



Annual Report 2018

Faculty of Theology and Religion



*Inspiring excellence. Transforming lives.
Inspireer uitnemendheid. Verander lewens.*

UNIVERSITY OF THE
FREE STATE
UNIVERSITEIT VAN DIE
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FACULTY OF THEOLOGY AND RELIGION ANNUAL REPORT 2018

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Faculty of Theology and Religion Annual Report 2018

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CONTENTS

Letter from the Dean	4
Department of Old and New Testament Studies	6
Department of Historical and Constructive Theology	10
Department of Practical and Missional Theology	12
Department of Religion Studies	16
Shepherd Centre	20
Acta Theologica	22
Sola Gratia	24
Faculty Saying Farewell to an Old Testament Scholar and a Dean	28
Research 2018	32

LETTER FROM THE DEAN

It is once again time to reflect on the past year. It is good to do that to get some perspective on what was done during 2018.

When you read through the reports from the different departments I hope you will appreciate the hard work and dedication of all staff members. It is also clear from the reports that the faculty did what can be expected from academic departments in a faculty at a university.

I wish to highlight a few matters that became clear when reading the annual report:

Departments pay attention to the lectures presented to students. Lecturers are well-prepared, on time and will never be absent without good reason. Lectures presented to students are of a high quality, challenging students to think rather than to merely convey knowledge to students. Because of the emphasis on good lectures we have also received a number of guest lecturers both local and from abroad to present lectures to our students. Some of our academic staff members were also invited to other institutions to present lectures both locally in South Africa and also abroad.

A second trend emanating from the report is the conferences and congresses staff members attended. To attend congresses remain an important part of being an academic because it brings one in touch with the latest research in a particular field and with colleagues from other institutions. Most of the colleagues also presented papers at various congresses in South Africa, Europe and the United States. What is also interesting to note is that the faculty had the privilege of hosting several congresses that were attended by scholars from all over the globe.

The third aspect to highlight is the high volume of research papers that was published in the past year. The faculty has indeed a proud record of research done. The research done can be seen in the number of postgraduate degrees awarded to students as well as in the large number of published articles in accredited journals. *Acta Theologica*, the academic journal of the faculty, is still one of only a few academic journals in the field of theology with an ISI-rating.

This year will be the last year for me to write an introduction to the annual report as I vacate the office of the dean at the end of 2018. I therefore want to make use of this opportunity to thank all staff members for the dedication, the effort, the sheer hard work we all put in to make 2018 a remarkable year. Our success is the result of the combined effort of all of us. Academic staff members continued to deliver high quality work in spite of so many demands and I want to thank them for that. Support staff members deserve a special word of appreciation. Without their hard work, long hours, often work even beyond official hours, the faculty will simply grind to a halt. I salute you for making my work as dean a pleasure in the midst of so many responsibilities. I can look back on 2018 with a sincere sense of deep gratitude.

I trust that you will find this annual report providing you with a glimpse into the many activities of the past year, interesting reading.

Prof. Fanie Snyman
Dean: Faculty of Theology and Religion

Our success
is the result of
the combined
effort of all
of us.



TEOLOGIE
THEOLOGY

DEPARTMENT OF OLD AND NEW TESTAMENT STUDIES

In 2018, the department welcomed a new lecturer, Dr Lodewyk Sutton. He obtained a PhD in Old Testament Studies in 2015 for a thesis titled “A trilogy of war and renewed honour? Psalms 108, 109 and 110 as a literary composition”. He completed a postdoctoral fellowship at UP in 2016 and joined the ministry on a full-time basis at the DRC Lyttleton East in 2017. Dr Sutton specialises in the Old Testament, in particular the Psalms.

A new integrated MDiv course was offered for the first time.

The normal pattern of undergraduate and postgraduate lectures continued in 2018. A new integrated MDiv course was offered for the first time. The lecturers from Old and New Testament Studies were responsible for the module on Naming and the Divine (together with Prof. Rian Venter who acted as the convenor). Another group of students started with their Master’s in Spirituality. Prof. Francois Tolmie was responsible for the module on Biblical Spirituality that was offered in the second semester in 2018.

The department also hosted three guest lecturers: Dr Fischer from the Evangelical-Theological Faculty of the University of Vienna, Prof. Declaisse-Walford from the



International scholars Prof. Nancy Declaisse-Walford and Dr Steve Declaisse-Walford from McAfee School of Theology in Atlanta, Georgia (USA) with Prof. Fanie Snyman (Dean of the Faculty of Theology and Religion, UFS) and Dr Lodewyk Sutton at the conference on “Unheard voices in the Bible”.



Prof. Werner Kelber.

McAfee School of Theology in Atlanta, Georgia, and Prof. Werner Kelber from Rice University in Houston, Texas.

Furthermore, two students completed their postgraduate studies in 2018. Rev. Meyer van Wyk obtained a MTh (*cum laude*; supervisors: Profs. Francois Tolmie and Ruben Zimmermann) for a dissertation on the ethics of the Letter to Philemon, and Rev. Jamie Rheeder obtained a DTh on Pauline mystagogy in 1 Corinthians (promoter: Prof. Pieter de Villiers).

The department hosted three international conferences: Dr Sutton organised a conference on the theme “Unheard voices in the Bible”. This conference focused on unheard voices in the Bible and in our contemporary world. The unheard



Dr Lodewyk Sutton and Dr Stefan Fischer

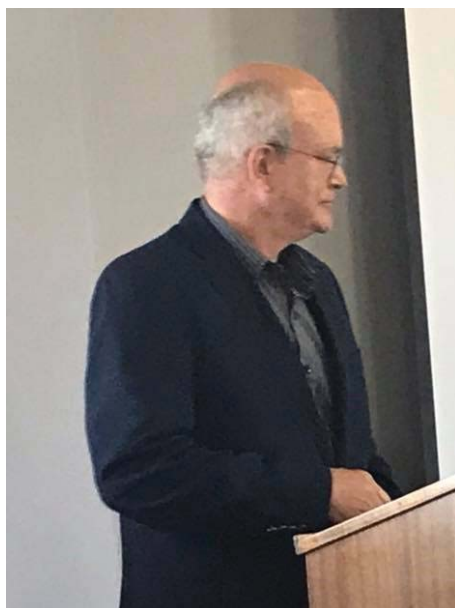
voices that were investigated are those that society ignores, oppresses, neglects, discriminates against, or rejects. Both Dr Sutton and Prof. Tolmie read papers at this conference. The papers read at this conference will be published in a special issue of *Acta Theologica* in 2019, of which Dr Sutton will be the guest editor. Furthermore, the International Colloquium for the Study of the New Testament had their bi-annual conference at the faculty. The theme of the conference was “God in the New Testament”. Several researchers from the faculty read papers at this conference, including Drs Sutton, Den Dulk, Hogeterp and Jantsch as well as Profs Venter, Joubert, Van der Watt and Tolmie. The papers read at this colloquium were published in the December 2018 issue of *Stellenbosch Theological Journal*.

Another publication that appeared in 2018 contained the papers read at the joint conference between Yale Divinity School and the Faculty of Theology and Religion in July 2017. These papers were published in the prestigious *Ekstasis* series of De Gruyter in Germany. A third international conference was hosted in honour of Prof. Fanie Snyman.

Researchers in the department also attended several other academic conferences in 2018: Prof. Snyman and Dr Sutton attended a joint meeting of the Old Testament Societies of The Netherlands, Belgium, the UK and South Africa at the University of Groningen. They also attended the ProPsalms, ProProphets and ProPent Seminars at the University of Pretoria. Furthermore, Dr Sutton attended a conference of the British Old Testament Society in Cambridge.

The International Colloquium for the Study of the New Testament

A number
of academic
papers were
read by
members
of the
department



Prof. Jan van der Watt at the conference of the International Colloquium for the Study of the New Testament.

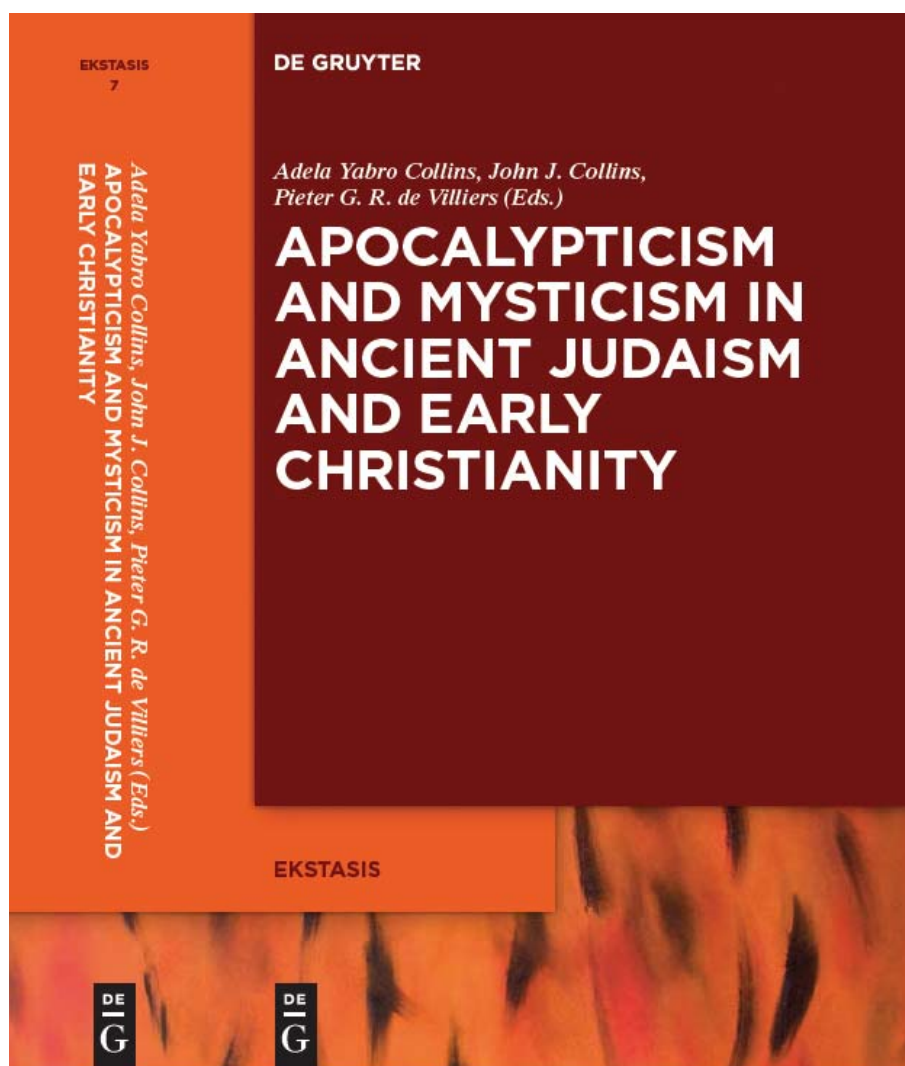


Dr Torsten Jantsch at the conference of the International Colloquium for the Study of the New Testament.

Quite a number of academic papers were read by members of the department: Dr Sutton read papers at the South African Society for Near Eastern Studies (North-West University), the Old Testament Society of Southern Africa (North-West University), ProPent (University of Pretoria), and at the conference in honour of Prof. Fanie Snyman. Dr Sutton was also invited to read a paper at the annual meeting of the Society of Biblical Literature in Denver, Colorado (USA). Furthermore, he and students of the department participated in an international



Participants at the meeting in Groningen.



The year ended with an international conference honouring Prof. Snyman

Publication on Apocalypticism and Mysticism

book project with Prof. Nancy L. Declaisse-Walford, Professor of Old Testament and Biblical Languages at the McAfee School of Theology in Atlanta, Georgia, for a new feminist commentary on the Psalms (to be published in 2019 by Liturgical Press in Minnesota).

Prof. Snyman read papers at the ProPsalms/ProProphets conference (University of Pretoria), and at the Spring Conference of the DR Church (Pretoria). Prof. de Villiers read papers on spirituality at the Spirasa Conference (Johannesburg), the University of the West Indies, Codrington College (Barbados), the LCC International University (Klaipeda, Lithuania) and the annual meeting of the Society of Biblical Literature (Denver, Colorado, USA). Prof. Tolmie visited the Radboud University in Nijmegen, where he acted as external examiner for a PhD in the New Testament and read a paper at the international meeting of the Society of Biblical Literature at Helsinki (Finland). He also became a member of the *Colloquium Paulinum Oecumenicum* in 2018 and attended the bi-annual meeting in Rome (Italy).

2018 ended with an international conference in honour of Prof. Snyman. Papers were read by scholars who contributed to the *Festschrift*. Dr Sutton was the editor of the *Festschrift*, which was also formally handed over to Prof. Snyman at this conference.

DEPARTMENT OF HISTORICAL AND CONSTRUCTIVE THEOLOGY

2018 was a
productive
and exciting
year spent
on teaching
and research
activities.


2018 was a productive and exciting year for the Department of Historical and Constructive Theology with time and energy spent on a host of teaching and research activities. The lecturers offered a large number of modules across the spectrum of programmes. Special mention must be made of the new MDiv interdisciplinary programme. Dr Henco van der Westhuizen participated in the module on Community, and Prof. Rian Venter in the ones on the theory of interdisciplinarity, and Naming the Divine and Community.

Five students completed MDiv and MTh mini dissertations. Dr Van der Westhuizen supervised C. Wheeler on Bonhoeffer and a theology of resistance, and S. Schoeman on a theological-historical evaluation of the Broederbond. Prof. Venter supervised students F. Jonker on an ethics of animals and poaching, A. Jordaan on the millennium generation and soteriological metaphors, and S. Dlwati on decolonising theology and curriculum theory. Student J. Deetlefs received his PhD in Trinitarian theology and political impact with Prof. Venter as promoter.

Dr Van der Westhuizen was invited to spend time in Heidelberg (Germany) with the renowned scholar Prof. Michael Welker and do research for his book on reformed pneumatology to be published in 2019. He also participated in the International Barth Conference (US) on the theme “Embracing Things Past and Things to Come”, which was held in Stellenbosch. During November, Dr Van der Westhuizen visited the American Academy of Religion in Denver (Colorado) and the Princeton Theological Seminary to network with some of the foremost reformed institutes in North America.



Attendees at the Department of Historical and Constructive Theology's Schleiermacher Conference.



Prof. Venter presented several papers at conferences: At the Nürnberger Seminar at UP on his Trinitarian theology; at the TSSA Conference (Howick) on Decolonisation and Systematic Theology; and at the International Colloquium for the Study of the New Testament (UFS) on 20th century developments in the doctrine of God. He also participated in the International Conference on Spirituality and Education (UNISA) where his paper evaluated the Trinitarian Renaissance. Towards the end of the year, Prof. Venter presented a paper at the REFO 500 Conference (NWU) on the reception of the Reformation in Africa.

Receiving guest lecturers and organising conferences are important for the Department. Dr Nadia Marais (US) was invited to be a guest lecturer. She presented a paper on the metaphor of the “womb of God” and contemporary theology. The department also hosted a Schleiermacher Conference, celebrating 250 years since his birth, with speakers from UP, UNISA, US, UKZN and UFS.

A large number of research outputs were produced by lecturers and research fellows. Dr Van der Westhuizen published three essays – one in the field of symbolics, specifically on Dordt; one on the Reformation, specifically Luther and Bonhoeffer; and one on Reformed Ecclesiology – all three in line with his teaching assignment. Prof. Venter published four articles: one on Nürnberger and the Trinity, one on God in a global multi-religious context; one on the state of the doctrine of God since Barth; and one on Kearney’s post-metaphysical theology and the Trinity. Research fellows such as Prof. Piet Strauss, Dr Jakub Urbaniak and Dr Thomas Resane deserve special mention as they are exceptionally creative and published a great number of articles.

DEPARTMENT OF PRACTICAL AND MISSIONAL THEOLOGY

The year 2018 saw numerous department colleagues make presentations at international and national academic conferences.

“The role of ministers in community development: the DRCA OFS as a case study”

Dr Joseph Pali attended the Society of Practical Theology in South Africa conference on Reforming Practical Theological Anthropology with the focus on culture, gender, and violence. This was held in Pretoria in January. His paper was titled “The source and impact of conflicts within the congregations of the DRCA OFS (NGKA OVS)”. At the NetACT Conference on Diaconia, community, and development: Exploring new theories for social justice and inclusion in Stellenbosch in July, Dr Pali spoke about “The role of ministers in community development: the DRCA OFS as a case study”. His final presentation for the year was at the Jesuit Institute South Africa Conference on Religion and Racial Justice in South Africa and the United States, which was held in Soweto in August 2018. Here his paper was on “The interaction of leadership and members of the congregations in the DRCA OFS. A reflection on integrity and justice”.

Rev. Martin Laubscher presented a number of papers on wide-ranging topics at several conferences during 2018. At the SPTSA conference on Reforming Practical Theological Anthropology at the intersections of culture, gender and violence, his paper was titled “A genealogy of human rights in South Africa’s Reformed Theology, 1974–2014”. He also presented a paper on “(Just) Preaching Peace during the 1990s in South Africa” at the Theological Society of South Africa conference, From Versailles to Kempton Park: Theological and ethical reflection on peace and peace-making, which was held in Howick in June. The Jesuit Institute South Africa, Fordham University’s Department of Theology, and the University of Pretoria’s Centre for Contextual Ministry held a conference on Religion and Racial Justice in South Africa and the United States in Soweto in August where Rev. Laubscher’s paper was on “South Africa’s Homiletica RACE to the occasion”. At the International Barth Conference “Embracing Things Past



Rev. Martin Laubscher with Mrs and Prof. Long, who visited the Department of Practical and Missional Theology in March 2018.

and Things to Come” at the University of Stellenbosch (in collaboration with the Princeton Theological Seminary and Unisa) in October, his presentation was titled “After Barth’s (prophetic) witness in SA today”. Rev. Laubscher’s final conference presentation for 2018 was in November at the Schleiermacher Conference at the UFS, where he presented a paper titled “Schleiermacher as Preacher: A South African Perspective”.

Dr Juanita Meyer spoke about “Restructuring the Christian Fatherhood Model: A practical theological investigation into the ‘male problematic’ of father absence”



Prof. Hermans (Radboud University, Nijmegen), who was appointed as Extraordinary Professor at the doctoral workshop that was held in February 2018.

at a SPTSA conference on Reforming Practical Theological Anthropology at the intersections of culture, gender and violence.

Prof. Pieter Verster attended a conference in Florence, Italy in July where he presented a paper titled “The challenge of poverty in informal settlements in Mangaung, South Africa and possible interventions from the Christian Church”.

Prof. Kobus Schoeman presented a paper titled “Shifting trends within the South African religious landscape after 1994 – developing a relevant research agenda” at the International Society of Empirical Research in Theology conference in Helsinki, Finland in June.

The department had the privilege of hosting the following international scholars during 2018: Prof. Van de Beek (Vrije Universiteit, Amsterdam), who discussed his book *Mij Vader Uw Vader* on Theological Day on 19 February; Prof. Hermans (Radboud University, Nijmegen), who was appointed as Extraordinary Professor at the doctoral workshop that was held in February 2018; and Prof. and Mrs Long, who presented guest lectures at the department in March 2018. Lecture sessions were held on two of Prof. Long’s books, namely *The witness of preaching* and *Beyond worship wars – Building vital and faithful worship*.

In 2018, the department, under the guidance of Dr Joseph Pali and Rev. Bongani Ngesi, started to develop a research focus and project within the Mangaung Metropolitan Municipality. A workshop with more than 40 religious leaders in the townships was held on 17 October. The provisional title of the research project is “Flourishing and Christian ministry in the township: Exploring developments and practices”.

Dr Meyer developed two quantitative questionnaires for a research project titled “An investigation into the possible relationship between South African masculinities and religiosity/spirituality (RS) through the application of two inventory scales to a sample of male hostel students at the UFS”.

The SA-NCLS (National Church Life Survey) attender survey and the Church Mirror congregational survey were conducted in collaboration with the department. Prof. Schoeman was the project leader. This has developed into an ecumenical project with various denominations and congregations that are part of the research.

The department is home to four NRF rated scholars, namely Profs Verster, Van den Berg and Schoeman, and Dr Meyer.

The NetACT AGM was held from 2 to 6 July 2018 at the Samuel Campus of the Huguenot College in Wellington. Prof. Schoeman, Dr Pali and Rev. Mostert attended the annual general meeting. Progress is being made with cooperation from Justo Mwale University (Lusaka, Zambia) and the Lesotho Evangelical Church.

Dr Pali received an NRF sabbatical grant for 2018 and 2019.



Attendees at the NetACT conference

Prof. Van den Berg served as the editor-in-chief of *Acta Theologica*, the academic journal associated with the Faculty of Theology and Religion. He also coordinated the Master's programme in Spirituality, which is currently being housed in the department. Prof. Van den Berg completed his second PhD at the School of

Historical and Philosophical Inquiry at the University of Queensland, Australia. The title of the thesis is “Tweeting God: A practical theological analysis of the communication of Christian motifs on Twitter”.

Dr Meyer presented the following: a training workshop at the Aurora Drug and Alcohol Rehabilitation Centre (pastoral care to patients); a so-called Tree of Life workshop to learners at Martie du Plessis School; and narrative counselling workshops with the youth at the VGK Heatherdale Youth Centre (The Life Change Centre). She was also voted to the School Governing Body of Martie du Plessis School as a representative of the Dutch Reformed Church in the network of TOIBO.

Prof. Schoeman was a visiting lecturer at Radboud University, Nijmegen during April.

Dr Johan Nel presented the Master’s programme in Narrative Therapy. He also coordinated the supervision module for student interns in the completion of the requirements for registration with the Council for Pastoral and Spiritual Counsellors (CPSC), a specialist council of the Association of Christian Religious Practitioners (ACRP). In addition, he provided a pastoral therapeutic service at the Unit for Professional Training and Service in the Behavioural Sciences (UNIBS). The service was provided to students of the Faculty of Theology and Religion as well as students from other faculties. Supervision for Master’s students was provided at UNIBS.

DEPARTMENT OF RELIGION STUDIES

The Department of Religion Studies is a department that employs a multi-religious outlook to the systematic and scientific study of religion and adheres to the basic principles of religious tolerance, religious plurality, and religious inclusion.

The department offers both undergraduate and postgraduate courses (honours, Masters and PhD). Undergraduate courses are designed to produce well-grounded, open-minded and research-ready students who can effectively pursue postgraduate studies in Religion Studies, theology and other fields of study. Postgraduate programmes are designed to produce innovative students, competent researchers, and well-informed academics who can meaningfully contribute to the global scholarship and academic debates through their research expertise and comprehensive knowledge.

The department, in line with the UFS Strategic Plan 2015–2020, has employed two critical approaches to increase its students' success and throughputs rates, and reduce the achievement gap: the first of these approaches regards the improvement of the quality and effectiveness of teaching and learning – both at undergraduate and postgraduate levels. This approach to teaching and learning focuses more on evidence-based teaching excellence, and deep curriculum transformation. On the one hand, it enhances learning capacity through the use of interactive and innovative learning techniques, such as blended learning and imaginative critical thinking techniques, through content-based classroom debates. A deep curriculum transformation was piloted in order to reduce the achievement gap, particularly between black and white students, as new content materials, focusing on African ideals, knowledge systems and pedagogies, were introduced to the existing curricular. This process was characterised by the inclusion of cutting-edge methods and pedagogies that scholars and students may use to compete at a global standard.

The second approach regards the management of student enrolment in order to ensure academic sustainability and throughput rates. This was done to ensure that there is clear integration, alignment of workload and excellent performance in key areas by the academic staff. With the department having a shortage of staff – one full-time lecturer and two part-time lecturers – they distributed the workload evenly and effectively.

The enrolment numbers for 2018 decreased slightly when compared to those for 2017. During 2017, the enrolment numbers were 357 students for all modules at undergraduate level. This number was 284 undergraduate students in 2018. The throughput rates, however, remained impressive across all the modules. Out of 357 students in 2017, only 13 did not succeed. Eight students failed their modules, four did not write their exams, and one student discontinued. In 2018, 11 out of 284 did not succeed. These students all failed their modules.

At postgraduate level, nine students enrolled with the department in 2017. Two students were at honours level; four at Master's level; and three at doctoral level. Out of the two honours students in 2017, one student graduated in 2018 and the other discontinued. Out of the four Master's students who enrolled in 2017, two completed their research in 2018 and are due to graduate in June 2019. The other

Religion
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outlook

two discontinued. Out of the three doctoral students who enrolled in 2017, two completed their research studies in 2018 and the last doctoral student is expected to complete his research in 2019. There were two students who enrolled in 2018. One is an honours student who is expected to complete in 2019, and the other is a Master's student who is expected to complete in 2020.

These statistics show that the throughput rates are high in the department, and that students are empowered to achieve excellence. The challenge, however, remains a lack of financial support, which leads to many students discontinuing their studies. Even though the Faculty of Theology and Religion is doing a lot to support postgraduate students with regards to this, much still needs to be done to ensure sustainable financial assistance for students.

In order to develop graduate attributes through the curricular and by co-curricular interventions, the students are encouraged to do both Religion Studies modules and Education modules. This means that curricula that were developed by the faculty permits students to do Religion Studies for theological purposes and Education in order to practice as teachers in the education sector after the completion of their degrees.

The department has developed curricula that is locally relevant yet globally competitive. This is part of the Decolonisation/Africanisation process, which is advocated by the Integrated Transformation Plan (ITP). The University of the Free State has committed itself to widening the scope and to the radical acceleration of transformation in the university. Among its goals, the university aims to:

- Instigate a curriculum review which will interrogate the marginalisation of particular identities and philosophies of knowledge, incorporating scholarship from Africa and the global South; and
- Emphasise methodologies and practices for improving student success.

Adhering to this vision, the department has transformed its curricula in order to interrogate the marginalisation of particular identities and philosophies of knowledge, incorporating scholarship from Africa and the global South. The departmental staff further takes time to develop working and professional relationships with students in order to improve student success. This comes in various forms. On the one hand, lecturers invest their time in support of students outside their classroom interactions, and on the other hand, tutors assist the students with the support required to tackle curriculum-related challenges. In this sense, the department transforms the pedagogic relationship between students and lecturers.

The department continues to transform the profile and increase the diversity of UFS researchers. It has developed good relationships with young academics as well as seasoned and renowned scholars from various socio-cultural contexts, educational backgrounds, and countries. These scholars increase the department's contribution to local, regional and global knowledge. The quality of the work and knowledge they produce continues to attract national and international students. Due to the increased impact and uptake, and by attracting both national and international students, the quality of the work which these research fellows produce adds value to and enhances diversity in the department.

At present, the department is experiencing a shortage of academic staff who are actively involved in engaged scholarship. This, however, does not imply that it does not have any researchers who contribute towards support development

The department has developed curricula that is locally relevant yet globally competitive.

and social justice through engaged scholarship. The current academic staff, supported by both undergraduate and postgraduate students, gets involved in support development and social justice through engaged scholarship. This is the varied way in which the department interacts with the diverse community in which it exists. It links the best of the research and teaching skills of staff and students to the specific needs of different parts of the extended community, such as civil society, local churches, government, and non-governmental organisations. These are some of the areas in which students receive their service learning and practical experiences.

The department commenced 2018 with the re-opening of the Inter-Religious Forum (IRF) in February. The forum proposed hosting two conferences, which sought to contribute to student support and development, and to socio-political issues that had a significant impact, either directly or indirectly, on religious institutions or bodies.

The first was an event on the benefits of meditation as a spiritual tool for study and self-development. The event was held on 8 March. It included both a public lecture and practical demonstrations on meditation. The keynote speaker and facilitator was Dada Mantra: Acarya Mantrasiddhananda from the community of Ananda Marga (the path of bliss). Dada Mantra: Acarya Mantrasiddhananda is a monk from the Philippines, with 25 years' experience in mediation.

The second event was a half-day conference on "Land and Religion". This was a Religious Interchange Conference on the question of land, which is a pertinent topic within the South African socio-political landscape. The conference aimed to offer a religious voice on the current socio-political debates on land restitution. The event took place on 2 September in the Chancellor's Room, UFS. There were three keynote speakers: Dr Van der Watt (DRC), Dr Mndende (Icamgu Institute) and Mr Zulu (Madisebo College, Johannesburg).

Mr Joel Mokhoathi was appointed as the acting Head of Department from 1 July to 31 December 2018. In addition, two part-time lecturers were appointed for teaching responsibilities from 1 July to 31 December 2018. They were Mr Ngesi and Mr Oosthuizen.



Speakers at the "Land and Religion" conference at the UFS.

The department links the best of research and teaching with the specifics needs of the community



Speakers at the "Land and Religion" conference at the UFS.



Speakers at the "Land and Religion" conference at the UFS.



SHEPHERD CENTRE

More than
ten Shepherd's
Schools opened
across the
country.

2018 was a successful year for the *Shepherd Centre's* Short Learning Programmes. More than ten Shepherd's Schools opened across the country. This includes places such as QwaQwa, Thaba Nchu, Botshabelo, Kroonstad, Kimberley, Zeerust, Brandfort and Bloemfontein.

On the University of the Free State's South Campus, Dr Botha convened a meeting every Wednesday evening with a group of pastors from in and around Bloemfontein. During March, close to 100 certificates were presented at the QwaQwa Campus to pastors that have finished the *Shepherd Centre's* certificate programmes. Dr Thomas Resane acted as the guest speaker. This event stood up to its reputation of being a highlight on the Shepherd calendar.

The number of students at the *Shepherd Centre* now stands at 150 (minimum) every semester. These students are rewarded with certificates after successfully completing the courses they enrolled in throughout the year.

The *Shepherd Centre* is still responsible for presenting the Certificate in Ministerial Renewal for the Dutch Reformed Church's ministers. This programme is in its last phase and 14 ministers are enrolled.

The African Council of Independent Churches (SAUCIC) held its annual bishops' meeting during the weekend of 19 and 20 May. Dr Botha, being a founder member of the Association of Christian Religious Practitioners (ACRP), was invited to attend the meeting and to present the bishops with relevant information about the work of the *Shepherd Centre*. He was also the guest speaker at the certificate ceremony where pastors received their marriage officer's certificates from the Department of Home Affairs. The *Shepherd Centre* was appointed as the training institution for SAUCIC and all its members. This led to the first Shepherd's School opening in Gauteng and classes starting in August.

During 2018, the *Shepherd Centre* started a process whereby it engaged with role players that present theological courses for pastors. In November, Dr Botha

met with the directors of the Ebenezer Theological Seminar of South Africa. He was impressed by their work as well as the structure and content of their Short Learning Programme. ETZSA went through a lot of trouble aligning their material with the rules of SAQA with regard to the training of pastors. It is envisaged that this will lead to a mutual collaboration agreement in 2019.

The *Shepherd Centre's* ongoing engagement with pastors in church communities has made it an essential training institution for pastors and church leaders. It has played an important role in establishing and building the Association of Religious Practitioners (ACRP), the professional body for all pastors in South Africa. At the annual conference of ACRP in October, all conference members were reminded that the official register was ready and that the *Shepherd Centre* had established the means for everyone to register from then onward. It therefore plays a key role in establishing a Continued Professional Development (CPD) structure, which is expected from SAQA, for all pastors. In the future, the *Shepherd Centre* will assist in developing and administering a CPD structure for Christian Religious Practitioners.

During the latter part of the year, the faculty received a request from the Network for African Congregational Theology (NetACT) asking to partner with the faculty and establish an office in Bloemfontein. The faculty decided that the *Shepherd Centre* is the obvious place for this office and Rev. Nico Mostert will occupy this position. This places the *Shepherd Centre* in the position to expand its programmes to the rest of Africa. A thorough planning session was conducted and the way forward has been established.



ACTA THEOLOGICA

Acta Theologica once again experienced a rich and rewarding publication year. Apart from the two general issues that were published in June and December, a volumeous *Festschrift* for Prof. Fanie Snyman, the retiring Dean of the Faculty of Theology and Religion, was also published at the end of 2018. All of these issues were proof of high-quality impact articles resulting from the research of internationally-renowned scholars. In this regard, *Acta Theologica* remains an important reflection of research associated with the Faculty of Theology and Religion.

During the past year, the use of the electronic OJS platform for the submission of articles, as well as the management of the review and publication process, also became operational.

The scientific indexing of *Acta Theologica* in various prestigious and prominent databases is proof of the quality associated with the publication of this peer-reviewed journal. *Acta Theologica*'s current indexing is as follow:

Web of Science

Scopus

ATLA Religion Database

SciELO South Africa

Elenchus of Biblica

Internationale Zeitschriftenschau

New Testament Abstracts

Religious and Theological Abstracts

Abstracted on AJOL

The editorial board consists of the following 13 members from the Faculty of Theology and Religion: Prof. Jan-Albert van den Berg (editor-in-chief); Dr Lyzette Hoffman (executive editor); Rev. Martin Laubscher; Mr. Joel Mokhoathi; Drs Hanneke Meyer, Juanita Meyer, Joseph Pali, Lodewyk Sutton, Henco van der Westhuizen; and Profs Kobus Schoeman, Fanie Snyman, Francois Tolmie, and Rian Venter.

Four board meetings are held annually and members actively contribute to the activities of the journal, for example assisting with the review process. Dr Hanneke Meyer was appointed as editorial secretary and served in this capacity for the duration of 2018. This appointment was made possible through the financial support of the Directorate of Research Development of the University of the Free State.

The editors of *Acta Theologica* attended the quarterly UFS Editorial Board meetings on a regular basis. During these meetings, important strategic discussions and collaboration with other journal editors were facilitated.

In 2018, the editorial board also spent some time planning a strategic workshop involving important role-players that will take place in 2019. In addition, two regular and two supplemental issues were planned for 2019.

Acta Theologica
remains an
important
reflection
of research
associated with
the Faculty of
Theology and
Religion.



Acta Theologica Supplementum 26
Guest editor: Dr. L. Sutton



SOLA GRATIA

This report provides feedback on the projects, outreaches and activities of the Faculty of Theology and Religion's student body, Sola Gratia. The chairperson of the 2017-2018 term was Danie de Jongh. It was a term characterised by personal growth, challenges, self-discovery and service. The committee met on a weekly basis to plan the week's as well as future activities. The chairperson also provides feedback to the Seminary on a quarterly basis. An initiative this year from the management of the UFS was to invite the student chair of each faculty to attend Senate meetings of the UFS management.

Projects,
outreaches
and activities
of the Faculty
of Theology
and Religion's
student body,
Sola Gratia.

Coram Deo

At the Coram Deo events students and lecturers share a meeting with the Word and with God. The Sola Gratia committee organises these monthly events where a lecturer leads with Scripture and contemplation. It is a special event where students and lecturers get to know one another at a more personal level.

Sport

Sola Gratia organises weekly events for sport and physical activity, including netball, touch rugby, cricket, soccer and Action Frisbee.

First-year reception

This event is organised by Sola Gratia and the Faculty's support staff in order to welcome first-years and their parents. It consists of an information session to inform first-years of the processes and procedures of the Faculty. The Sola Gratia committee is also introduced and a short video presentation is used to show a bit more of the heart of Sola Gratia. Students are also taken on a campus tour to gain more practical experience.

Ice-breaker evening

This annual event is organised to enable students and lecturers to get to know one another in an informal manner and to introduce first-years to the theology family. This year's theme was also "family".

Mighty Families

Sola Gratia became involved with Mighty Families in order to provide students with exposure and experience. Students were involved in the children's tent, where puppet theatre and other activities were presented.

Soup outreach events

Sola Gratia assisted Towers of Hope to prepare ingredients for a soup outreach event at this inner-city institution. Students were also invited to attend communion with homeless people. An annual soup outreach for the staff of UFS Protection Services is also presented.

Serenade for lecturers

This is a popular annual event where students serenade lecturers at their homes. The lecturers are kind enough to provide snacks during the event. Students and lecturers interact in an informal manner and build relationships.



Sola Gratia
held a Moving
Into Action
workshop,
which equipped
teenagers
to deal with
challenges.

#Imagine

This year Sola Gratia became involved with the #Imagine movement. The aim of this project is to provide students with exposure in working with teenagers and serving them in an interesting and effective manner. Sola Gratia was responsible for a Moving Into Action workshop, which equips teenagers to deal with challenges such as prostitution, alcoholism and peer pressure.

Open Day

The Sola Gratia committee is responsible for creating a relaxed atmosphere to welcome prospective students to the Faculty. During this event it is also Sola Gratia's responsibility to show prospective students a bit more of what student life entails.

Sola Gratia camp

This is an annual tradition which allows students to break away for a weekend in order to spend time in God's creation. As with previous years the camp took place at the Doornkloof Voortrekker camp terrain. The theme was "Love, forgiveness and reconciliation".

Informal

The aim of the informal is to allow students to get away from the books and interact socially, mingling and dancing. The theme was "Greek" and students had the opportunity to dress up as a Greek character!

PR tour

This year's PR tour took the Kovie students to the Potchefstroom Campus of the North-West University to meet and interact with theology students there.

Barefoot Day outreach

Spring Day is celebrated by students and lecturers sharing cool drinks and a cupcake. Participants are requested to donate canned food. This forms part of a larger outreach at the Association for People with Disabilities in Bloemfontein. Sola Gratia members shared a message of hope with APD residents. The canned food is donated and students also take part in a wheelchair race!

Theology Week

This is an annual event where different activities take place over the course of a week. Activities include praise and worship, a Bible quiz, traditional sport as well as a formal dinner. The theme this year was Oscars and students could vote for nominees in various categories.



FACULTY SAYING FAREWELL TO AN OLD TESTAMENT SCHOLAR AND A DEAN

Fanie Snyman
will be
remembered
for his excellent
teaching and
research,
and inspiring
leadership

Towards the end of 2018 the Faculty had to say farewell to Prof. Fanie Snyman, both as Old Testament scholar and as Dean who reached retirement age. Two functions were organised to honour and celebrate his contribution over a period of 35 years. At a large dinner attended by family, friends, university top management and staff members, Prof. Snyman presented a paper on the theme "Some thoughts on the privileges and responsibilities of being an academic at a university". Highlighting his contribution over a wide spectrum, various speakers referred to his many accomplishments and outstanding service. At a conference on his Old Testament achievements, fellow scholars from South Africa and Europe explored themes in his academic oeuvre. A Festschrift with a large number of articles was also handed to him to acknowledge his significant work in the field of the Old Testament. Fanie Snyman will be remembered for his excellent teaching, outstanding research and inspiring leadership at the UFS.



Farewell ceremony for Prof. Fanie Snyman



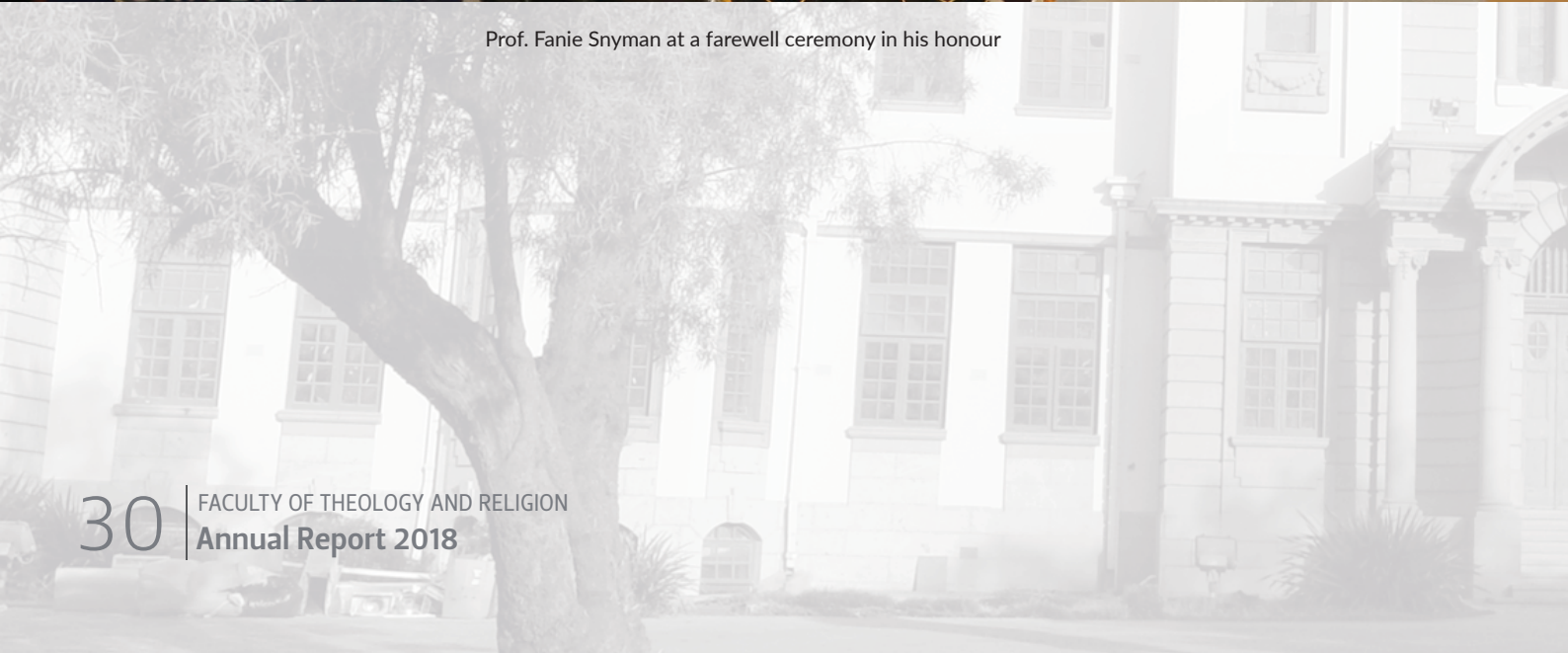
Prof. Francis Petersen (left, Rector and Vice-Chancellor, UFS) and Fanie Snyman (right, retiring Dean) with Mrs Snyman



Prof. Corli Witthuhn (Vice-Chancellor: Research) with Prof. Snyman



Prof. Fanie Snyman at a farewell ceremony in his honour





Prof. Fanie Snyman with his family



Prof. Snyman with Mrs Ingrid Mostert (left, Faculty Manager: Theology and Religion) and Mrs Nathlene van Wyk (right, Office Manager: Theology and Religion)

RESEARCH 2018

Department of Historical and Constructive Theology

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Department of Old and New Testament Studies

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- Nicklas, T. 2018. Der Judasbrief und der zweite Petrusbrief, in *Der "Kritisch-Exegetische Kommentar" in seiner Geschichte* (Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht), p 386-403
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Department of Practical and Missional Theology

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Department of Religion Studies

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