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The United Kingdom has a long record of high-quality teaching in theology and religious studies, with highly respected institutions, and world-class teachers and scholars. It is also home to rich resources in its libraries, its heritage, and in the increasing cultural diversity of the country. Until now, because there is no single representative body for theology and religious studies that corresponds to the AAR, finding this information and tracking down contacts has been time-consuming. It has involved searching through the individual web sites of British universities, colleges, and related bodies.

This edition of *Spotlight on Teaching* introduces a new project that, among other things, offers a one-stop site for access to the whole field of theology and religious studies in Britain. The project is particularly concerned to foster the communication of effective practice in teaching and learning. The new site is administered by the Philosophical and Religious Studies Subject Centre of the Learning and Teaching Support Network, or PRS-LTSN. Links to all the British institutions teaching theology and religious studies, and to British colleagues teaching in a particular field, are available at

<http://www.prs-ltsn.leeds.ac.uk/>. The site also offers discussion groups, web-based publications, and news of conferences. It offers a new possibility for sharing best practice and teaching learning, not just within Britain, but between Britain and the rest of the world. In the following pages, we hope to introduce this project to you and to suggest some topics this new dialogue might cover.

The web site is the most accessible part of the LTSN, but behind it is a great deal of other activity. LTSN offers workshops for teachers involved in particular subjects or facing particular problems. Research projects into topics such as the use of Web material in teaching, the problems of particular disadvantaged student groups, and creative ways to deal with increasing student numbers, are sponsored by the PRS-LTSN. We are shortly to launch a journal to provide a forum for publication of such material. The aim of the PRS-LTSN is to bring about a change of culture so that talking and writing about teaching becomes as accepted a part of the life of academics as the discussion of research. We are delighted to offer readers of *Religious Studies News*

an invitation to learn more about the PRS-LTSN's work, and to become involved in the exciting possibilities of pooling resources and teaching strategies internationally.

Some issues are specific to the British situation, of course, but the basic problems of teaching students to think creatively in these subjects, and of finding and assessing teaching materials to use, cross national boundaries. Common problems exist, for instance, in coming to terms with the proper use of the Internet, the changing educational experience of students at the school level, and the tension between teachers' independence and the need to ensure proper standards. Broadening the dialogue can only help us all. The PRS-LTSN has already benefited from strong links with the [Wabash Center for Teaching Theology and Religion](#) based at Wabash College, Crawfordsville, Indiana. The two bodies are cooperating in a Special Session at this year's AAR/SBL Annual Meeting. The Teaching and Learning Committee of the AAR has been very supportive, and the possibilities of exchange are very promising.

This edition falls into six sections, written by a variety of people involved with the LTSN and its work. Together, they give a window into the teaching of theology and religious studies in Britain today. We hope to explain some of the characteristic features of the educational traditions and systems in Britain in a way that may give food for thought for those in other countries — whether as a source of inspiration or as a cautionary tale.

We begin with a general description of the PRS-LTSN and its purposes written by Hugh Pyper, the Associate Director of the Centre with special responsibility for theology and religious studies. He is also Senior Lecturer in Biblical Studies at the University of Leeds. We then move on to Denise Cush's discussion of teaching religion at school level in Britain, which has some important differences from the situation in the United States. Gary Bunt addresses the role of the Internet in British religious studies education. This is followed by three personal views on teaching religious studies and theology in modern Britain. The first is by Dr. Chakravati Ram-Prasad of the University of Lancaster, the second by Professor David Fergusson of the University of Edinburgh, and the third by Bill Campbell, Associate Director of the PRS-LTSN in Lampeter.