Foreword

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This book is a celebration of 100 years of Theology in the Faculty of Theology (FT) at the University of Pretoria (UP). A historical and futuristic overview is created with perspectives from the past, present and future. Authors are all personnel or research associates of the Faculty. The past is not only colourfully portrayed with societal and academic contributions, but it also assumes the malfunctions, ill-behaviour and disappointments of church and theology in the South African context over 100 years.

In a general introduction, the book starts with the changed role of the FT at a current secular state university, focusing on the importance of the impact of research productivity. Theology and Religious Studies (TRS) also contribute to the business of world university rankings.

The core of the book focuses on the contributions, deficits and future visions of the traditional theological disciplines, namely, firstly, the biblical sciences (Old and New Testament Studies), then the historical disciplines (Systematic Theology, Church History and Church Polity) and finally, the practical disciplines (Practical Theology [PT], Science of Religion and Missiology). The role of Religion Studies in a newly established Faculty of Theology and Religion not only enhances the diversity of interreligious tolerance and an atmosphere of interreligious dialogue, but it serves as platform to interconnect with the fields of Humanities and Social and Natural Sciences or other disciplines.

In the concluding part of the book, contributions underscore the role of the centres in the Faculty (Centre for Contextual Ministry [CCM] and Centre for Sustainable Communities [CSC]) as well as the continental and international footprints of the two theological

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journals, *HTS Theological Studies/Teologiese Studies* (HTS) and *Verbum et Ecclesia* (VE).

The book *Theology at the University of Pretoria - 100 years: (1917-2017) Past, present and future* consists of the following chapters.

In Part 1, **Johan Buitendag** and **Corneliu C. Simut** debate the title 'Rethinking research impact by Theology and Religious Studies with references to the Faculty of Theology at the University of Pretoria'. They reckon that TRS are two interconnected and mutually dependent fields of academic inquiry that belong to the larger and more encompassing domain of general humanities. Given this interconnectivity, reciprocity and interdependability with the humanities, TRS find themselves in the same position of constantly being evaluated from various perspectives, including the particularly measurable perspective of research outputs. While research outputs can be measured rather easily in the sense that they are tangible and readable in a published format, the way in which they are actually evaluated and given credit for their content is a totally different matter and quite a complex problem.

This chapter is an attempt to demonstrate that it is not fair to evaluate research outputs in the field of TRS only in comparison to completely different fields, such as the natural sciences, but they need to be evaluated in comparison to closer and more related domains from the very corpus of the humanities. It is suggested, therefore, that three distinct features should be taken into account for a proper and fair assessment of research outputs in TRS, namely research productivity, citations and academic reputation. These, in turn, must always be complemented by a set of necessarily subsequent measures such as an increased-productivity reward, a high-citations reward, a high-impact journals reward and an international-research increase. The proposed ranking indicators and their rewarding measures are discussed and exemplified with specific reference to the research performance of the FT within UP, South Africa (SA).

In Part 2, the role of the different theological disciplines in the Faculty are portrayed. It starts with the focus on the biblical sciences.

Regarding Old Testament Studies, **Dirk J. Human, Alphonso Groenewald, E.E. Meyer, Ananda Geyer-Fouché, Sampson S.**

Ndoga and **Gerda E. de Villiers** depict perspectives on 'Old Testament Studies: Glimpses of the past and future'. In a short historical overview of the academic and social contributions of the Department of Old Testament Studies (OTS) at the UP over the past century (1917–2017), this chapter provides a brief picture of how the Department has contributed to academia, church and society. In this year of the Faculty of Theology's centenary celebrations, the chapter contemplates selected highlights of the past and intends to discover the avenues of future vistas through current academic strengths, research foci of personnel and the actualisation of the Old Testament (OT) in the African context(s).

Since the inception of the UP in 1908, the Faculty of Humanities has been involved in OT related studies through the Hebrew language. OTS has become known over many years through individual scholars' expertise regarding Bible translation and the foci on specific parts of the OT, namely the Pentateuch, Psalms, Prophets or Second Temple literature. World-renowned projects since 1990 involved several international scholars. These include, inter alia, Pro Pent, Pro Psalms, Pro Prof and Qumran projects.

Because the department is located at a FT in Africa, it has always strived to become theologically relevant for local and African contexts. The department always envisions excellence and relevant scholarship for its contexts in academia, church and society.

Hanre Jansé van Rensburg treats New Testament Studies (NTS) under the title 'Celebratory nostalgia: Reflecting on the work and impact of New Testament Studies'. In the context of the centenary celebrations of the FT at the UP, this chapter takes a closer look at the Department of NTS. It does not only serve as a reflection on the past people and events that have led to the department's present. Making use of introspective examination focused on the department's current position, task and impact, this chapter aspires to allow for the generation and evaluation of mental representations of possible futures. It thus anticipates to explore the history, work and impact of the Department of NTS at the UP briefly by focusing on the variety of methods used by the current members of the department in their various

research projects as well as the impact that these projects have and can continue to have. In doing so, the chapter demonstrates that the department embraces a methodology which holds the diachronic and synchronous approaches in dialogue, thus pursuing a holistic approach. Through the pursuit of a holistic approach, the chapter demonstrates, that the Department of NTS ensures a focus on the distinctive contribution that the New Testament (NT) offers – a better understanding of the dialectic between theological conceptualisation and historical reality. The disciplines of the historical sciences are depicted as follows.

Daniël P. Veldsman, Johan Buitendag, Willem Fourie and **Tanya van Wyk** discuss Systematic Theology under the title 'Finding an academic voice in post-apartheid South Africa: Systematic Theology at the University of Pretoria'. The following question is asked: How can an academic voice of systematic-theological reflection find expression at a public university in a post-apartheid SA? In this chapter, the different research foci of the members of the Department of Dogmatics and Christian Ethics at the UP are presented and interpreted as attempts aimed to find such a voice as a collection of voices within a society characterised by shifting social-ecclesial and theological landscapes.

Specific research foci are structured and presented from the hermeneutical question that was posed by Ricoeur, namely *D'où parlez-vous?* [Where do you speak from?]. These are eco-hermeneutics; evolutionary perspectives on religious experience; an ethic of sociality within postcolonial, pluralist and unequal societies; and ecclesiological challenges and political theology. Against the background of the vision, objectives and values of the department, the main objectives of their respective approaches as explication of the 'speaking from' and 'speaking to'. In conclusion, they identify some of the most important contemporary issues that are, according to them, to be addressed within the southern African context.

With church-historical perspectives **Wim A. Dreyer** and **Jerry Pillay** outline 'Historical Theology: Content, methodology and relevance'. In this chapter, the authors reflect on Historical

Theology as theological discipline. They propose that historical theology could be applied to different areas of research such as prolegomena, history of the church, history of missions, history of theology, history of ecumenical theology or public theology and church polity. The point is made that historical theology, when properly structured and presented, could play a major role in enriching the theological and ecclesial conversation and in assisting the church in the process of reformation and transformation.

The third group of disciplines is characterised as the practical disciplines. **Casparus J. Wepener, Yolanda Dreyer** and **Johann A. Meylahn** provide perspective on 'The tradition of Practical Theology at the University of Pretoria'. The focus of this chapter is the tradition of PT at the UP. The authors look at PT from different angles in order to throw light on the unique position of the Department of PT at the UP by the time of the celebration of the centenary of the FT and especially also its future in this particular context. By looking at the history of the subject and the department as well as the global and local contexts in which the discipline is practiced in Pretoria, they sketch the possible direction in which this discipline can move at the Department of PT at the UP after 2017 (the year of the centenary of the FT).

The chapter challenges the discipline of PT to embrace the continent of Africa where the department is situated, an embrace which will impact on both ontology and epistemology. In this regard, they suggest a pneumapraxis to be part of the future of this discipline in SA. The chapter promotes both an intra- and interdisciplinary approach.

Science of Religion and Missiology receive attention from **Cornelius J. Niemandt** and **Jaco Beyers** in the chapter entitled 'Science of Religion and Missiology: Historical overview, theological discourses and future possibilities'. The history and contributions of the Department Science of Religion and Missiology at the UP are described with a particular focus on a discussion of the understanding of both disciplines. In the case of Science of Religion, the research covers theological discourses in the discipline, attending to issues such as secularisation and Theology of Religions. It is argued that, in the future, Science

of Religion will continue to contribute to three areas of concern, namely studying religions, secularisation and theology of religion and religions.

The chapter concludes with a brief overview of future contributions by the department. Missiology is defined in terms of current insights in the discipline against the background of the decline in mission studies at many universities. The research argues that Missiology is an intrinsic part of Theology. The following discourses in Missiology are noted, namely flourishing life, ecological justice, the role of the Holy Spirit in the *missio Dei*, missional church, contextualisation and indigenisation, and mission from the margins. The contributions of the department as well as future contributions are described. This includes an argument for the change of the name of the department to the Department of Religion Studies. In terms of future developments, research into flourishing life as well as deep incarnation are noted as exciting new possibilities.

Jaco Beyers elaborates further on the subject of Religion Studies in a chapter entitled 'Fathoming Religion Studies: Treading on the spider's web'. He reckons that any attempt at understanding religion proves to be a perilous undertaking. Understanding Religion Studies as it is envisioned to function at the Faculty of Theology and Religion at the UP already implies some problems. To fathom the breadth of Religion Studies is like treading on a spider's web: There are so many interconnected elements related to this field of study. The metaphor of a spider's web is utilised to portray the interconnectedness of religion to other elements. Kobus Krüger's concept of conditionality is utilised to describe this interrelatedness. There are many possible approaches to studying religion. This research highlights the anthropological, philosophical and sociological approaches. The relationship between religion and several other disciplines (i.e. education, law, science, politics and economy) is illuminated in this chapter.

Part 3 of the book outlines the contributions of the theological centres in the faculty and follows some footprints of the theological journals HTS and VE.

Stephanus F. de Beer and **Attie S. van Niekerk** first describe aspects of their centres in the chapter entitled 'Transforming curricula into the next century: Doing theology collaboratively with local communities'. As part of the faculty's celebrations of its first century of existence (2017), this chapter is an attempt to draw from the emergentist approaches of the CCM and the CSC, asking whether it perhaps offers clues for transforming curricula as we enter our second century. The chapter seeks to offer a vision for doing theology collaboratively with communities, in liminal spaces, opening up a transdisciplinary approach to theological engagement. In its engagement with local and struggling contexts, subverting the conventional suburban classroom spaces and hierarchies of knowledge alike, it opens itself up for the ongoing transformation of both theology and the theological curriculum as well as for the transformation of local communities. It presents the possibility of doing theology at a public university in a way that could have direct, and hopefully liberating and life-giving, impact in a deeply unequal society, mediating multiple households of freedom.

Andries G. van Aarde, Dirk J. Human and **Daniël P. Veldsman** provide a bird's-eye view on '*HTS Theological Studies/Teologiese Studies* and *Verbum et Ecclesia:* South African accredited journals with footprint'. This chapter forms part of the centennial celebration of the FT of the UP. The focus is on the two scholarly journals linked to the FT in Pretoria, namely HTS and VE. The first and longer section of the chapter focuses on HTS, the oldest and largest of the two journals. The second and shorter section is about VE. The overarching aim of the chapter is to tell the story of their historical and formal footprints that have shaped their respective character as scientific theological journals. Much attention is given to the contemporary functioning and positioning of the journals within the broader university and greater intellectual context but also to their relation to the African context.

In sum, the scope of the book enlightens not only the faculty's academic achievements but also its fragile history and exciting future.

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