

Geneva, 23 September 2011

Globethics.net and World Council of Churches launch global online theological resource

Jointly issued by Globethics.net and the WCC



A unique and ambitious web-based theological resource was launched in Geneva on 23 September by the World Council of Churches (WCC) and Globethics.net. It aims to redress a global imbalance of access to research materials in theology and related disciplines.

The Global Digital Library on Theology and Ecumenism (GlobeTheoLib) contains several hundred thousand articles, documents and other academic resources that can be accessed online free-of-charge by registered participants from anywhere in the world via Internet (www.globethics.net/gtl).

“The time has come to launch a new model of ecumenical sharing of theological resources in order to prepare world Christianity for the 21st century,” said the WCC general secretary, the Rev. Dr Olav Fykse Tveit.

GlobeTheoLib is intended to use new digital models of information exchange to make the theological voices and resources of the global South more visible and accessible, across national, cultural and denominational barriers.

It uses the electronic platform of Globethics.net, the Geneva-headquartered organization that already holds more than 650'000 full-text documents in its Global Digital Library on Ethics.

Redressing the balance

Prof. Dr Christoph Stückelberger, the founder and executive director of Globethics.net, said GlobeTheoLib represents a determined attempt to redress the balance in global knowledge transfer.

“GlobeTheoLib harnesses the potential of the internet to offer theological research and education new possibilities for international networking, exchange and digital sharing,” said Stückelberger.

GlobeTheoLib provides access to journals, books, training materials, and theses and dissertations on theology and ecumenism. It also gives registered participants the opportunity to submit their own documents and publications to share with others from around the world.

The project is supported by a consortium that includes associations of theological libraries and seminaries, as well as mission organizations, foundations, Regional Ecumenical Organizations, and Christian World Communions. The project has been co-initiated and planned by the WCC programme on Ecumenical Theological Education (ETE).

“GlobeTheoLib offers a new and creative opportunity to promote the sharing of theological perspectives between fast-growing churches in the global South as well as with churches and theological institutions in the North,” said the Rev. Dr Dietrich Werner, the international project coordinator for ETE.

Content for GlobeTheoLib comes from four major sources: commercial publishers with whom GlobeTheoLib has subscriptions to make content available to registered participants; rapidly growing Open Access repositories; partner institutions that make their own resources available via GlobeTheoLib; and registered participants who are able to submit their own documents to the library.

The technical implementation of the Globethics.net libraries has been undertaken by Pointsoftware in Zürich, specialists in online libraries and data management.

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The World Council of Churches brings together 349 Protestant, Orthodox, Anglican and other churches representing more than 560 million Christians in over 110 countries, and works cooperatively with the Roman Catholic Church.

Globethics.net is a global network that promotes the exchange of insights and research on ethics and values between experts, institutions, and individuals, and whose International Secretariat is based in Geneva.