



ONS KENMERK --
LEUVEN, 19 September 2008

Report about the activities of the Teaching Chair for Pastoral Ministry with the Deaf, Academic Year 2007-2008

1 Introduction

In view of the meeting of the board of ICF on September 26 to 28, 2008, this report is written before the official beginning of the new academic year 2008-2009.

My main activities during the academic year 2007-2008 were:

- Giving lectures
- Making contacts
- Preparing publications
- Making a website
- Service to the deaf community.

1.1 Lectures

Three courses were given, the same courses as during the preceding years.

The course about Pastoral Ministry with the Deaf and Partially Hearing, two hours weekly, was given in the Flemish programme of the Faculty of Theology. The course was attended by 10 students, and two students followed the course by self-study. All students were in the programme of Pastoral Studies. None of them had had professional contacts with the deaf; some of them had personal contacts with deaf people, either in the family or as friends. A part of the course was followed by a deaf student from the Netherlands, who wanted to register at the University only for this course. Registration did not succeed, however, because she did not meet the admission criteria for an academic programme. The topics treated were essentially the same as in other years, although every year the content of each topic is adapted and made more up to date:

- Deafness made visible: about the necessity of a special course about pastoral ministry with the deaf; history of deaf people in several parts of the world; the role of the Churches in the early emancipation of the deaf.
- An enabling view on deafness: about two different views on deafness, the medical-audiological view, the social view and the cultural view on deafness; deafness as a world view, a cosmology; consequences for pastoral ministry.
- The consequence of deafness for persons' functioning: communication and the effects of poor communication on personal, social, religious development; deafness and literacy; visual orientation; religious experience of deaf people.
- Deaf people and their language: about a view on language for pastoral ministry, language as instrument of dialogue and encounter or as crystallisation point of alienation; aspects of conversation from heart to heart; sign language as a religious and liturgical language.



- The self-experience of deaf people: What do deaf people tell about themselves? The place of deafness in deaf people's life journey; aspects of counselling with deaf people; how can deaf and hearing people meet each other really?
- Models of pastoral ministry with the deaf: the place of deaf persons in the community of believers: deaf Churches; pastoral ministry with the deaf as contextual ministry; the role of deaf lay people and deaf leadership.

One of the students decided to write a Master's thesis about Sign Language as a religious and liturgical language. The thesis will be published on the website of the Chair.

Like preceding years, a course of one hour weekly, "Religion, Meaning, and Philosophy of Life", was given in the third year of the Bachelors' programme in the Department of Audiology and Speech Therapy. The following topics were treated:

- Who do people with functional impairments view themselves? The deconstruction of the concept of disability. The views of theologians with a disability were discussed, like Nancy Eiesland (physically disabled), John Hull (blind), Cyril Axelrod and Peter McDonough.
- What is language and communication from the viewpoint of religion, meaning and philosophy of life?
- Mainstreaming, the language debate, and cochlear implantation: backgrounds of the difference in ethical evaluation between deaf and hearing people.
- The religious life of deaf people; deafness and liberation theology.

For the evaluation of the course students had to write a paper with six statements, from which I chose two for a discussion during the examination.

A third course, two hours weekly during the second semester, was given together with my colleague Prof. Axel Liégeois, "Pastoral Work in Care Services: Practical Issues". Prof. Axel Liégeois and I discussed the fact that in reality we treat very different topics. Prof. Liégeois presents the viewpoint and the identity of the pastor and the institution within which the pastor is working, and he speaks from the viewpoint of institutional care. I try to present the viewpoint of the client, the identity of the client, and my perspective is clients' emancipation and empowerment. We discussed if we should propose to the Faculty to separate our courses, but that would have the disadvantage that both courses would become courses given in alternating years. Now, we have access to all students in the programme of pastoral theology, as well in the Flemish programme as in the international programme.

Like in former years, I made a choice for more general topics that were applied on the field of deafness. The following topics were treated:

- Conversation with people in their actual life situation. Disability is a world-generating condition that makes that people with a disability live in a different world than pastors who mostly not are disabled. Is it possible for such a pastor to enter into a real dialogue with his clients? Many aspects of the lives of people with disabilities are outside the realm of Christian tradition; by consequence a pastoral ministry that focuses on correlation of Christian tradition with elements of people's own lives and culture, fails.
- The language of presence. Speech, hearing, language, words play a central role in Jewish-Christian tradition, and for some people they are even the core of that tradition. This risks to make Christian tradition *logocentric*, and inaccessible for people with problems with speech, hearing, spoken/written language, narratives. A different view on Christianity is presented, more in line with low verbal people's experience and postmodern culture, in which communion and belonging are central. For pastors, that means that their main tool is not language, but being present to people and the capacity of building up community.
- Ways towards participation in life. The movement for the emancipation of people with disabilities has led to better accessibility of education, labour, social services and Churches. Accessibility, however, is only a first step. Physical presence and integration do not guarantee full participation. Integration may be based on normal standards that see an *ableist* perspective as the only perspective that makes sense, whereas the perspective of so-called normal people is only one of the many possible perspectives. Participation respects people's own culture and perspectives.



- Case study.
- Collaboration in ministry. The place of people with functional impairments in the community; accessibility, empowerment and liberation theology; integration and plurality; pastoral ministry and the deaf community.

For the evaluation of the course students had to write for my part of the course a paper with six statements, of whom I chose two for discussion during the examination. Students were from Belgium, Poland, Ukraine, Lithuania, Nigeria, Uganda, India, Sri Lanka, Philippines, Singapore, and Vietnam.

1.2 Publications

Three articles were published and one submitted to international peer-reviewed journals in the field of theology.

One article, "The Presence of God in the Deaf Community", had been submitted to the editorial board of Louvain Studies in 2007. In spite of repeated attempts to contact the director of the editorial board, no response was obtained, neither positive nor negative. Therefore, I decided to withdraw the manuscript and to submit it to Gregorianum. Gregorianum accepted it, and the article will be published in 2009.

The article, "A liberating approach of human contingency", that had been submitted and accepted by Gregorianum, was published in February 2009. This article proposes to use the concept of human contingency, the unavoidable fact that no human person is perfect, and that every person is more or less subject to human contingency. Even Jesus Christ as a human person was limited: he was a man, a Jew, a hearing person in a hearing world, a sighted person in a sighted world, and his risen body is a violated body. The fact that this contingent human person is an image of God should not be based on an image of God that we design in words based on individual or social characteristics of people, but on God himself, who is beyond knowledge and words. That God can be discovered in a community of people that accepts difference and contingency and the relativity of people's own worlds.

An article, "Worlds of difference", that had been submitted to Ethical Perspectives, a journal on ethics edited by KU Leuven, was accepted and published in March 2008. This article describes that hearing people and deaf people often have different views on central topics in the approach of deaf persons: mainstreaming / inclusion, communication, medical-audiological treatment of deafness, especially cochlear implantation. These different views may lead to very different ethical analyses of these themes. The article tries to put these differences into a framework, based on the observation that deafness and normal hearing are what is called by the blind theologian John Hull, "world generating conditions". Deafness and normal hearing lead to a different perception of the world, different worldviews, different choices in life, and to different worlds. Both worlds are not absolute and have to be put into perspective. When worldviews become absolute, a hearing view becomes audism, and a deaf worldview becomes deaf fundamentalism. Neither of them succeeds in realising their goals. The article proposes to bring both worldviews into negotiation and a dialogue based on equality. This may lead to cooperation and a mutual understanding, without the expectation, however, that for a hearing person it will be possible to understand completely a deaf worldview, and for a deaf person a hearing worldview.

Two contributions were written for books.

In the Liber Amicorum that was offered to Prof. Lambert Leyssen, professor of Sacramentology in the research unit of Pastoral Studies, at the occasion of his retirement, an article was published, "Waar taal en verhalen falen: doven in gesprek met een horende (?) God" (Where language and narratives fail: deaf people in conversation with a hearing (?) God). An English version and adaptation was submitted to the journal Questions Liturgiques/Liturgical Questions. The editorial board gave some suggestions for adaptation.



For a book to be edited by Goedele Van Edom, researcher in the Research Unit of Pastoral Studies, about embodiment, a chapter was written about the liberative views on embodiment and disability of theologians and other people with disabilities. In this article, it is described that in outdated views, disability is seen as an aspect of imperfection of human persons, a sign that human persons are still to be redeemed. Therefore, we say that in God's Kingdom that is to come, the deaf will hear and the blind will see. From an *ableist* view, that is a message of hope, but for people with disabilities that is a message of non-acceptance. Moreover, it is not in line with the story of Christ's resurrection, in which the risen body is a damaged body. The risen body is not a perfect body; if it were, incarnation would be undone. Disabilities are simply an aspect of the created reality of the human person. They may form the core of people's identities, and such they are a core aspect of people's resurrection. In this sense, disability may become a symbol of wholeness of the human person, and a contracultural message in a culture haunted by perfect body fetishism.

A presentation and a paper on Deaf Liberation Theology have been prepared for the conference, "Deaf and Other Lives: Living in Multiple Cultures", organised on September 25 - 26 at Amsterdam (NL), by the Amsterdam School for Social Science Research (ASSR) of the University of Amsterdam, at the occasion of the Deafness Visibility Week.

1.3 Expansion of the Chair

In 2005, the former Dean of the Faculty of Theology, Prof. Lamberigts, proposed to ICF that the Chair would be expanded. The board of ICF succeeded at finding funds for an expansion towards 40%; this expansion will start from October 1, 2008, i.e. the beginning of the new academic year.

In view of the expansion of the Chair, the board of ICF asked me to present a strategic plan for the coming years. This plan was presented to the board on its April 2008 meeting at Washington DC, and has been published on the website of the Chair, <http://theo.kuleuven.be/icf>, and is added as an appendix to this report. In this strategical plan, four elements of the general policy of the Chair are described:

- Preference for internationalisation over activities restricted to Western Europe,
- Relevance for the practice of Pastoral Ministry with the Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing,
- Being a resource centre,
- Involvement of deaf persons

These elements of general policy are applied to the core tasks of the Chair, teaching, research and service. As to research, the strategical plan proposes to study a limited number of examples of good practice in different cultural context. This study should be done stepwise in a qualitative way. This means that no quantitative research with an experimental design is done. Cultures, general and Deaf Culture, within which pastoral ministry take place, would be too different and too different model of pastoral ministry might be used for application of a quantitative experimental design. The board of ICF proposed that the choice of examples of good practice would not be Eurocentric.

1.4 Contacts and other activities

In June, I had the opportunity to participate in the International Deaf Pilgrimage to Rome, organized by ICF, a two-day programme, with on the first day a Papal audience in the morning and in the afternoon a meeting about the theme "Being Disciple of Christ in the Global Deaf Community", with contributions from deaf persons involved in pastoral ministry in various countries: England, Mexico, Ireland, South-Africa, Korea, Germany. On the second day, there was an international Eucharist for the deaf in Saint Peter's Cathedral, and in the afternoon, international deaf club.

The international meeting on the first day showed that the situation of deaf communities in various countries is very different. In Mexico, the International Conference of ICF in 2003 had given a boost to the Catholic deaf community; it had been a crucial moment of empowerment, after which the Catholic



deaf community has taken its responsibility and set up various activities in the fields of catechesis, liturgy, diakonia and community building.

In Ireland, it had been stated that the era of oral deaf education had led to a discontinuity in the Catholic deaf community. Interviews about deaf persons' personal faith development and involvement in Church life, had shown that in spite of participation in Church activities, in orally educated deaf persons no relation was found between faith and personal life. The situation of deaf persons in Germany could be described as isolation and dispersion, since German culture had stressed for a long period of time integration of deaf people into hearing society. Deaf people involved in pastoral ministry with the deaf often feel themselves more a kind of social and community workers than pastors, because the first thing that deaf people want to know during a pastoral visit, is news about other deaf people. Only after that, there is a possibility of faith communication.

In Korea, there is one young deaf priest. In Korea, evangelical Churches have established services for the deaf since many years. The Catholic Church neglected pastoral ministry with the deaf, and Catholic pastoral ministry with the deaf meant poor sign language use and poorly skilled interpreters. By consequence, many deaf people, especially young deaf people, converted to these evangelical Churches, because those Churches are more aware of Deaf Culture, have more persons with good Sign Language skill, and better interpreters, and proselytise among the deaf. Now, a work of recovery has started, with the danger of a burnout when the work has to be done by very few persons.

I had the possibility to give a modest contribution to these days. Through personal contacts, I had the possibility to lay a contact between ICF and those people who are in charge of the use of Saint Peter's Cathedral for liturgical celebrations. I tried to organise also a travel for deaf people from Flanders and the Netherlands to Rome. The result was very modest: only four people. From Flanders, a deaf pilgrimage to Rome had taken place in November 2007. From the Netherlands, a deaf pilgrimage to Lourdes had been planned in the same period of time.

On September 25, I shall participate in a conference, organised by the Department of Sociology and Anthropology of the University of Amsterdam, "Deaf and Other Lives: Living in Multiple Cultures". The focus of the conference is on what it means to live in and between multiple and changing cultures. The keynote speakers are deaf authors of international standing, such as Karen Nakamura, author of "Deaf in Japan: Signing and the Politics of Identity". In my opinion, it is a rather exceptional fact that the University of Amsterdam, a secular university in a secular city, accepts a paper about a religious or theological topic. On the first day of the conference, I am the only hearing presenter. Next to my presentation, there are two other presentations from Belgium, one by Annelies Kusters, deaf, who studied cultural anthropology at KU Leuven, and Maartje De Meulder, deaf, who studied educational psychology at the University of Ghent. Both of them work now at the department of Deaf Studies of the University of Bristol.

Leuven, September 19, 2008

Marcel Broesterhuizen



APPENDIX A

Strategic Plan for the ICF Chair for Pastoral Ministry with the Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing at KU Leuven

1. Introduction

In its last meeting, ICF asked me to present a strategic plan for the Chair, also in view of the expansion of the Chair, to 40% on the basis of the funds found until now, or to 50% if additional funds are found. I am happy to present here such a plan.

A Chair has three main goals: academic teaching, research and service. These goals are realised by practical activities, that are not carried out in a spirit of mere pragmatism, but on the basis of a well-chosen policy. This policy is described first in this strategic plan, and then the application of it on the main goals of the Chair.

2. General Policy

The general policy that this Chair follows, has four elements:

- ♦ Preference for internationalisation over activities restricted to Western Europe.
This is a logical consequence of the fact that ICF is an international organisation. This preference is guaranteed by the fact that KU Leuven¹ is one of the few Catholic universities with an international character, having a strong international programme. The majority of students in the international programme are from those countries in which ICF has not yet a basis (African countries, Southern Asia, Eastern Asia, Eastern Europe). Moreover, an international approach with respect for diversity is in line with the traditionally open attitude of the University with its tradition of liberation theologies, Gutierrez and Sobrino being alumni of KU Leuven.
- ♦ Relevance for the practice of Pastoral Ministry with the Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing.
The primary task of an academic chair is scientific reflection, also fundamental scientific reflection. This reflection is directed on experiences, questions and themes that come forth from the concrete life of deaf persons, deaf communities and pastors in the field. It has, however, to be clearly more than the mere transmission of skills and knowledge about deafness developed by other sciences (psychology, sociology, cultural anthropology, medicine) to those who want to prepare themselves for pastoral ministry. As far as possible, students should be given at least the intuition an inside view in the life of deaf persons and communities as a *locus theologicus*. Students should develop a certain level of *deaf awareness* and insight in the pitfalls for pastors working with the deaf.
- ♦ Being a resource centre.
Although most European atlases represent Europe almost as the centre of the world and out of proportion, for the majority of humankind Western Europe is just an outpost. That has consequences for the content of the programme, but also for the way in which insights and information gathered by Chair should be made and available and accessible for people in other parts of the world. By consequence, the "official" language of the Chair should be English (and if it were possible Spanish), and not a regional language such as Dutch, French or German. Publications should be made available by means of the internet, preferably in English.
- ♦ Involvement of deaf persons.

¹ The official name of the Catholic University of Louvain is KU Leuven, KU being the abbreviation of Catholic University, and Leuven the Flemish word for Louvain.



One of the goals of ICF is empowering deaf people and making them aware of their dignity as full members of Church and society. Involvement of deaf persons should be a central goal, and might take place in several ways: participation in the courses, participation in activities of the Chair, and service. At the moment, participation in the courses as students is rather difficult. In Flanders and the Netherlands, there are rather few deaf young people who meet the requirements for admission to an academic study, and these requirements are hardly negotiable. Moreover, deaf youth in these countries is very secularised, most of them living in a world that is remote from Christian tradition. Involvement has to be an enduring goal.

3. Application on the core tasks of the Chair

The core tasks of the Chair are teaching, research, and service.

a. Teaching

The primary task of the Chair is teaching. At the moment, there are three courses given by the Chair:

- “Pastoral Ministry with the Deaf and Partially Hearing”.
In the uneven years, this course is given in English and in the even years in Dutch. In the international programme, the number of students is larger than in the Flemish programme, which is logical. Four points should be discussed with the Faculty’s programme committee:
Firstly, that the course might be given each year in English, also for the Flemish students. That might lead to a slight decrease of Flemish students, especially those in Master programmes that do not give direct access to the doctoral (Ph.D.) programme, i.e. the Master programmes for teachers of religion and for practical theology.
Secondly, that the name of the course be changed in “Pastoral Ministry with the Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing”, which seems to be more in line with how people call themselves.
A third point to be discussed is whether the programme, which can be followed in the form of guided self-study with additional practical assignments, can be followed by students living in other countries, by means of tele-learning.
A fourth point to be discussed is whether it is possible to depart from the rule that students who want to follow the course in the form of a credit contract, should meet the complete requirements for admission to an academic programme. If admission might be obtained also by means of a *colloquium doctum*, an admission examination, participation of deaf persons might be better possible.
- “Pastoral Work in Care Services: Fundamental Issues” and “Pastoral Work in Care Services: Practical Issues”. These courses, both of 26 contact hours, are given in English and are combined courses for the international and the Flemish programmes. I share these courses with my colleague Prof. Axel Liégeois – both of us give 13 hours of each course. There is a logical relationship between both courses, of which one is given in the even years and one in the uneven years. These courses substituted a course that I gave during the first two years, which was a duplicate of the Flemish course for Pastoral Ministry with the Deaf and Partially Hearing, for students in the programme of Advanced Academic Formation, a programme with a rather small number of students. A course shared with Prof. Axel Liégeois was strongly wished by the Faculty’s programme committee, and was neither my nor Prof. Liégeois’s choice. I feared an overlap with the course for Pastoral Ministry with the Deaf and Partially Hearing, and I felt some tension between the goal of this course and the goal of the Chair. From the other side, it is a course that is followed by all students in the programme for pastoral theology. For this course, I chose themes that start broader than deafness, but most concrete applications are given in reference to deaf people. These themes are: the deconstruction of the concept of disability, logocentrism in Christian culture, functional impairment and worldview, what are language and communication about, the impossibility of the correlation paradigm in a highly secular culture or with the worldviews of people with functional impairments. The goal of these courses is to develop in students a first, global awareness that the world of normally hearing persons or persons seemingly without functional impairments is not the only world that can be conceived, and the world view of so-called normal persons is not absolute



and should be put into perspective, and the practical consequences for pastoral ministry are discussed.

- “Religion, Meaning, and Philosophy of Life”: the Faculty asked me to give this course in the third year of the Bachelor’s programme for Speech Therapy and Audiology in the Medical Faculty. Since KU Leuven is a Catholic University all students in all departments have to follow these courses, which are as much as possible related to the study in that specific department. The themes that I treat in that course are: toward a Christian view on functional impairment, language and communication in relationship to religion and meaning of life, ethical issues in the field of deafness, and religion in Deaf culture.

Each year, these courses are prepared extensively. Course texts with literature references are prepared carefully and provided to the students through Blackboard. From year to year, course texts are reworked and made up-to-date, in order to make them a possible starting point for publications preferentially in international peer reviewed journals. This has yielded up to now several articles published or accepted by or submitted to journals.

Reworking, deepening and making up to date the course texts requires much literature research, research being one of the tasks of the Chair.

Up to now, these activities have filled my contract time at Louvain (30%).

b. Research

As to research in the sense of projects made possible by a grant, up to now the Chair has not been successful. The way towards funds for projects in the field of theology are not easy, and certainly not in the case of international projects. Until now, the strategy has been to write an application for a grant to be given by the Flemish Fund for Scientific Research, which has a clear preference for objective and secular research that takes place within an international network, but oriented on Flanders. European funds have a strong preference for research on an European level on topics relevant for economy. It is clear that a different strategy has to be followed, i.e. a strategy that is not directed primarily on Flemish or European funds, and that not requires the formulation of goals, content and methods of the research to be squeezed within the straitjacket of secular language use.

Research should take place within an international context, and oriented on themes relevant for pastoral ministry with the deaf. A major topic of study should be which factors make pastoral ministry with the deaf effective. Within an international context, this will be a very complex research theme, for the following reasons:

- Effectiveness of pastoral ministry can be studied from the perspective of the pastor, individual persons ministered to, or the community in which the pastor works. When pastors are hearing, their perspective can be quite different from the perspective of the deaf community. Methods by which effects are studied, are often directed on the spiritual and pastoral needs of individual persons, tending to individualise people’s pastoral needs, whereas various deaf authors state that many Deaf Cultures tend to be collectivistic, even in countries with an individualistic culture like Western-European countries.
- Deaf pastoral ministry takes place in very different ways in different countries, by various motives:
 - Differences in general cultural (e.g. USA and Latin America);
 - Differences in religious culture (e.g. religious pluralism vs. homogeneity, level of secularization);
 - Differences in Deaf culture (different phases of Deaf emancipation, different social-economic status of Deaf leadership);
 - The degree in which pastoral models are applied. In some places, clear models of pastoral ministry are applied, whereas in other places just pastors try to serve with much energy the Deaf community in a practical and pragmatic way, on the basis of common sense, loyalty to the Deaf community, and the formation they received in seminary.
- The method to be used has to be considered very well. Information gathered by means of questionnaires, a method that is frequently used, might be biased in the case of the Deaf. Other methods should be used too, e.g. ethnographic methods developed in cultural anthropology,



such as direct and participating observation, but these methods would require a period of time to be spent within a specific pastoral programme. This would require large funds.

- Methodologically, a comparative study that yields a statistical comparison of data, will not be possible because of the many factors involved, and the high number of programmes that should be studied.

My proposal is to choose a limited numbers of examples of “good practice” in different cultural contexts, that should be studied stepwise in a qualitative way. I propose the following steps:

1. At first, through different channels, agencies for pastoral ministry with the deaf should be contacted. In this phase persons involved in pastoral agencies should be invited to be contacted by means of MSN, in order to have a possibility to ask preliminary questions and getting concrete information about pastoral programmes. A pitfall in this phase may be that valuable pastoral projects that cannot be approached through the internet, will not come into the picture, e.g. projects in African and some Asian countries. Another pitfall will be that some countries will remain outside of the picture because of the language of that country (Slavic languages, Arab, Portuguese); for deaf persons written communication in their country's official language is often already a problem, and communication in a foreign language will be impossible with most deaf persons. Step 1: 40 hours.
2. In the meantime different models of pastoral ministry and descriptive characteristics of pastoral projects are described in such a way that they can be operationalised. Models of pastoral ministry might be Baart's presence theory,² narrative pastoral ministry,³ contextual ministry,⁴ liberative pastoral ministry,⁵ base community pastoral work.⁶ The choice of the models should reflect pastoral models in different cultures.
Descriptive characteristics concern observable facts, such as numbers of participants, kinds of activities organized, courses offered, liturgies, interpreters.
The results of these descriptions should be laid down into a checklist that can be used as a guideline for in-depth interviews, that for motives of distance and money should be carried out through MSN or Skype (chatting mode). This checklist will be tried out with one particular pastoral project. Step 2: 160 hours.
3. On the basis of the preliminary information gathered in step 1 potential examples of “good practice” are chosen and approached. These examples should be located in different cultural settings: Latin America, Southern Asia (Southern India or Sri Lanka), USA, Southern Europe (Spain or Italy) Western Europe, and if possible Africa (Nairobi or South Africa). Three contact persons in these examples of good practice should be found, with whom communication by means of MSN or Skype is possible: a pastor, a volunteer and a person involved as a common participant. Step 3: 40 hours.

² Presence theory is an approach for social case work by the Dutch social scientist Andries Baart, and applied on pastoral ministry in lower class districts in big cities, i.e. especially with people who are socially and economically superfluous. Pastors are present in people's daily world, try to understand that world from an inside perspective, and join into that world. Pastoral ministry is not “interventionism”, not primarily problem and product oriented, although the starting point may be a specific intervention. Pastors find a good balance between friendship and professionalism.

³ In an narrative approach of pastoral ministry, pastors take people's stories about their life and their daily situation serious, and try to correlate these stories with the story of God.

⁴ In contextual ministry a pastor sees people within the contexts of their relationships, relationships that have led to growth, but also relationships by which people have been wounded. Pastors try to reconcile the pains and sorrows that relationships have caused, with the loyalties with which people may be tied to those same relationships.

⁵ The goal of liberative ministry is to enable people to live in full dignity, and to recognize within themselves the image of God. It demands a conscious commitment to empowerment of communities as people of God.

⁶ Base communities started as faith communities of poor people in Latin America, who because of a lack of priests and pastors started to read and to explain the Bible by themselves. The theology that arose from these communities, liberation theology, influences from the sixties and the seventies of the last century on also the Church in other countries. Theology, as speaking from and about God, should be a reality that could be experienced, people should be better off with it, that was the primary goal. Often, injustice had been glossed over in an erroneous way by the established Churches.



4. When the examples of good practice are chosen, additional information is gathered about the general culture, religious culture and Deaf culture in the area of those examples. Possibly additional questions are added to the checklist on the basis of this information. Step 4: 160 hours.
5. The interviews with the contact persons take place through MSN or Skype. Step 5: 200 hours.
6. First drafts of the results are written. Step 6: 80 hours.
7. Dependently from the possibility to gather funds for it, each example of "good practice" is visited, and for a short period the life of the community is shared, as far as possible. The first drafts of the results are discussed with a group of members of the community, and corrected if necessary. Step 7: 5 periods of 3 weeks, 15 weeks. This would require funds for travel and lodging during those five periods of three weeks.
8. The final report is written, published on CD-ROM (pictures and movies included) and handed over to ICF and the communities involved in the study. Step 8: 200 hours.

If expansion of the Chair takes place to 40% (one additional day every week), 880 hours means 110 weeks, two years and two months, to which 15 whole weeks have to be added (2½ years in total).

If expansion of the Chair takes place to 50% (two additional days every week), 880 hours means 55 weeks, one year and two months, to which 15 whole weeks have to be added (1½ years in total).

Students of the Faculty's international programme might participate in the study, e.g. for a licentiate thesis, under strict conditions: familiarity with deaf persons.

c. Service

A third aspect of a Chair is service. Service shall take place in the following ways:

1. A first way of service takes place through the internet. On the website of the Faculty of Theology, a page has been made with information about the Chair: <http://theo.kuleuven.be/page/icf>. On this website, publications are made available, and other information too will be made available, such as some of the information about pastoral programmes for the Deaf gathered in the course of the research study, i.e. only that information for which persons who gave the information, give their consent. The course texts, i.e. the texts that the students registered for my courses, receive, are not made available on the website, but might be made available in a selective way for members of the board of ICF, e.g. password protected against opening, selecting text and printing. Since this is an ongoing activity, I do not specify the time it takes.
2. Contribution to the formation of a network of persons involved in pastoral ministry with the deaf. Next spring, 2009, the meeting of the board of ICF is proposed to take place at Louvain. This might be an excellent opportunity for the organization of a meeting for persons involved in pastoral ministry with the Deaf from Flanders and surrounding countries. On that day members of the board present at the meeting of the board, might give a presentation, e.g. about their work, about the practice of pastoral ministry in their place, or about ICF in general, e.g.:

Ian Robertson:	narrative approach in pastoral ministry with the Deaf, or the STU programme
Chelo Manero:	Catholic Deaf communities in Central and Latin America
Peter McDonough:	the Catholic Deaf community in Great Britain, or translation of the Bible into Sign Language
Frankie Berry:	Pastoral Ministry with the Deaf in Ireland
Mary O'Meara	the Catholic Deaf community at Washington DC

The following categories of persons might be invited to this meeting:

- Students in the Master's programmes for Pastoral Theology and Practical Theology
- Staff of the Research Unit of Pastoral Studies and the Centre for Practical Theology
- Pastors, volunteers and other persons involved in pastoral ministry with the deaf in Flanders and surrounding countries, in the Catholic Church and other Churches
- Other persons interested, like deaf persons, persons interested in Deaf culture.

The meeting will be supported by the Faculty, it will be an obligatory meeting for students in the programmes of Practical Theology and Pastoral Theology (Flemish and international programme), and it will figure on the conference programme that is sent to all pastors and



pastoral programmes in Flanders. In the conference programme, a Friday at the end of March or April 2009 would fit best. A date in the first half of February, would not fit, since in that period students and staff may be absent.

The conference language should be English. Preparation should start early, also in view of the organization of interpreters, since Sign Language interpreters should be found who are able to interpret directly from English into one of the Sign Languages and vice versa. Since European states give deaf persons a certain number of interpreting hours (travel costs for the interpreter included), deaf participants should be contacted in time before the conference in order to ask them to contribute to the interpreting hours, which is a normal procedure.

I can organize the practical aspects of the conference, introduce the speakers, setting up a system for exchanging post and e-mail addresses in order to stay in touch.

The organization of this day will require 60 hours.

3. The goal of the Chair is teaching and research on an academic level. There is, however, among deaf persons a need, surely not excessive, of formation and courses. It is not the task of the Chair to organize or to give courses on a lower than academic level. If a conference in 2009 takes place, deaf participants will be contacted afterwards and asked about their needs for formation and courses. They might be informed about the courses that are given on different levels, and support might be given in finding ways that enable deaf persons to follow regular programmes as a group. In total this will require 40 hours.

This service proposal will require a total number of 100 hours.

Prof. Dr. Marcel Broesterhuizen