

Editorial

In January 2023, representatives of the *Global Network for Theology and Religion* (GN) convened at the Faculty of Theology, Stellenbosch University. It was the third international conference of the network. In 2009, a founding meeting was held in Heidelberg, Germany, where a Memorandum of Understanding (http://globalnetresearch.org/cms/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/memorandum_of_understanding-1.pdf) was accepted by the institutions present. The main impetus behind the founding of the GN was prof dr. Michael Welker of Heidelberg University who—through the Research Center for International and Interdisciplinary Theology, University of Heidelberg (FIIT)—started forming personal networks from 2007. The first official meeting was convened on invitation of prof Welker—thus an informal group of representatives of institutions that had an interest to form such a Network. From the start, however, the GN extended an invitation to all institutions globally to apply for affiliation (see Welker, M, “The Global Network of Research Centers for Theology, Religious, and Christian Studies (2007–2019),” *Theology Today* 76/3, 2019:189-193). Presently, the Network consists of more than 45 research universities and institutions (<http://globalnetresearch.org/participating-universities/>).

The Global Network wants to foster their intellectual exchange by enabling doctoral students and post-docs to pursue their research at participating institutions for one or two terms. For this purpose, funding opportunities offered by member institutions are advertised in the Network (<http://globalnetresearch.org/funding-opportunities/>). The GN furthermore wants to foster their intellectual exchange by conducting multi-lateral colloquia on pressing theological questions.

A second conference of the GN was held at the Chinese University of Hong Kong, in January 2019. The theological theme that stood central was “Family in Cultural Transitions.” The papers of that conference were published as Volume 76/3 in *Theology Today*. It was decided at a business meeting at the Hong Kong meeting that the next conference would take place in Stellenbosch, in 2022. Due to the Covid pandemic, the meeting was postponed to January 2023.

The local organizing team decided on the following theme for the Stellenbosch conference: “A God of Justice and Reconciliation? Multidisciplinary Theological Perspectives.” Participants were invited to present a perspective on this theme from their own disciplinary angles. A total of thirteen international colleagues, together with twelve South African scholars delivered papers. Some of these papers are published as peer-reviewed articles in this volume of the *Stellenbosch Theological Journal*.

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A next conference of the GN will take place at the Pontificia Universidade Catolica do Parana (PUCPR), Curitiba Brasilia, on 2-9 February 2026. The theme will be “History – Memory – Places of Memories.” More information will be published on the GN website.

Louis C. Jonker
Guest Editor