P.G.R. de Villiers Dedication – A tribute

P.G.R. de Villiers dedication: A tribute

The Editorial Board of HTS Teologiese Studies/Theological Studies pays tribute to Prof Dr Pieter G.R. de Villiers, an internationally recognised scholar and esteemed colleague. Prof De Villiers has been the Executive Director of the Centre for Christian Spirituality and Ethics since 1990 and has been a Research Fellow and Professor Extraordinarius in Biblical Spirituality at the Department of Old and New Testament Studies at the Faculty of Theology, University of the Free State (since 2001). He is a member of 15 national and international academic societies (including invited membership of Studiorum Novi Testamenti Societas). He has edited 15 books, authored four monographs, published 120 peer-reviewed academic articles and chapters in books as well as numerous general articles and book reviews. During his academic career (since 1971), Prof De Villiers has been a member of several editorial boards and served in the executive of various academic societies. Currently, he is the chairperson of South African Association for Spirituality (SPIRASA), the executive Director of the Centre for the Study of Christian Spirituality and Ethics, the chair of the Mysticism Group of the New Testament Society of South Africa and editor of LitNetAkademies (Godsdiensts-wetenskappe). Since January 2008, he has been the organiser of the NAVNUT project (Nederlandse, Afrikaanse, Vlaamse Nuwe-Testament Projek) on social justice and violence, power and peace. Similar international collaboration between Dutch and South African scholars was also a catalyst for the founding of the HTS in 1943.

Contribution to research and research foci

Prof De Villiers’ impressive publication list bears testimony to his expertise in New Testament Studies. He has published on the Synoptic Gospels and Acts, apocalypticism, non-canonical writings (4 Ezra and the Similitudes of Enoch), hermeneutics (postmodernity and the relationship between history and faith), exegetical approaches and methods (narratology, sociological text analysis and linguistics), theological and related topics (the unity of the church, Judaism, Graeco-Roman society, miracles, superstition) as well as Pauline (1 Thessalonians, Philemon), Deutero-Pauline (2 Thessalonians), and Trito-Pauline literature (1 Timothy). His most extensive publications are on Revelations, socio-ethical themes and spirituality.

He has been doing research in the field of spirituality since 1997, often in collaboration with colleagues from the Netherlands, the United States and the United Kingdom, and has published 30 articles in this field. His research has contributed to establishing spirituality as a discipline of Biblical Studies in South Africa and to its international advancement. He is currently developing a program in Biblical Spirituality which reflects the African context and aims to publish handbooks and monographs on this topic.

Flowing from his research on spirituality, with its focus on the spiritual nature and impact of biblical texts, are his publications on themes such as peace, love and joy, mysticism and discernment in biblical texts. Prof De Villiers is specifically interested in identifying and interpreting texts with a spiritual dimension that are often overlooked in academic scholarship. His research investigates the spiritual nature of specific New-Testament texts and elucidates the relationship between theological themes and the faith experience of early Christian communities. Themes such as violence, power and peace are investigated in collaboration with international scholars. Prof De Villiers’ publications on violence and peace are extensive, and he has established himself nationally as a leader in the field.

Prof De Villiers believes in engaged rather than ivory tower New-Testament scholarship. As early as 1989, he played a leading role in the empowerment of students from previously disadvantaged contexts and contributed to the democratisation and deracialisation of theological training at Rhodes University. His commitment to social justice can be seen in his research foci. Aspects such as peace, violence and power have socio-economic and socio-political implications. His work contributes to the building of a just and non-violent South Africa, striving for peace and joy for all.
It is therefore befitting that Prof De Villiers has been invited to present the second A.S. Geyser Commemoration Lecture in 2016, hosted by the Department of New Testament Studies, Faculty of Theology, at the University of Pretoria.

With this edition of the *HTS*, the Editorial Board pays tribute to an esteemed scholar, colleague and friend who, for the past 44 years, has contributed significantly to the development of theology as an academic enterprise.
Appendix 1
Curriculum Vitae: Pieter G.R. de Villiers

Personal information
• Born in Venterstad, South Africa, as eldest son in a family of five children.
• Married to Susan de Villiers, a university librarian/archivist, and has three daughters (Elizabeth, Elsje and Judith, as well as two grandchildren).

University degrees
• 1966: B.A. (cum laude) (University of Stellenbosch, South Africa) with Greek and Hebrew as majors, Philosophy, Psychology, Latin and Afrikaans as degree subjects.
• 1969 (March): B.A. Honours in Greek (cum laude) (University of Stellenbosch, South Africa).
• 1969 (November): B.Th. (cum laude) (University of Stellenbosch, South Africa), three-year degree in theological disciplines.
• 1973: Th.Drs. in New Testament Studies (Kampen Theological University, The Netherlands).
• 1974: Licentiate in Theology (cum laude) (University of Stellenbosch, South Africa).
• 1976: D.Th. in New Testament Studies (University of Stellenbosch, South Africa). (Doctoral theses in South Africa are not graded).

Present and past member of scholarly societies
On invitation only
• Studiorum Novi Testamenti Societas (SNTS).

Others
Society of Biblical Literature.
• American Academy for Religion.
• American Philological Association.
• Society for the Study of Christian Spirituality (presently a Board Member).
• European Association for Jewish Studies.
• European Association of Biblical Studies.
• The International Organization for Septuagint and Cognate Studies.
• New Testament Society of South Africa (former member of the executive).
• Old Testament Society of South Africa.
• South African Society for Patristic and Byzantine Studies.
• South African Society for Biblical and Religious Studies (former chairperson of the executive).
• South African Society for Jewish Studies.
• South African Society for Science of Literature.
• Association of Southern African Theological Institutions (former member of the executive).
• D.A.A.D. Alumni Association of South Africa (former chairperson of the Management Council).
• SPIRASA (Spirituality Association of South Africa) (member of the executive).

Academic positions
• Lecturer in the Department of Biblical Studies (Faculty of Arts) at the University of Stellenbosch, South Africa (1971–1978).
• Senior Lecturer in the Department of Biblical Studies (Faculty of Arts) at the University of Stellenbosch, South Africa (1978–1984).
• Professor in the Department of New Testament at the University of South Africa (1984–1988).
• Head of the C.B. Powell Bible Centre in the Faculty of Theology at the University of South Africa (1984–1988).
• Professor of New Testament in the Faculty of Divinity at Rhodes University (1989–2002).
• Executive Director of the Centre for the Study of Christian Spirituality and Ethics (1990–).
• Professor Extraordinarius and Research Fellow in the Department of New Testament in the Faculty of Theology, University of the Free State (2001–).

Merit awards and research grants
• Merit awards for academic excellence from the University of Stellenbosch (B.A. studies).
• Elize Visser Scholarship at the University of Stellenbosch.
• Merit award for the best student in the second-year theology class of the Faculty of Theology at the University of Stellenbosch (1969).
• Merit awards from the University of Stellenbosch (B.Th. studies).
• D.A.A.D. stipendium (German Academic Exchange Scholarship) for study in the Federal Republic of Germany at the Theological Faculty of the University of Göttingen (Georg-August Universität, 1973).
• Senior Research Grant from the Human Sciences Research Council of South Africa (HSRC) to do research at Duke University (Durham, North Carolina, USA) on apocalyptic literature (with Prof J.H. Charlesworth). Visiting Fellow at Duke University (1980).
• Human Sciences Research Council Travel Grant to attend the annual meeting of the Society of Biblical Literature in San Francisco (1981).
• Research grant from the University of Stellenbosch for a research project on apocalyptic literature (1982).
• Human Sciences Research Council Travel Grant to attend the annual meeting of the Society of Biblical Literature in New York (1982).
• Ad Hoc Research Grant from the Human Sciences Research Council of South Africa and the University of Stellenbosch to research the topic, Wisdom in 1 Enoch: A study on the speculative element in apocalyptic literature (1983).
• University of South Africa grant and Senior Research Grant from the Human Sciences Research Council to research the topic, The relationship between Christianity and Judaism in the Acts of the Apostles, at Yale University (New Haven, USA). Research Fellow at Yale University (Divinity School, 1986–1987).
• Rhodes University Research Grants for various projects and travel grants to attend international meetings (1988–2000).
• Grants from the Human Sciences Research Council (National Research Foundation, Stellenbosch University and Rhodes University to invite international scholars (mostly experts on Jewish early Christian literature) to South Africa, amongst them Prof Jim H. Charlesworth, Lars Harman, G.W.E. Nickelsburg, Richard Bauckham, A.J. Malherbe and Wayne A. Meeks (USA).
• Rhodes University Grant and Senior Research Grant from the Human Sciences Research Council (National Research Foundation) to do research on the topic, The household under threat in the Pastoral Epistles at Yale University in New Haven, USA. Research Fellow at Yale University (Divinity School, 1992–1993).
• Supervisor Grants to Senior Academics from the Human Sciences Research Council (NRF) for master’s and doctoral students in 1997–1999.
• Research Funding from the University of the Free State to do research in The Netherlands and Germany (2002–2015).
• Research Grant from the D.A.A.D. (Wiedereinladung) to conduct research at the Ludwig Maximilians University in Munich, Germany in co-operation with Prof Jörg Frey (2004).

Curriculum Vitae: Pieter G.R. de Villiers
• Research Grant from the D.A.A.D. (Wiedereinladung) to conduct research at the University of Regensburg, Germany in co-operation with Prof Tobias Nicklas (2009).

Academic experience

• Research Institutions and committees
  ▪ Member of the University Research Committee of the Faculty of Theology at Stellenbosch University and of Senate at Rhodes University as well as the Library Committee of Senate of Rhodes University.

• Teaching
  ▪ Tutor in Greek at the University of Stellenbosch (1968–1969).
  ▪ Teaching Spirituality in the honours as well as in the master’s programs at Rhodes University.
  ▪ Teaching a master’s degree (course work) in spirituality at the University of the Free State.
  ▪ Part-time teaching in the Department of Ancient Studies at the University of Stellenbosch.
  ▪ Visiting professor at the Christian University of St Petersburg, Russia (2004, 2006 and 2010).
  ▪ Visiting lecturer at various universities in Switzerland, the Netherlands, Belgium, Germany, the United Kingdom and Namibia.

• Supervision of Research
  ▪ Supervised master’s and doctoral theses at the Universities of Stellenbosch, University of South Africa, Rhodes University and the University of the Free State.
  ▪ Leader of a master’s degree course in spirituality at the University of the Free State.

• External examining and evaluation
  ▪ External evaluator and examiner of postgraduate theses at several South-African universities (University of the Witwatersrand, University of Pretoria, University of the Free State, Stellenbosch University, University of Potchefstroom, University of Kwa-Zulu Natal, University of South Africa, The Joint Board of Theological Institutions in Southern Africa and the University of Namibia).

• Refereeing
  ▪ Referee for the National Research Foundation (NRF) of the Human Sciences Research Council of South Africa for grants and overseas conferences, as well as articles for journals in the field of Old and New-Testament Studies, both locally and abroad.

Executive positions in scholarly societies

• Co-chair of the Background group of the New Testament Society of South Africa.
• Co-chair of the Religious experience group of the New Testament Society of South Africa.
• Co-chair of the Mysticism Group of the New Testament Society of South Africa.
• Member of the executive of the Association of Southern African Theological institutions (1992–1995).
• Member of the executive of the South African Society for Biblical and Religious Studies.
• Member of the Management Council of the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) Alumni Society of South Africa (1999–2005).
• Member and chairperson of the South African Association for Spirituality (SPIRASA).
• Executive Director of the Centre for the Study of Christian Spirituality and Ethics (1990–).
• Organizer of NAVNUT (Nederlandse, Afrikaanse, Vlaamse Nuwe-Testament Projek) since January 2008 (for South African, Dutch and Flemish scholars). Conceptualized, organized and co-organized two conferences held by the group (on violence and power) and co-organized the third conference on peace.

Editorial boards

• Member and chair of the International Relations Committee (IRC) of the Society of the Study of Christian Spirituality (SSCS).
• Member of the Editorial Board of Theologia Evangelica (1986–1988).
• Member of the Editorial Board of Scriptura.
• Member (co-worker) of the Editorial Board of Nederduitse Gereformeerde Teologiese Tydskrif (2003–).
• Member of the Editorial Board of Acta Patristica et Byzantina.
• Member of the Editorial Board of Neotestamentica. The Journal of the New Testament Society of South Africa.
• Editor of LitNet Akademies (Godsdienswetenskappe).
• Member and Associate Editor of AOSIS Scholarly Publications, Domain Religion.
• Chair (since 2015) of the Editorial Board of Neotestamentica.
• Member of the Editorial Board of Spiritus, the journal of the Society for the Study of Christian Spirituality (SSCS).

Linguistic training and competence

• Ancient languages:
  ▪ Latin
  ▪ Greek
  ▪ Hebrew
  ▪ Aramaic
  ▪ Syriac
  ▪ Coptic

• Modern languages:
  ▪ German (Certificate in intermediate German; Goethe Institut, 1973)
  ▪ Dutch
  ▪ Afrikaans
  ▪ English
  ▪ French
Church involvement

- Licensed as minister of religion in the Dutch Reformed Church of South Africa (1974).
- Ordained as minister of religion in the Dutch Reformed Church of South Africa (1993).
- Served on a number of church boards, church commissions and synods of the Dutch Reformed Church of South Africa in Stellenbosch and Grahamstown.

Other activities and interests

- Member of several community societies and their executives (social, historical, educational and classical societies):
  - member of the School Committee of Stellenbosch Primary School (1983–1984)
  - member of the Governing Body of P.J. Olivier High School in Grahamstown (1994)
  - member of the Executive of the Governing Body of P.J. Olivier High School (1996)
  - chairperson of the Governing Body as well as its Executive (1996).
  - Patron of the Undergraduate Society of Theological Students (Admissiebond) at Stellenbosch University.
  - Squash
    - Played league squash in Stellenbosch, Pretoria and Grahamstown.
  - Representative of the Rhodes University Senate on the Sports Committee of the University.
  - Passed the final examinations in piano (University of South Africa, 1966).
  - Computer Science (Rhodes University, 2002).
  - Running: occasional participation in marathons.

Scholarly papers read at conferences

- 1982, ‘The service of the believer’, paper read at the Theological Faculty of the University of Stellenbosch.
- 1982, ‘The motive of chastisement in Hebrews 12’, paper read at the Theological Faculty of the University of Stellenbosch.
- 1982, ‘Renaissance of sociological text analysis’, paper read at the Theological Faculty of the University of South Africa, Pretoria.
- 1983, ‘Solving the riddle: Towards a consensus in apocalyptic research?’, paper read at the annual meeting of the Old Testament Society of South Africa.
- 1983, ‘Relevance of general linguistics for the reading of classical texts’, paper read at a public seminar organised by the Department of General Linguistics of the University of Stellenbosch (with J.C. Thom).
- 1985, ‘Miracles in the time and world of the Bible’, paper read at the University of South Africa.
- 1985, ‘The use of Scripture and modern society: Political interpretations of the Bible’, inaugural lecture at the University of South Africa.
- 1992, ‘The Church and development: Determining priorities’, paper read at a conference on Church and Development, University of the Western Cape.
- 1993, ‘The opponents in 1 Timothy’, paper read at the Faculty of Theology, University of Geneva.


• 2002, ‘The historical Jesus’, paper read at the Theological Faculty, University of Stellenbosch.


• 2003, ‘Interpreting Revelation in the new millennium’, paper read at the Faculty of Theology, University of Stellenbosch.

• 2003, ‘Obscurity and ambiguity in pagan oracles and Revelation’, paper read at an International Colloquium at McGill University, Montreal.


• 2004, ‘Following the radical Jesus in the quest for a humane society: The contribution of Biblical spirituality to the new struggle against violence’, opening paper read at the SAAP Conference for Ministers, Stellenberg, 14 September.


• 2005, ‘The ethics of 1 Timothy’, paper read at the University of Pretoria, 15–17 Augustus.

• 2005, ‘Shaping the common future: Academic exchange and scientific cooperation between South Africa and Germany’, presentation at the DAAD workshop, Johannesburg, 5 November.


• 2007, ‘Mysticism in Revelation’, paper read at an expert meeting at the Titus Brandsma Institute for Spirituality, Radboud University, Nijmegen, June.

• 2007, ‘The septet of seven trumpets in Revelation’, paper read at the Free University in Brussels, 11 June.


• 2007, ‘Biblical spirituality, peace and a culture of violence’, inaugural lecture, University of the Free State, 12 September.


• 2009, ‘A spiritual reading of the Bible in a time of war: The twentieth century diary of Renske van der Walt’, paper read at a conference of the Spirituality Association of South Africa (Spirasa), Pretoria, 17 April.


• 2009, ‘Reflections on spirituality: A new vision for a new discipline’, paper read at a conference on Biblical Spirituality at the University of Nijmegen, 16 October.

• 2009, ‘Theoretical and hermeneutical perspectives on Biblical spirituality’, paper read at the University of Gloucestershire, United Kingdom, 27 October.

• 2010, ‘The resurrection as Christ’s entry in glory’, paper read at a conference of the University of Gloucester, Gloucester, 04–06 May.


• 2011, ‘Love in the Letter to the Romans’, paper read at a Conference in honour of Andrie du Toit’s 80th birthday, organized by the Department of New Testament at the University of Pretoria.


• 2012, ‘Historical, literary and mystical perspectives in Spinoza’s Interpretation of the Torah’, paper read on invitation at the international meeting of the Society of Biblical Literature, Amsterdam.

• 2012, ‘Community discernment in Acts’, paper read at an international conference on Discernment in the Bible and Spirituality, Malta, May.
2012, ‘The first fruit of the Spirit: Pauline perspectives on love’, paper read at an international symposium on the Bible and Spirituality, hosted by the Centre of the Bible and Spirituality in the School of Humanities at the University of Gloucestershire, May.

2012, ‘Enslaved in love: Perspectives on the theme of love in Paul’s Letter to the Galatians’, paper read at a conference on the Letter to the Galatians, Faculty of Theology, University of the Free State, 13–14 March.


2013, ‘In awe of the mighty deeds of God: Holy fear in the early church from the perspective of Biblical spirituality’, opening and keynote address at the conference on Wondrous Fear and Holy Awe at the University of Notre Dame, 29 June – 02 July. Responses given by John T. Fitzgerald and Gary Anderson of the University of Notre Dame.

2014, ‘Apocalyptic favour and the socially disadvantaged’, paper read at the conference on Perspectives on the Socially Disadvantaged in Early Christianity, held at the University of the Free State, Bloemfontein.

2014, ‘Holiness in Mark’s Gospel’, paper read at the Annual Meeting of the Spirituality Association of South Africa, held at the University of South Africa, Pretoria, 11 August.


2014, ‘Perspectives on holiness’, paper read at an International Meeting on Spirituality, Radboud University, Titus Brandsma Institute, Nijmegen, 27 May.


2014, ‘Smuggling the Law through the back door?: The Law and love in the ethics, ethos, and identity of the Galatian community’, paper read at the Annual Meeting of the Society of Biblical Literature (Biblical Ethics group), San Diego, 23 November.


2015, ‘What are the hallmarks of the spiritual interpretation of Scripture?’, paper read at the Christian theology and the Bible Group of the Annual Meeting of the Society of Biblical Literature, Atlanta.


Research articles in scientific journals


1992, ‘Helde in eie huis, Oor die etiek van 1 Timoteus’, Scriptura 9, 223–240.


List of publications

Theses


• 2003, ‘Religiouse ervaring as hermeneutiese beginsel in die interpretasie van Bybeltekste in die lig van die boek Openbaring’, Nederduitse Gereformeerde Teologiese Tydskrif 44, 276–286.
• 2007, ‘Rethinking the contribution of Spinoza to theology and Biblical Studies’, Studia Historiae Ecclesiasticae 33, 251–271.
Research chapters in books


Articles in dictionaries

  - Violence
- Encyclopedia of the Bible and its reception, EBR; Walter De Gruyter, Berlin.
  - Adoration
  - Angels and angelic beings
  - Astronomy
  - Auditions
  - Dragon
  - Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse New Testament

Edited books

- 1987, Healing in the name of God, UNISA, Pretoria.

• 1987, Like a roaring lion... Essays on the Bible, the church and demonic powers, UNISA, Pretoria.
• 1987, Liberation theology and the Bible, UNISA, Pretoria.
• 1988, Hoe lees ’n mans die Bybel?, UNISA, Pretoria.
• 1988, Reading Revelation, with E. Botha & J. Engelbrecht, Van Schaik, Pretoria.

Translated books

• 2000, Drie minute stilte op die lewenspad: ’n Jaar se gedagtes oor wysheid en geloof, Lux Verbi, Wellington.
• 2003, 1, 2 en 3 Johannes, Lux Verbi, Wellington.
• 2005, ’n Seisoen vir heel word, with a postscript, Lux Verbi, Wellington.
• 2005, Lion handboek tot die Bybel (Nuwe Testament), Lux Verbi, Wellington.
• 2007, Henri Nouwen: Die terugkeer van die verlore seun. ’n Ware verhaal oor tuiskoms, with a postscript, Lux Verbi, Wellington.
• 2007, D. & J. Stoop, Die volledige ouerskapboek, with a postcript, Lux Verbi, Wellington.
• 2007, D. & J. Stoop, Die volledige huweliksbok, with a postcript, Lux Verbi, Wellington.

Books

• 1987, Leviatan aan ’n lintjie: Woord en wêreld van die sieners, Serva, Pretoria.
• 1999, SAA in God se span, Lux Verbi, Kaapstad.
• 1999, Kom gou, Here, Lux Verbi, Kaapstad.
• 2001, Jabes roep tot God, Lux Verbi, Wellington.

University textbooks

• 2000, Young churches in old cities: The contextual mission theology of selected Pauline Letters, 156 pages, Module (F6) on the Pauline Letters for the Southern Theological Education and Training Scheme, Salisbury, an associated institution of the University of Surrey, Salisbury, Great Britain. (Published by STETS).
• 2005, Revised Edition: Young churches in old cities: The contextual mission theology of selected Pauline Letters, 156 pages, Module (F6) on the Pauline Letters for the Southern Theological Education and Training Scheme, Salisbury, an associated institution of the University of Surrey, Salisbury, Great Britain. (Published by STETS).

General articles

• 1997, Articles in Studiebybel vir tiener, J.L. van Schaik, Pretoria.

• 2002, Contributions to Die groot gebedeboek, Lux Verbi, Wellington.
• 2007, Contributions to Gebedeboek vir die lewe, Lux Verbi, Wellington.
• 2008, Articles in Christelike Kerkensiklopedie, Lux Verbi, Wellington.

Various articles in newspapers and church journals.

Book Reviews


Bible translations
• Translated Acts in the New Afrikaans Translation of the Bible (Acts), Bible Society of South Africa.
• Translated Acts in the Interlinear Bible (C.U.M., Vereeniging).