

MINUTES NETACT ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

On Wednesday 5 and Thursday 6 May 2021

The presentation team: The NetACT Offices prepared the zoomed meeting in the following way: Mr Fraser Jackson did the technical preparations to have a virtual meeting. The chair, Dr Madimbo led the meeting but was assisted by Dr Nico Mostert in presenting the agenda and in keeping everyone in tune with the protocols of our first virtual AGM and to our time frame. (**Addendum I** to minutes outlines the Zoom protocol posted by Dr Mostert). Dr Len Hansen guided us through the technicalities of adapting our constitution to the realities imposed by the Covid-19 pandemic. Prof Hendriks took the minutes and gave, where needed, additional information.

Attendance: see Addendum II of the minutes.

1 OPENING DEVOTIONS: After welcoming everybody, we divided into small groups and discussed Matt 5:13-16. The theme served as scriptural background to NetACT's goal of addressing corruption and leadership issues in our continent with the publication of *African Public Theology*. How do we get to the Africa God wants?

2 OPENING BY CHAIR: Dr Madimbo welcomed everybody to our first zoomed AGM. During the previous AGM, in July 2019 at SPU in Kenya, we planned to meet in July 2020 at the Africa Union headquarters in Addis Ababa in Ethiopia in order to present *African Public Theology* to the chair of the African Union. She reminded us of Proverbs 16 where it is clear that humans make plans but that the final decision of how things turn out is in God's hands. NetACT adapted remarkably during the time of the pandemic and its Associate Members like the Barnabas Fund and the Oxford Centre for Religion in Public Life stepped in to help our members financially and to adapt to the new world of virtual meetings and online teaching. The chair thanked them for their support. Our schools, churches and families lost dear ones during the pandemic. We prayed for all of them during a few moments of profound silence. The chair wished us a fruitful meeting and explained how we are going to choose the new leadership at the end of the meeting.

3 AMENDMENTS TO NETACT CONSTITUTION

The discussion on constitutional changes, necessitated by the pandemic, was led by our Executive Director, Prof Len Hansen. After a fruitful question and answer session, the new constitution was unanimously approved.

4 OTHER ARRANGEMENTS OUTLINED IN THE AGENDA

Points 1.3 to 1.7 were put to the AGM and accepted.

5 THE THREE MAIN REPORTS

5.1 Theology and Development Report: Noted

5.2 *African Public Theology* project

Reports were read beforehand. The regional groups spent an hour discussing 1) the introduction of the book and the implementation of the principles outlined in the book in public life; 2) the translation to French and Portuguese and 3) implementing the book as part of the curriculum taught at NetACT Institutions. Regions have to organize regional meetings (including deciding whether they will meet virtually or in a hybrid way and decide on a venue and time). After the regional meeting members have to replicate the process in their own countries and motivate church courts or

congregations to take the message to local levels and address their own contextual challenges.

5.2.3 Reports from Regions on their planned Regional Workshops:

5.2.3.1 NE Africa (Kenya, Ethiopia, South Sudan, DRC). Dr Nathan Chiroma and Seble Daniel (EGST) reported: Dr Teklu (one of the writers) shared about the content of the book as everybody in the groups has not yet read the book. It was mentioned that some institutions have not received their copies yet. They stress that presenting the book to the AU at the African Union (AU) Headquarters should be done because of the symbolic value of it and the connection between the book and the Africa 2063 vision of the AU. In NE Africa schools staff should be encouraged to read the book and to use the book in their curricula.

5.2.3.2 West Africa (the 14 Nigerian members) Sunday Agang chair, Godwin Etukumana reporting: They are working on how to launch the book in their region. Dr Agang has met with the Vice President, Yemi Osinbajo of the country (he is a pastor of a church, a lawyer and professor in law). A process was set in motion to present the book the President himself as well as to a previous president, Major-General Olusegun Obasanjo, who is very much involved in addressing the issues discussed in the book. The Vice President suggested that the book should be used as a key textbook at training institutions where it should set the standard as to moral and ethical values. They want to see to it that the book serves as a textbook in all their theological schools.

5.2.3.3 East Africa (Malawi, Zambia, Zimbabwe & Mozambique). Dr Madimbo chair. Dr Lukas Soko presents: They plan a regional meeting on or around October 2021 at ABC in Lilongwe with the Malawian president invited to open the meeting. All Christian denominations and organizations will be invited, welcomed and introduced to the book. The basic challenge will be to each country attending to replicate a book launch in their countries that will be specific, in other words where the specific chapters of the book will be addressed to the specific fields like law, business, education etc. The Malawi meeting will therefore act as a trial run. The workshop will then be replicated in Mozambique, Zambia and Zimbabwe but adapted to local and contextual realities. Following regional or national meetings where the book is introduced in general, follow-up meetings with specific groups should be envisioned. The group suggested that specific meetings with, for instance, government people, business people, people in education, in the media, etc. can be held to discuss with them how to implement moral and ethical principles in their fields of work. In the individual countries one should also apply these workshops at a local level in communities and use congregations to play a key role in organizing them.

5.2.3.4 Southern Africa. Len Hansen reported: They used David Tracy's model to discuss how the book should be applied in 1) The academic world. The four SA faculties of theology use the book as a textbook. They point out that all theological disciplines have a public theology face and, as such, need to guide society on how to be salt and light. The book can be used in all departments. 2) A process began where the churches are using the book for continuous theological training (continuous professional development). Authors of chapters are available for zoomed discussions. Alternatively, videos by the

authors are available and can be downloaded from the Huguenot College website. 3) Civil society should also be involved. This needs to be organized and still needs more planning.

5.2.3.5 Lusophone Africa (Angola in this case): Alberto Alberto emphasized the importance of translating the book into Portuguese. They want to launch it in the North, Central and South of Angola making use of already established events. At their June 2019 NetACT Regional Meeting NetACT members as well as members from all the important church organizations discussed addressing corruption and developing servant leadership. They decided to request their president, who is taking a stand against corruption, to open the main meeting where African Public Theology will be launched. It should then be a Portuguese translation that is on hand and available. SED at Dondi near Huambo in the central region will launch a meeting, ISTEEL in the South has an annual conference regularly attended by about 500 people. They will use this meeting to launch the book in the south. The two ecumenical bodies of Angola, the AEA (Alliance of Evangelical Churches in Angola) and CICA (the Angolan Christian Churches Council) will play a key role in the implementation of the content of the book.

5.2.4 General decisions taken:

- 5.2.4.1 Members that did not receive the books donated by Tyndale House Foundation and dispatched by Langham, should notify Prof Hendriks by email hjh@sun.ac.za.
- 5.2.4.2 The book should be officially presented at the AU to the chair of the AU. EXCO has to follow up on suggestions raised at the meeting. The new AU chair is the president of the DRC, Félix Tshisekedi. Our Ethiopian Members offered their support in attending to the local organization in Addis with the AU.
- 5.2.4.3 We need to work with the All Africa Council of Churches (AACC) in this regard and Nico Mostert should take this up with them.

6 Close of Meeting on Monday May 5 just before 17:00

The chair and Dr. Nico Mostert explained the nomination procedure for the executive positions. After a time of silent reflection, Nico closed in prayer.

THURSDAY MAY 6, 2021

1 OPENING. Attendants were welcomed and divided into groups for devotions. At 13:30 the chair welcomed everyone. The nominations received for chair and vice-chair were announced. Jurgens Hendriks & Len Hansen then apologised for not mentioning that we also need to vote for a new Executive Director. After discussions it was obvious that the natural person to select was Dr Nico Mostert and the Board unanimously accepted the proposal of Dr Agang seconded by Rev Silas Wanjala. Dr Hansen will continue to serve as the Stellenbosch Board Member. He is representing Stellenbosch at this AGM.

2 REPORT ON THE NETACT INTERNET PORTAL (NIP)

Fraser Jackson led the discussion on the NIP (Annual Report Pages 6-8), illustrated it on the Zoom Share Screen and answered questions. This session is available on YouTube at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7Tjv5SP7lo8> (beginning at 22:39).

All the NIP components can be reached from the NIP hub at hub.netact.org.za

3 THE NETACT OFFICE REPORT (REPORT PAGES 9-12)

3.1-2 The financial statements and Membership Fees

Dr Odendaal led the discussion and explained the statements with Dr Hendriks (Report Addendum II page 20). Our finances are administered and audited within the Stellenbosch University financial system. Because NetACT is a network of theological schools, donations to NetACT in SA (and those coming from the USA) are eligible for tax benefits.

Decisions taken unanimously after discussion:

The NetACT Executive should thank Stellenbosch University, the Barnabas Fund, Tyndale House Foundation and the Langham Trust for their support of NetACT.

3.3 The NetACT Offices

The way the offices work and communicate were explained and discussed. Noted.

3.4-3.7 NetACT House, Communication, Lecturer Exchange & Scholarships

These core functions of the network were discussed, questions were asked, explanations given and information supplied. Noted.

3.8 Publications

3.8.1 *Studying Congregations in Africa* (NetACT's first book publication) can now be downloaded as open source material in both English and Portuguese. The English version can be downloaded at:

https://libportal.netact.org.za/sites/default/files/Studying_Congregations_in_Africa_English.pdf

The Portuguese version is at:

https://libportal.netact.org.za/sites/default/files/Studying_Congregations_in_Africa_Portuguese.pdf

Dr Mostert took the lead in getting the book open sourced. Exco suggests that Dr Mostert takes the lead to form a team to write a follow-up publication. Those interested to partake in it should contact him. Noted.

Prof Hannes Knoetze, former NetACT Board member for North West University moved to the University of Pretoria as their professor in Missiology. He requests volunteers who want to work on a publication on Theological Education with a missional hermeneutic to contact him. Noted.

Agriculture as a program at theological schools was enthusiastically discussed. Dr Mostert mentioned the support from the Barnabas Fund in this regard. Agriculture provides an income stream and food at a number of NetACT institutions. The Board feels that we should focus on developing training and expertise in this field because of the importance of food security at our schools as well as in their local our communities. The NetACT Office should take the lead in this matter and provide guidance in developing expertise and leadership.

3.8.2 The Board discussed NetACT's relationship with Langham Publishers.

Langham's support to the church and theological schools in Africa helps all of us to deal with the challenge we are confronted with. The annual gift of free books to our schools (to

be chosen from their catalogue), the Langham scholarships, their enormous input in *African Public Theology* and their book distribution system were all mentioned. Dr Agang, one of their prominent authors, shared with the Board the request from the Langham leadership that we should take initiative by suggesting publication topics for our continent that address the issues on our agendas. He related the joy and appreciation with which the Nigerian Vice President received *African Public Theology* and how he immediately took initiative by suggesting how it should be distributed and used in Nigeria. Noted with appreciation.

Dr Hendriks highlighted two Langham Publications authored by Dr Agang dealing with Islam and minority groups as essential theological literature in our continent:

Agang, Sunday Bobai, 2016, *No More Cheeks to Turn?* Langham Publishers, Hippo Books, Carlisle, UK.

Agang, Sunday, 2021, *God of the remnant, the plight of minority ethnic groups in Africa*, Langham Publishers, Hippo Books, Carlisle, UK.

3.8.3 The African Theological Journal for Church and Society

The ATJCS report (check also Addendum V, pages 27-30) was a highlight to the Board as the second volume of the journal was digitally published during the meeting and was shown to the Board. With both the Editor in Chief (Dr Agang) and General Editor (Dr Gideon van der Watt) present, a lively discussion with questions and answers and suggestions ensued. The Journal envisages a third volume by September as well as special editions on specific topics. The ATJCS can only apply for the official registration as an accredited journal after several years of publication in which the quality and scholarly-academic contribution of the journal can be evaluated. The General Editor asked Board Members to send him names of people who are qualified to serve as peer reviewers. The Board discussion made it clear that we should all work hard to contribute to our journal and to establish a forum where an African agenda and discussion can help us to deal with the challenges we face and in pursuing our prophetic responsibility in our continent. Look at the new edition of the Journal at:

<https://atjcs.netact.org.za/index.php/netact> The first volume is at:

<https://atjcs.netact.org.za/index.php/netact/issue/view/1>

3.9 Curriculum & ACTEA

These issues were discussed and it was again and again emphasized how important it was that schools pay attention in their curricula and adapt training to address the ever-changing Covid-19 influenced world that we live in. The example of the PhD studies of Dr Kruger du Preez, who analysed the curricula of ten individual NetACT schools and helped them with the necessary transformation processes to be contextually relevant, was mentioned as an example worth repeating! Dr Mostert informed the Board of the close cooperation with ACTEA and the planned meeting with Dr Tarus (ACTEA ED) as soon as the lockdown situation makes it possible to meet and address our mutual concerns and challenges. Noted.

4 REPORT ON THE NETACT EXECUTIVE'S MEETINGS

4.1 **Condolences to Hartgerink family:** Noted.

4.2 **Membership statistics.** This led to a lively discussion. See Addendum III of the minutes. It was obvious that the numbers of some sections need to be checked

as there is an obvious discrepancy. An adjusted table will be presented in the minutes.

4.3-4 **Nigerian regional workshop issues:** Discussed. Noted.

4.5 **Writers Retreat and research centres.** Addendum X in the Annual Report led to another lively discussion on the workshop that was held, with financial support from Tyndale House Foundation, at the Andrew Murray Centre for Spirituality in Wellington, SA in Nov 2019. A follow-up was planned but the Covid pandemic prevented it from happening. Dr Agang then informed the meeting of the plans of the Overseas Council to help establish four research centres in Africa. Dr John Jusu (in Kenya at Africa International University) is leading the project. The West African centre is at JETS in Jos in Nigeria and Dr Agang is leading the project there. Dr David Ngaruiya (also a NetACT Board Member) is leading the West African centre in Nairobi. The central African centre is not yet established. The meeting suggested that the NetACT EXCO continue their conversation and cooperation in this regard with OC and suggests that the Southern African centre be established in Wellington at the Andrew Murray Centre for Spirituality. Proposal accepted.

4.6 **Chinese influence and neo-colonialism in Africa** to be discussed as one of the main topics at the 2021 regional workshops. Accepted.

4.7 **NetACT cooperation with Resonate Global Ministries:** Dr Mostert explained how the cooperation between the formerly known Christian Reformed World Mission and NetACT began in 2000 when NetACT was founded and continues. He is in conversation with Resonate as they are an Associate Member and are sponsoring our ATJCS journal.

4.8 & 9 Dealt with the continuous cooperation between NetACT and organizations like the Barnabas fund, the Oxford Centre for Religion in Public Life, Tyndale House and Langham publishers. Noted with appreciation.

5 NEXT ANNUAL MEETING

The board members of the Ethiopian Graduate School of Theology, Dr Theodros Teklu and Mrs. Seble Daniel, invited NetACT to convene their 2022 AGM at their institution in Addis Ababa in Ethiopia. We trust that the Covid-19 pandemic will allow us to do so in future. The Board requested the EXCO to investigate if it will be possible to have a physical AGM in 2022 in Addis. Accepted.

6 ELECTIONS

6.1 Dr Sunday Agang of JETS in Nigeria was elected as Chairperson of NetACT and Dr Nathan Chiroma of PACU in Kenya as Vice-Chair. Dr Nico Mostert was earlier unanimously accepted as the new Executive Director. The chair welcomed the new leadership and wished them well on behalf of all present.

6.2 Gindiri Theological Seminary and the Baptist College of Theology, Benin City, both from Nigeria, were unanimously accepted and welcomed as new members.

6.3 The Board expressed their thanks to several people for their contribution to NetACT.

Dr Hendriks thanked our outgoing Chair, Dr Maggie Madimbo, for her outstanding leadership over the most difficult period that the network ever experienced. All of NetACT rejoiced when Maggie and her husband Gilbert received a wonderful little baby, Emmanuel. We rejoiced in experiencing the same miracle that Abraham and Sarah were blessed with.

Dr Len Hansen thanked Dr Hendriks as he has been one of the founding members of NetACT. He is now in retirement but will continue to help when and where needed.

Several speakers thanked Fraser Jackson for the enormous contribution that the NIP is making and his hard work in leading the network into the new digital world.

In conclusion the new chair, Dr Agang, accepted the responsibility to lead the network with the new executive team. They will lead with humility and as servants and asked the network to support their leadership in prayer.

Reverend Alberto Alberto of ISTEEL in Angola and Kruger du Preez closed the meeting in prayer.

(Minutes by Dr Hendriks and edited by Fraser Jackson) 12 May 2021.

ADDENDUM I TO MINUTES. ZOOM ADVICE

From Nico Mostert, NetACT Office, to everyone:

Tips for Meeting Attendees

Mute your microphone and video Feed and only un-mute if you want to speak
To help keep background noise to a minimum, make sure you mute your microphone when you are not speaking.

Be mindful of background noise

When your microphone is not muted, avoid activities that could create additional noise, such as shuffling papers.

Position your camera properly

If you choose to use a web camera, be sure it is in a stable position and focused at eye level, if possible. Doing so helps create a more direct sense of engagement with other participants. Avoid sitting in front a window with the light from behind we cannot see you then

Limit distractions

You can make it easier to focus on the meeting by turning off notifications, closing or minimizing running apps, and muting your smartphone.

Avoid multi-tasking

You'll retain the discussion better if you refrain from replying to emails or text messages during the meeting and wait to work on that PowerPoint presentation until after the me

Prepare materials in advance

If you will be sharing content during the meeting, make sure you have the files and/or links ready to go before the meeting begins.

Monitor the chat function for questions as they come in, to see if people are expounding on something you covered, or to see if people are expressing poor understanding.

From nico mostert NetACT Office to Everyone: 12:59 PM

ADDENDUM II ATTENDANCE

Attendance is difficult to be precise about when one has a Zoom meeting. Many of our members had internet problems. One had to admit them to the meeting several times after they lost contact. Some members could simply not connect. Some attended partially – and then there were those that did not attend.

Our attendance list below is per country with those in red and not numbered those who did not or could not attend. We also provided as far as possible the names of all who attended per institution.

NetACT Members who attended the Zoomed AGM (members in red were unable to attend)

Angola (Portuguese Region)

Instituto Bíblico de Kaluquembe – Missão Urgente (IBK-MU),

- 1 Instituto Superior de Teologia Evangelica no Lubango (ISTEL), Rev Alberto L.S. Alberto;
- 2 Instituto Teológico da Igreja Evangélica Reformada de Angola (ITIERA). Pastor Campos Afonso,
- 3 Seminario Emanuel do Dôndi (SED), Principal's representative: Rev Coutinho Moma & Principal: Rev Adelaide Catanha

Democratic Republic of Congo (North-East Africa Region)

- 4 Université Shalom de Bunia; Dr Georges Pirwoth Atido, President:

Ethiopia (North-East Africa Region)

Ethiopian Full Gospel Theological Seminary

- 5 Ethiopian Graduate School of Theology (EGST): Theodros Teklu, Seble Daniel; Adamu Addissie; Lidetu Kafenie;

Kenya (North-East Africa Region)

- 6 Africa International University (AIU), Prof. James Nkansah-Obrempong (??)

Bishop Hannington Institute of Theology and Development studies

- 7 Carlile College, Principal: Patience Wanzala

Daystar University

International Leadership University (ILU)

Moffat Bible College (Moffat)

Orthodox Theological Seminary

- 8 Pan Africa Christian University. Head School of Theology: Dr Nathan Chiroma,
- 9 Reformed Institute for Theological Training (RITT), Principal: Rev Silas S. Wanjala

Scott Christian University (CSU)

- 10 St. Paul's University (SPU), Rev. Prof. Diphus Chemorion; Rowland van Es.

Lesotho (Southern Region)

- 11 Morija Theological Seminary (MTS). Rev. Zacharias Ramonotsi, Rev Majebo Moshoeshoe.

Malawi (Central East Africa Region)

- 12 Africa Bible College (ABC), VC: Dr Maggie Madimbo
- 13 Chancellor College, Dr. Jones Mawerenga

14 Josophat Mwale Theological Institution (JM TI), Principal: Rev. Dr. Leonard. C. H. Katundu

University of Livingstonia

Zomba Theological College

Mozambique ((Central East Africa Region)

15 HEFSIBA Mozambique, Principal: Rev dr Manasse Matiquele

Namibia (Southern Region)

Namibia Evangelical Theological Seminary (NETS)

Nigeria (West Africa Region)

Apokalupsis Theological College, Kafanchan, Nigeria

16 Baptist Theological Seminary, Kaduna; Dr. Moses Audi

17 ECWA Theological Seminary, Aba, Nigeria; Dr Godwin Etukumana

18 ECWA Theological Seminary Igbaja (ETSI). Provost: Rev Dr John Olu Adetoyese, Isaac Olukomogbon, Communications & Resource Development Officer

ECWA Theological Seminary Kagoro (ETS Kagoro)

Hugh Goldie Lay/Theological Training Institution Arochukwu (HGLTTIA)

19 Jos ECWA Theological Seminary (JETS), Prof Dr Sunday B Agang

20 Nigerian Baptist Theological Seminary; President: Rev. Prof. Emiola Nihinlola

21 Redeemed Christian Bible College, Provost: Rev Dr Babatunde Adedibu

22 Reformed Theological Seminary (RTS), Rev Peter Orngu

23 Theological College of Northern Nigeria (TCNN), James J Reynold

UMCA Theological College (United Missionary Church of Africa)

Gindiri Theological Seminary. , Gindiri, Plateau State Nigeria

24 Baptist College of Theology, Benin City, Rev Dr Samuel Olubenga Akinktola

South Africa (Southern Region)

25 Free State University (FSU), Dr Joseph Pali; Dean: Prof Dr Rantoa Letsosa

26 Huguenot College, Rector: Prof Nelus Niemandt, Dean: Dr Andre du Toit

27 North West University: Prof. Alfred Brunson

Pretoria University

28 Stellenboch University (SU), Prof Len Hansen

South Sudan (North-East Africa Region)

29 Nile Theological College, Principal: Rev. Santino Odong Othol, Rev Michael Obat Rev James Bol Obwonyo Padiet; Bob Rice; Andrew Kang

St John's College of Theology and Development

Zambia (Central East Africa Region)

30 Justo Mwale University (JMU). VC Dr Lukas Soko &

Zimbabwe (Central East Africa Region)

31 Domboshava Theological College, Principal: Rev Dr Roy Musasiwa

32 Murray Theological College (MTC), Rev Simbarashe Munamati

Reformed Church University

Rusitu Bible College

Associate Members who attended:

- | | |
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| 1. Barnabas Foundation & OCRPL | Rev Gavin Mitchell. |
| 2. Witness Ministry DRC family, Cape Region | Dr Kobus Odendaal. |
| 3. Partners in Mission (DRC Free State) | Dr Nico Mostert, |
| 4. Tearfund, UK | Dr Sas Conradie. |
| 5. The Reformed Family Forum | Dr Nico Mostert, |

NetACT Office members who attended:

Len Hansen, Executive Director

Nico Mostert, Bloemfontein

Jurgens Hendriks, Stellenbosch

Fraser Jackson, Wellington

On behalf of the Christian Literature fund: Dr Gideon van der Watt: ATJCS

Dr Hannes van der Walt of the Association for Christian Religious Practitioners wrote a very kind letter apologising for not being able to attend. Dr Nathan Chiroma also apologised for not being able to attend day 2 due to power-cuts in Nairobi.