bernard Lategan, and his successor has found every reason to reaffirm that appreciation as he has taken up from the excellent work which Bernard had achieved. The goals remain working with Liaison Committees covering areas beyond those where New Testament research has traditionally been strong and been well represented in SNTS, to promote biblical scholarship in these less developed regions, to identify potential SNTS members and mentor their development, to propose new members from their region, and to advise the SNTS Committee on their suitability. The particular needs and priorities of Liaison Committees (LC) vary as their regions are diverse. The Eastern European LC has a strong focus on interchange between Orthodox and wider scholarship and special projects related to the libraries in St Petersburg and Sofia. The African LC coordinates activities across a vast continent, anglophone and francophone, East and West Africa, and works within a broader institute promoting biblical scholarship. The Asia Pacific LC covers a vast range, culturally and geographically, and seeks to build strength in subregions. The Latin America LC operates in Spanish and Portuguese speaking context. Beside coordination with LCs the role of the ASII is also to seek to maintain and develop resources for people in the regions including the Electronic Library and to explore meaningful synergies to the same end with international organisations and institutions.

Regional Liaison Committees

Eastern European Liaison Committee

Belgrade Symposium

The 6th International East-West Symposium of Biblical scholars was held in Belgrade, 25-31 August, 2013, hosted by the Theological Faculty of Belgrade State University and officially inaugurated by His Eminence Bishop Irinej from Novi Sad and Bachka. The symposium was attended by 44 active participants from 20 countries, 24 of them coming from 13 different Eastern European countries. In addition to them about 40 attendees from the host institution and from other Serbian institutions (students as well as teachers) joined parts of the conference as well as two students from the neighbouring country, Croatia. 19 of the active participants are members of Orthodox churches, 15 from Protestant churches, 9 Roman-Catholics and one Anglican. The title of the conference was: "The Holy Spirit and the Church according to the New Testament". The program consisted of twelve scholarly papers devoted to the Holy Spirit in Luke-Acts, John and Paul, as well as in patristic exegesis and in the liturgies of the churches. The papers were given in pairs by one Orthodox and one 'non-Orthodox' (Roman-Catholic or Protestant) speaker and one public lecture, given by Prof. Tom Wright (St. Andrews). In addition there were three seminars, each consisting of three sessions, with leadership shared by Orthodox and non-Orthodox scholars. The seminars dealt with the Holy Spirit in Matthew and Mark, in Ancient Judaism and in second century Christian writings. Part of the program was an excursion to Novi Sad and to the Kovilj Monastery on the Feast of the Assumption of the

Theotokos, highlighted by attending the Liturgy lead by the Bishop Irinej. Morning prayers lead by participants from different confessions and the possibility to attend the regular Evening prayers in the Faculty also belonged to the conference program. The conference was sponsored by the Theological Faculty and the Orthodox diocese of Novi Sad, by the Evangelische Kirche in Deutschland and the diocese of Regensburg (Germany), by the Roman Catholic foundation 'renovabis' (Germany) and by foundations and churches in Switzerland. A conference volume will be published in the WUNT series with Mohr Siebeck (Tübingen).

Pre-Conference Szeged 2014

A pre-conference for younger Eastern European scholars will be held in combination with the SNTS General Meeting in Szeged on 4-5 August, 2014. Ten papers will be given by ten scholars from six different countries. The speakers invited as guests have also been invited to attend the SNTS General Meeting.

Libraries

The Bibliotheca Biblica St. Petersburg has received a number of books and periodicals from Finland (donations of Karl-Gustav Sandelin and the late pastor Antti Saarela's family), Switzerland (Ulrich Luz) and from Germany (books collected in Jena). In total 300 books were added to the electronic list (catalogue). In the academic year 2012/13, more than 150 readers were using the library facilities, among them 128 from outside St. Petersburg State University. A new director appointed by the State University Library has taken office at the Bibliotheca Biblica. According to State University's library regulation the computer-aided library system IRBIS is now used. Indexing of periodicals has been completed till the end of 2103. During the academic year, two MA students and two BA students received their degrees at the Biblical Institute and six new students have been enrolled in the Masters program.

The Bibliotheca Biblica Sofia has created a network to inform readers about new publications in the field of biblical scholarship by distributing catalogues from publishers. The electronic catalogue of books and periodicals is available on-line at the faculty website. See the report http://www.uni-sofia.bg/index.php/bul/fakulteti/bogoslovski_fakultet2/bibliotheca_biblica. In November 2012 the Biblical Library received a donation of 208 books and 180 volumes of periodicals from the personal collection of Michael Knibb (London). In 2013 the retired Professor Ivan Dimitrov (Sofia) donated part of his personal library, about 260 volumes, among them very rare editions. In the academic year 2012/13, about 370 readers were using the library facilities. All newly enrolled students are made familiar with the information resources of the Biblical library. Even some classes on biblical subjects were held in the library itself.

There has been a continuing, but slow inflow of books to both libraries. Both libraries come forward to their academic and church connected environments by several scholarly and educational activities (bible conferences, Summer schools, publications).

Committee Members: Karl-Wilhelm Niebuhr (Chair - Germany), Loveday Alexander (UK), Anatoly Alexeev (Russia), Reimund Bieringer (Belgium), Samuel Byrskog (Sweden), Andreas Dettwiler (Switzerland), Ivan Dimitrov (Bulgaria), James Dunn (UK), Christian Grappe (France), Carl Holladay (USA), Ivor Jones (UK), Christos Karakjolis (Greece), Hans Klein (Romania), Ulrich Luz (Switzerland), Vasile Mihoc (Romania), David Moessner (USA), Tobias Niklas (Germany), Puig I Tàrrrech (Spain), Lauri Thurén (Finland), Stelian Tofana (Romania), William Loader (ASII, ex officio – Australia)

African Liaison Committee

The African Liaison Committee (established 2004), under the leadership of Jean-Claude Loba-Mkole, has operated since 2009 within the framework of the *Institute of Scripture Studies*, where it is one of the three study units, New Testament Studies, Old Testament Studies and Scripture Translation Studies, and which has as its aim fostering “critical studies for correct understandings” while its mission consists of promoting “biblical scholarship for peaceful interactions”. Its focus is

- methodologically sound study of the Scripture in original or translated texts
- learning and teaching biblical original languages or any of the translation languages
- publishing locally and globally items which reflect the mission statement of the Institute.

The first annual ISS meeting took place on December 5, 2008 at Hekima College/Catholic University of Eastern Africa (Nairobi). Since 2009 ISS has usually held two meetings per year in Nairobi and surroundings on the last Saturdays of May and September. During the year 2013-2014, ISS has intensified its interactions outside of Kenya through academic meetings that were organized in South Africa at University of Pretoria and University of South Africa. Such meetings include the following (except one that took place in Nairobi):

- 16 January 2013: Lectures on exploratory of collaboration between Institute of Scripture Studies and Nida Institute of Biblical Scholarship (Hekima College, Nairobi): “Background and initial framework for biblical scholarship” (Joseph Crockett); “Reconstruction hermeneutics” (Jesse Mugambi)
- 12 August 2013: Public lectures (University of Pretoria): “Secondary orality in the Gospel of John” (Michael Labahn); “The triangle of rescue in Psalms” (Antje Labahn)
- 22 August 2013: Departmental lecture for NT Doctoral students: - “Greek Pronunciation according to Chris Caragounis” (Jean-Claude Loba-Mkole)
- 14 August 2013: *Colloquium Novum Testamenticum Pretoriae* (University of Pretoria): “What is the role of tradition in the formation of ethics in John” (Jan van der Watt); “Interculturality in Scripture exegesis and translation” (Jean-Claude Loba-Mkole); “Dialogical Self Theory and New Testament Interpretation” (Kobus Kok); “P. Oxy 840’s place among the trajectories of Early Christianity” (Erastus Jonker); “‘OT awareness’ and the textual tradition of the explicit quotations of Isaiah in Codex Bezae’s Acts” (Ronald van der Bergh); “Misleading connotations in the name ‘Lord’ from Tsonga Bible Translation” (Jeremy Nobela); “Critical dialogue with Zizek and Deuluze: Can we retroactively change history?” (Zoro Dube); “Jesus, the Son of Man figure as a narrative character in the Q-Document” (Michael Labahn)
- 10-13 September 2013: Annual Conference of the New Testament Society of South Africa (University of South Africa). The main topic of this conference was: “Interconnecting Discourses: Gender, Bible, Publics.” During this conference, a new sub-group was created under the title: Hermeneutics of Early Christianities. It aims at exploring interpretative tools that underline the production or exegesis of New Testament books and related literature
- 27 September 2013: International Translation Day Celebration (University of South Africa): “Missionary contribution to the development of South African translated literature. A case study of works by Reverends Adolphe Mabile and Tiyo Soga” (Neli Mzimba); “The development of isiZulu through borrowing” (Victor Ndlovu);-“The formulation of court interpreting models. A South African Perspective” (Sam Lebesa); “Optimality in Sesotho translation - The future of translation in Africa – discussion” (Ketiwe Ndhlovu).
- 6-7 March 2014: Pan African New Testament Congress (University of Pretoria). This conference revolved around the theme: Social justice in Luke-Acts.

A collective book on “Biblical Contributions to Peace-building Process” is in the process of being finalized. The publisher has been identified (Acton Publishers, Nairobi).

Future Plans

1. Increasing contacts with different associations of Biblical studies in Africa and finding ways of close collaborations.
2. Identifying and encouraging potential candidates for SNTS membership
3. Preparing a conference for Francophone New Testament Scholars from Francophone Africa (2015)
4. Preparing an International Symposium on Peace in Africa (2016)
5. Preparing a pre-SNTS conference for New Testament scholars from both Francophone and Anglophone (2017)

Committee Members: Jean-Claude Loba-Mkole (Chair), Richard Mutura Bairo (Secretary), Jesse Mugambi, John Ekem, Jean-Bosco Matand, William Loader (ex officio ASII).

Asia Pacific Liaison Committee

The Asia Pacific Liaison Committee (established 2010) held its inaugural pre-conference before the Perth SNTS Meeting and resolved to mount a regional conference in 2014. This duly took place 24-25 May, hosted by the Divinity School of Chung Chi College, the Chinese University of Hong Kong, and led by Eric Wong and his team of helpers. There were 23 participants, including the 7 members of the APLC, as well as 7 local student helpers and staff, thus a total of 30. 16 papers were presented, including 7 from APLC members. Beside the APLC members, participants came from Singapore, mainland China, Myanmar, and the majority from Hong Kong from a range of institutions. Feedback from participants was very positive, both for the excellence of the organisation and hospitality, for the opportunity for scholarly interchange and for the quality of the papers and their discussion. As a result there was strong support for mounting further conferences in other areas of the region. Accordingly APLC is planning a regional conference in Manila, Philippines, in 2015. The level of scholarship evident in some papers pointed to possibilities in the future of further nominations for membership from the region.

Committee Members: Eric Wong (Chair), Jey Kanagaraj, James McLaren, Boris Repschinski, David Sim, Paul Trebilco, William Loader (ex officio ASII). The Committee is seeking representation from Korea and Japan.

Latin America Liaison Committee

The Latin America Liaison Committee (established 2011) held an inaugural regional conference in Bogotá, 2012. The publication of the papers offered there is in train. The last twelve months have not been an active period for the LC, but discussions are underway about future development, membership of the LC, and the possibility of a second regional conference in 2015. At this stage it is envisaged that the LC will host a pre-conference before the SNTS Meeting in Montreal, 2016. With regard to constituency it has become clear that its region needs also to include the Caribbean nations.

Committee Members: Moisés Mayordomo (Chair), William Loader (ex officio ASII).

Sponsorships

For the Perth SNTS 2013 there was an allocation of funds at the level of 12 x GBP1200 for sponsorship of members and guests which help fund people to come to the pre-conference. For Szeged 2014 LCs were allocated sponsorships for which they could nominate people on the basis of

2 each for all except the Eastern European Liaison Committee which was allocated 6 and given the flexibility to treat 6 x GBP1200 as a budget which could be applied to cover the costs of approved sponsorees. This allocation made it possible for them to nominate to the ASII for approval for sponsorship: 5 members and 10 approved guests (1 for only the pre-conference), all covering their own travel costs, from Russia, Bulgaria, Romania, Hungary, Croatia, Slovakia, and Serbia). The remaining 6 approved sponsorships were for 5 members and 1 approved guest (Africa LC: 3; Asia Pacific: 2; Latin America: 1) from Nigeria, Ghana, Kenya, India, Hong Kong and Jamaica. The Treasurer's report indicates the total cost of the 2014 sponsorships (EELC 7200 + 6 sponsorships). Applications for sponsorship of members and guests are to be submitted to the Assistant Secretary for International Initiatives for approval in consultation with the Treasurer, and that applications for the approval of guests are to be submitted for presidential approval prior to this through the Assistant Secretary, Andrew Clarke.

Pre-Conferences

The pattern proposed for pre-conferences for the coming three years will depend on the decision to be taken by the Society concerning the location of the 2017 meeting. If the invitation to Pretoria is accepted then the pattern will be: Amsterdam (no pre-conference); Montreal 2015: Latin America LC pre-conference; 2017 Pretoria: Africa LC. Alternatively, the African LC could be invited to host a pre-conference at the Amsterdam meeting. Hopefully meetings in the following years might include one in the Asia Pacific region, should the Society so decide.

Electronic Library

By special arrangement with Stellenbosch University the SNTS Electronic Library facility has made it possible for scholars to become Research Associates of the Discipline Group Old & New Testament (DONT) of the Faculty of Theology. This has been in operation since 2011. The then ASII, Bernard Lategan, solicited names from Liaison Committee chairs and then proposed these to DONT who then registered them (60) for a three year period as Research Associates. The term of registration expired 31 January, 2014. The current ASII met with Professor Louis Jonkers of DONT in Baltimore in November, 2013, to discuss future options and issues of renewal. Of the 60 registered Research Associates very few had sought access and thus far only one has produced and registered a research publication. The registration and re-registration process entails a considerable amount of work for each application. The ASII accordingly made contact with Liaison Committee Chairs informing them of the need for re-registration and asking that they forward names of those who sought re-registration on the basis of being resolved to make use of the facility. As a result 14 have been re-registered or are in the process of being re-registered.

The appointment by the university of Research Associates serves a dual purpose: to assist scholars to remain up to date by accessing the library including via the internet to electronic resources such as journals and e-books and to generate income through publications which benefit both the university and the scholar. The RAs are obliged to "endeavour to publish on average at least one article per year in an accredited journal in the field of Old or New Testament studies". Registrations are conducted in March and August each year. There is an annual fee for registration of R200 (ca US\$20) which is currently still able to be covered by sponsorship fees through the Department.

The Electronic Library remains an excellent facility which we shall continue to promote, especially for the access it gives to journals (the pool of E-books is still relatively small). There has in

the meantime been a significant expansion of on-line resources, including through SBL International Cooperation Initiative (ICI) offering open access for people in “countries with a per capita GDP that is substantially lower than the average per capita GDP of the United States and the European Union” (partners: “Brown Judaic Studies, Catholic Biblical Association, Fortress Press, Gorgias Press, Sheffield Phoenix Press, Westminster John Knox Press **and** Wiley-Blackwell”) and JSTOR which has a tiered approach to costs in relation to accessing on-line material with zero costs for those identified as the poorest countries (but with limited offerings). The number of books available on-line for free access even under these schemes is still, however, relatively small. The ASII has sought to encourage wider participation by publishers in the SBL ICI scheme. The Theological Book Network, based in Grand Rapids, USA, channels donated books from libraries and publishers (including Brill, Eerdmans, Westminster John Knox, Augsburg, University of Notre Dame Press) to theological teaching and learning institutions in the “Majority World”, another useful resource for books in print (<http://theologicalbooknetwork.org/>). The Electronic Library arrangement with Stellenbosch remains the most effective form of access to on-line publications, especially journals, for scholars from the LC regions. Scholars seeking access to the Electronic library should approach the Assistant Secretary for International Initiatives, not the University directly.

William Loader

Assistant Secretary for International Initiatives

Recommendations

That the SNTS Committee

1. receive the report
2. express appreciation to the leaders of the Liaison Committees for their continuing work
3. congratulate Eastern European Liaison Committee on its mounting the pre-conference in Szeged
4. draw members’ attention to the opportunity to support the St Petersburg and Sofia Libraries through donations of books
5. authorise continuance of funding to provide for at least the equivalent of 12 sponsorships @ GBP1200 to assist members and approved guests from the Liaison Committees’ regions to participate in the annual meeting on the basis of financial need
6. draw members’ attention to the procedure that applications for sponsorship of members and guests are to be submitted to the Assistant Secretary for International Initiatives for approval in consultation with the Treasurer, and that applications for the approval of guests are to be submitted for presidential approval prior to this through the Assistant Secretary, Andrew Clarke.
7. draw to the attention of members in LC regions the provision for making application through the Assistant Secretary for International Initiatives for access to the Electronic library of Stellenbosch University and encourage them to make this known to New Testament scholars in their region