

## NIME – future directions?

Lund May 2010

Dear NIME member institutions and members of NIME network,

Nordic Institute for Missiological and Ecumenical Research is a network of all major Nordic institutions involved in academic study of missiology and ecumenism. NIME has no personal members but a good number of researchers, professors and other teachers are all very committed to the NIME study objectives. For a couple of decades, NIME has functioned as a forum for conversation, getting together, and for coordinating common strivings, most notably the (pre-Internet times') bibliographies and the ongoing NIME study days, doctoral courses and conferences. As a network it has an ultra-light structure with very low running costs, and its level of activity has been dependent on the board, especially the chairperson and the secretary. Therefore, the level of activity in NIME has been varying between mere annual general meeting and more active years.

From time to time it is useful to ponder the present structures and policies and in the NIME board we now feel that time has come to take up this task. From our perspective, NIME is in a crossroad. One of the reasons is that the Swedish Institute of Mission Research (SIM) which has been administering NIME funds will probably be closed down in 2011. At any rate, NIME will need to find a new solution at least concerning its financial administration. In this situation a useful starting point is to map the views of members and other stakeholders.

The present board is ready to activate NIME but for that purpose we need to hear your voice. Below, I have listed a number of questions that I would ask you kindly to answer via e-mail ( [mika.vahakangas@teol.lu.se](mailto:mika.vahakangas@teol.lu.se) , copy to [jaj@teol.ku.dk](mailto:jaj@teol.ku.dk) ).

<b>1. NIME rationale:</b>		
	What should NIME exist for, in your view?	
<b>2. NIME activities:</b>	In what kind activities do you wish NIME to be involved?	
	In which role?	
<b>3. NIME organisation:</b>	On ad hoc or permanent basis?	
	In which direction do you wish NIME to develop organisationally:	
	<i>1. Network</i> 1a. Continue as a loose network of research active institutions in mission studies and ecumenism. 1b. Continue as a network of institutions but opening to individual members, too. 1c. Becoming a researchers' network, dropping out	

	institutional membership.	
	<p><i>2. Association</i></p> <p>2a. Registering NIME as an association having institutions as members.</p> <p>2b. Registering NIME as an association and opening up the membership to individual researchers.</p> <p>2c. Registering NIME as an association only for individual members.</p>	
	<p><i>3. Institute</i></p> <p>Mapping out the plausibility of establishing NIME as an institute. (If opting for this, propose also how to obtain the necessary resources.)</p>	

Below I have listed some of the pros and cons of the different dimensions of the alternatives – please correct me if you think I have misinterpreted things and add different points in favour or against the various alternatives:

- *Institutional vs. individual membership*: Institutional membership is useful in securing funding (even if modest) whereas it does not produce commitment and activity. Individual members could bring more vibrancy and commitment to NIME. Individual members would cause considerable increase in administration (membership records, membership fees etc.). Individual membership would also make NIME more democratic and transparent – it would be known who are the members, and all members would have the right to vote.
- *Network – association – institution*: Network is the lightest version in terms of administration but hinders activities as a legally recognized body, e.g. applying and administering of funds for courses/conferences. NIME administration is constantly dependent on other institutions to take care of its finances. Administering them via universities involves a considerable cost in form of overheads. Association would grant the legal status while the bureaucracy and costs could be kept at a low level. At the same time, there would be no additional administrative etc. resources. Institution would presuppose premises and at least a part-time employee, multiplying bureaucracy but giving such a level continuity that is missing from fully voluntary organisations.

I hope to get your **feedback by the end of May 2010**. Your feedback, as well as feedback from the researchers involved in NIME activities will serve as the basis for discussions about NIME future direction in the 2010 **Annual General Meeting** to be held in Lund (Centre for Theology and Religious Studies, Allhelgona Kyrkogata 8, sal 118, ground floor) at **3 pm on the 28<sup>th</sup> of September 2010**.

Please, remember also that NIME will organise a **PhD course** under the title “The Future of Missiology” 24.-27. May 2011. We will have exciting guest lecturers participating also in work in smaller groups like Brian Stanley, Heikki Räisänen and Joel Robbins. All PhD students and their advisers are warmly welcome.

Yours,

Mika Vähäkangas, chairperson of NIME

Allhelgona Kyrkogata 8  
22362 Lund  
SWEDEN

[Mika.vahakangas@teol.lu.se](mailto:Mika.vahakangas@teol.lu.se)