


Om die Rubicon oor te steek: Oopmaak van die hekke in die Nederduitsch Hervormde Kerk van Afrika/ Crossing the Rubicon: Opening of gates in the Netherdutch Reformed Church in Africa

**Authors:**Ernest Van Eck¹ **Affiliation:**¹Department of New Testament Studies, Faculty of Theology, University of Pretoria, South Africa**Corresponding author:**Ernest van Eck,
ernest.vaneck@up.ac.za**Dates:**

Received: 25 Aug. 2017

Accepted: 25 Aug. 2017

Published: 12 Dec. 2017

How to cite this article:Van Eck, E., 2017, 'Om die Rubicon oor te steek: Oopmaak van die hekke in die Nederduitsch Hervormde Kerk van Afrika/Crossing the Rubicon: Opening of gates in the Netherdutch Reformed Church in Africa', *HTS Teologiese Studies/Theological Studies* 73(1), a4793. <https://doi.org/10.4102/hts.v73i1.4793>**Copyright:**© 2017. The Authors.
Licensee: AOSIS. This work is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution License.

By geleentheid van die 500 jaar herdenking van die Reformasie en die eeufees van die Fakulteit Teologie van die Universiteit van Pretoria, word HTS se Eeufeesbundel Volume Twee opgedra aan die Nederduitsch Hervormde Kerk van Afrika (NHKA), die oudste kerklike vennoot van die teologiese fakulteit aan die Universiteit van Pretoria – uit dankbare erkenning vir wat die NHKA tot die beoefening van kritiese teologie in die afgelope 100 jaar in Suid Afrika bygedra het en vir die ondersteuning van HTS Teologiese Studies as titeleienaar vir 73 jaar. HTS se Eeufeesbundel Volume Twee neem die vorm aan van 'n kompendium van die belangrikste dokumente wat die 'oorsteek van die Rubicon' in die NHKA voorafgegaan en opgevolg het, sowel as die publikasie van drie spesiale kolleksies, te wete '100 jaar Hervormde Teologie' (onder redakteurskap van Wim Dreyer), 'Hervormde teoloë in gesprek' (onder redakteurskap van Christo van der Merwe), en 'Kerkhervorming 1517–2017' (onder redakteurskap van Natie van Wyk).

On the occasion of the 500 year commemoration of the Reformation and the centenary celebration of the Faculty of Theology HTS Centenary Volume Two is dedicated to the Netherdutch Reformed Church in Africa (NRCA), the oldest partner of the theological faculty at the University of Pretoria – with grateful recognition to what the NRCA contributed to the practice of critical theology in South Africa over the past 100 years and its support of *HTS Theological Studies* as title owner for 73 years. HTS Centenary Volume Two takes the form of a compendium of the most important documents that preceded and followed the 'crossing of the Rubicon' in the NRCA, as well as the publication of three special collections, namely '100 jaar Hervormde Teologie' (edited by Wim Dreyer), 'Hervormde teoloë in gesprek' (edited by Christo van der Merwe), and 'Kerkhervorming 1517–2017' (edited by Natie van Wyk).

Introduction to compendium

The Netherdutch Reformed Church of Africa (NRCA), because of an exclusive article in its church order (Article III) that stated that only white people were allowed to be members of the NRCA, and its support of apartheid on the basis of Scripture, was suspended from the World Alliance of Reformed Churches (WARC) in 1982 during its Ottawa conference.

The NRCA's road back to membership of the WARC started in 2006, when a team of the WARC visited the NRCA from Monday, 05 June to Thursday, 08 June 2006. On Friday, 06 March 2009, members of the Executive Committee of WARC again met with the Commission of the General Assembly of the NRCA to discuss the NRCA's possible readmission to WARC. In order to be

Inleiding tot kompendium

Die Nederduitsch Hervormde Kerk van Afrika (NHKA), as gevolg van 'n eksklusiewe bepaling in die kerkorde (Artikel III) wat bepaal het dat slegs blankes lidmate van die NHKA kan wees, en die NHKA se Skriftuurlike ondersteuning van apartheid, se lidmaatskap van die Wêreldalliansie van Reformatoriese Kerke (WARK) is in 1982 tydens hierdie ekumeniese liggaam se Ottawa-kongres opgeskort.

Die NKHA se pad teug na lidmaatskap van die WARK het begin in 2006 toe afgevaardigdes van WARK die NHKA besoek het vanaf 05–08 Junie 2006. Op Vrydag, 06 Maart 2010, het lede van die dagbestuur van die WARK weer vergader met die Kommissie van die Algemene Kerkvergadering met die oog op die

Read online:

Scan this QR code with your smart phone or mobile device to read online.

readmitted, an unequivocal motion by the General Assembly of the NRCA rejecting Apartheid as contrary to the gospel message was required. During this meeting, the Commission were not prepared to comply with this requirement, and some members of the Commission even yet again defended apartheid on the basis of Scripture.

As a result of this outcome, five theologians of the NRCA, of which four have received the HCM Fourie medal of honour from the NRCA, namely Johan Buitendag, Yolanda Dreyer, James Alfred Loader and Andries van Aarde, and the author of this article, released a press statement titled 'Apartheid in church and politics' on 10 March 2009. In this statement, these five theologians unequivocally declared that apartheid is sinful in essence and in its consequences, and that an attempt at any theological justification whatsoever of apartheid is misguided, and called on the NRCA to admit that it was wrong, for so many years, to support apartheid on the basis of Scripture.

This statement eventually led to Resolution 54/69, submitted for discussion and decision at the 69th General Assembly of the NRCA. Resolution 54 *inter alia* states that apartheid cannot be accepted or justified by Christians because (1) it was based on the premise of inequality and, therefore, impedes the Ministry of Reconciliation in Christ; (2) it allocated privileges to white people at the expense of black people; (3) it perpetrated injustice and oppression, among other things by the forced removal of people from specific areas, which destroyed the lives of countless individuals and families and (4) it obscures the image of God in people – which saddens the Holy Spirit.

After a lengthy discussion, the General Assembly adopted a resolution, and thus, for the first time, officially stated that supporting apartheid by means of Scripture was wrong. In essence, apartheid is unjustifiable. Although adopted by a majority vote (58% of the delegates), 144 delegates to the meeting noted their vote against the resolution, which later resulted in a schism in the NRCA.

For the NRCA, this was literally the moment of 'crossing the Rubicon', a process that already started with the National Colloquium held by the NRCA in April 2006. This chapter in the history of the NRCA was concluded in 2016 when the World Communion of Reformed Churches (WCRC)¹ took a decision to reinstate the NRCA as a member of the WCRC.

This article wants to put this period of the history of the NRCA on record by bringing together in one publication the documents that served as catalyst for the NRCA to 'cross the Rubicon', as well as other important documents produced by this process in the NRCA. The following documents are, therefore, included below:

1. In 2010, the Reformed Ecumenical Council and the World Alliance of Reformed Churches united to form the World Communion of Reformed Churches.

heropname van die NHKA in WARK. Die voorwaarde vir hertoelating was, soos in die verlede, dat die NHKA 'n ondubbelsinnige sinodale besluit moes neem wat apartheid as oevangelies verwerp. Die Kommissie was nie bereid om die Kerk hiertoe te verbind nie, en sommige lede van die Kommissie het, tot die teendeel, apartheid weereens Skriftuurlik probeer begrond.

In reaksie op hierdie besluit van die Kommissie, het vyf teoloë van die NHKA – waarvan vier die HCM Fourie Erepennig ontvang het en laasgenoemde die skrywer van hierdie oorsigartikel is – te wete Johan Buitendag, Yolanda Dreyer James Alfred Loader, Andries van Aarde, en Ernest van Eck, op 10 Maart 2009 'n openbare verklaring getitel 'Verklaring oor apartheid in kerk en politiek' uitgereik. In hierdie verklaring het die vyf teoloë onomwonde verklaar dat apartheid sowel in uitwerking as in wese sonde is en enige teologiese regverdiging daarvan 'n mistasting is. Hulle het verder die NHKA opgeroep om te erken dat die Kerk in die verlede verkeerd was deur apartheid Skriftuurlik te probeer begrond.

Genoemde verklaring het later in Besluit 54/69 uitgemond wat in die agenda van die 69ste Algemene Kerkvergadering gedien het vir bespreking en besluitneming. Besluit 54 stel onder andere dat apartheid nie aanvaar of goedgepraat kan word nie omdat (1) dit gebaseer is op 'n beweerde ongelykheid tussen mense wat in die pad kom van die bediening van die versoeningswerk van Christus; (2) dit eksklusiewe voordele aan wit mense ten koste van swart mense gegee het; (3) daar ongeregtheid en onderdrukking plaasgevind het in onder andere die destydse gedwonge menseverskuiwings wat die gesinslewe van miljoene mense verwoes het; en (4) dit die beeld van God in mense aantast – wat die Heilige Gees bedroef.

Na 'n lang bespreking het die Algemene Kerkvergadering die voorstel aanvaar en so, vir die eerste keer, amptelik erken dat die verkeerd was om apartheid Skriftuurlik te ondersteun. Apartheid is in essensie onaanvaarbaar. Alhoewel die voorstel met 'n meerderheid van stemme aanvaar is (58% van die afgevaardigdes het vir die voorstel gestem), het 144 afgevaardigdes hulle teenstem laat aanteken, en later uit protes kerkskeuring in die NHKA tweeggebring.

Vir die NHKA was hierdie letterlik die oomblik waarin die Kerk die 'Rubicon oorgesteek het', 'n proses wat in wese al in April 2006 begin het met die hou van 'n Nasionale Colloquium. Hierdie hoofstuk in die geskiedenis van die NHKA is in 2016 afgesluit toe die WARK die NHKA se lidmaatskap van die WARK (WCRC)² heringestel het.

Hierdie artikel wil hierdie deel van die geskiedenis in die NHKA boekstaaf deur die dokumente wat as katalisator vir die NHKA gedien het om die 'Rubicon oor te steek, byeen te bring in een publikasie. Belangrike dokumente

2. In 2010, het die Gereformeerde Ekumeniese Raad met die Wêreldbond gemaalgemeen en die World Communion of Reformed Churches gevorm.

- Netherdutch Reformed theologians who crossed the Rubicon: The Synodal muniments presented to Johan Buitendag, Yolanda Dreyer, James Alfred Loader and Andries Gideon van Aarde at the occasion of receiving the HCM Fourie medal of honour, as well as their responses to the muniments presented;
- Declaration regarding apartheid in church and politics – Resolution 54 of the General Assembly of the Netherdutch Reformed Church in Africa, 2010, compiled by Johan Buitendag, Yolanda Dreyer, James Alfred Loader, Andries van Aarde and Ernest van Eck;
- The National Colloquium's joint declaration of intent made by the Netherdutch Reformed Church in Africa, including a letter from the General Secretary of the WARC as response to the NRCA's National Colloquium joint declaration of intent, the summary of conclusions of the WARC team visit and a reflection on the way forward, the NRCA's response, and the joint resolution between the WARC and the NRCA.

Gateway to...

The 'opening of the gates' of the NRCA, and the symbolic 'opening of the gates' of the Faculty of Theology during its centenary celebrations in 2017, opened up several opportunities to celebrate the 'opening of the gates' in the NRCA and the Faculty. The world renowned theologian, Jürgen Moltmann, because of new opened gates to all, accepted a PhD honoris causa from the University of Pretoria (UP). His acceptance speech at the graduation ceremony on 06 April 2017, titled 'In my end is my beginning', as well as his public lecture with as focus reconciliation, delivered on 05 April 2017 during the centenary celebration of the Faculty, are also included in this volume.

Also included in this article is the presentation of Professor Johan Buitendag, titled 'Cloud of Witnesses', delivered on 05 April 2017 at a ceremony that was part of the conference 'Gateway to the future from a deconstructed past'. During this ceremony, the Faculty acknowledged 10 predecessors – inside and outside the Faculty, who have contributed to the vision and mission of the Faculty as it is today.

World Council of Churches

Another highlight of the centennial celebrations was a colloquium held on 16 June 2017 by the *Commission of Faith and Order* of the *World Council of Churches*, in association with the Faculty of Theology in celebrating Youth Day. A contribution in this article presents the contributions of ecclesiastical and academic office bearers who participated in the colloquium. This volume of *HTS Theological Studies* also includes the keynote address during this celebration delivered by Yolanda Pantou, titled 'Ecumenical movement for millennials: A generation connected but not yet united'.

wat in wese deur hierdie proses geskep is, word ook hieronder ingesluit. Die dokumente wat ingesluit word, is die volgende:

- Nederduitsch Hervormde teoloë wat die Rubicon oorgesteek het: Die sinodale oorkondes oorhandig aan Johan Buitendag, Yolanda Dreyer, James Alfred Loader en Andries Gideon van Aarde tydens hulle ontvangs van die HCM Fourie Erepemning, asook hulle antwoorde op die ontvangs van die oorkondes;
- Verklaring oor apartheid in kerk in politiek – Besluit 54 van die Algemene Kerkvergadering van die Nederduitsch Hervormde Kerk van Afrika, 2010, opgestel deur Johan Buitendag, Yolanda Dreyer, James Alfred Loader, Andries van Aarde en Ernest van Eck;
- Die Nasionale Colloquium se verklaring van voorneme deur die Nederduitsch Hervormde Kerk van Afrika, insluitend 'n brief van die Algemene Sekretaris van WARK as respons op die Nasionale Colloquium se verklaring van voorneme, 'n opsomming van die samevatting van WARK se besoek en die belangrike vrae vir die pad vorentoe, en die WARK en die NHKA se gesamentlike verklaring van voorneme (net beskikbaar in Engels).

Oopmaak van die hekke

Die 'oopmaak van die hekke' van die NHKA, en die simboliese 'oopmaak van die hekke' van die Fakulteit Teologie tydens die eeufeesviering in 2017, het die geleentheid gebied om op verskillende wyses die 'oop hekke' in Kerk en Fakulteit te vier. Jürgen Moltmann, die wêreldbekende teoloog het in 2017 'n eredoktorsgraad van die Universiteit van Pretoria (UP) met dankbaarheid ontvang, veral op grond van die oop hekke in Kerk en Fakulteit. Sy aanvaardingstoespraak tydens die gradeplegtigheid van 06 April 2017, getitel 'In my einde is my begin', asook die openbare lesing wat hy op 05 April 2017 gelewer het oor die tema versoening, word in hierdie Volume opgeneem.

Ook opgeneem is die voordrag gelewer deur die Dekaan van die Fakulteit Teologie, prof. Johan Buitendag, getitel 'n Wolk van getuïenisse' (my vertaling) op 05 April 2017 (net beskikbaar in Engels). Tydens hierdie geleentheid, wat deel uitgemaak het van 'n konferensie gehou deur die Fakulteit, getitel 'Gateway to the future from a deconstructed past', het die Fakulteit erkenning gegee aan 10 persone – binne en buite die Fakulteit – wat bygedra het tot die Fakulteit se visie en missie soos dit tans daaruit sien.

Wêreldraad van Kerke

'n Ander hoogtepunt van die eeufeesviering van die Fakulteit Teologie was 'n colloquium wat gehou is op 16 Junie 2017 deur die *Commission of Faith and Order* van die Wêreldraad van Kerke, in samewerking met die Fakulteit Teologie, met die oog op die viering van Jeugdag. Een van die bydraes in hierdie Volume bevat groeteboodskappe en

This volume also includes an article by Gijs Dingemans on panentheism, titled 'Post-theism or another form of theism?' (my translation), and the third A.S. Geysers Commemoration lecture delivered by Dr Wim Dreyer on 30 March 2017. Linked to this lecture, two short articles are included: First is the welcoming address by Dr A.G. Ungerer, the moderator of the Executive of the General Assembly of the NRCA, with permission granted by the Executive, and an interesting cameo on Albert Geysers' resignation speech on 3 September 1968 delivered to the Executive of the General Assembly of the NRCA, compiled by Professor A.G. van Aarde.

The volume, finally, includes three special collections, namely, '100 jaar Hervormde Teologie' (edited by Wim Dreyer), 'Hervormde teoloë in gesprek' (edited by Christo van der Merwe) and 'Kerkhervorming 1517–2017' (edited by Natie van Wyk).

HTS Theological Studies, Volume 73, Issue 1, is dedicated to the NRCA for what the NRCA has contributed to the practice of critical theology in South Africa over the past 100 years, and its support of *HTS* as title owner for 73 years.

This centenary celebration volume showcases the profound transformation that took place at the Faculty of Theology at the University of Pretoria during, especially, the past two decades, as well as the NRCA's return to the ecumenical world.

opmerkings van die verskillende kerklike- en akademiese amptenare van die verskillende denominasies wat hierdie geleentheid bygewoon het. Hierdie volume van *HTS Teologiese Studies* bevat ook die teks van die hoof toespraak by hierdie geleentheid, gelewer deur Yolanda Pantou, getiteld 'Ecumenical movement for millennials: A generation connected but not yet united'.

Die Volume bevat ook 'n artikel deur Gijs Dingemans, getitel 'Post-teïsme of een andere vorm van teïsme?', en die derde A.S. Geysers Gedenklesing gelewer deur dr W.A. (Wim) Dreyer op 30 Maart 2017. Tydens hierdie geleentheid het die voorsitter van die Kommissie van die Algemene Kerkvergadering van die NHKA, dr A.G. Ungerer, met toestemming van die Algemene Kommissie, die verwelkomingswoord gespreek, wat vir die historiese belang daarvan ook hier gedokumenteer word. Ook professor A.G. van Aarde se opmerkings tydens hierdie geleentheid oor Albert Geysers se bedankingstoespraak voor die Kommissie van die Algemene Kerkvergadering op 3 September 1968 word vir die historiese waarde daarvan by hierdie volume ingesluit.

Ten slotte, hierdie aflewering van *HTS Teologiese Studies* sluit drie spesiale kolleksies in, te wete '100 jaar Hervormde Teologie' (onder redakteurskap van Wim Dreyer), 'Hervormde teoloë in gesprek' (onder redakteurskap van Christo van der Merwe), en 'Kerkhervorming 1517-2017' (onder redakteurskap van Natie van Wyk).

Hierdie eeufeesvolume word opgedra aan die NHKA uit erkenning vir die bydrae wat die NHKA gelewer het tot die beoefening van kritiese teologie die afgelope 100 jaar in Suid Afrika, en die NHKA se ondersteuning van *HTS Teologiese Studies* as titeleienaar vir 73 jaar.

Die volume is 'n vertoonvenster van die diepgaande transformasie wat veral die afgelope twee dekades by die Fakulteit Teologie, Universiteit van Pretoria plaasgevind het, asook die pad wat die NHKA gestap het om weer deel te word van die ekumeniese wêreld.

Netherdutch Reformed theologians who crossed the Rubicon/Nederduitsch Hervormde teoloë wat die Rubicon oorgesteek het

Synodal muniment presented to Johan Buitendag

With this award of the HCM Fourie honorary medal, the Netherdutch Reformed Church of Africa extends its sincerest appreciation to Prof. Johan Buitendag for his distinguished service as theologian, minister and previous Moderator of the General Assembly.

Johan Buitendag was born on 20 November 1953. He was ordained by the Netherdutch Reformed Church of Africa on 27 November 1977 and served the parishes of Parkrand, Randburg and Stellenbosch. During the period of 1984–

Sinodale oorkonde aan Johan Buitendag

Met die toekenning van die HCM Fourie-erepenning aan professor Johan Buitendag word erkenning gegee vir sy uitnemende diens as teoloog, predikant en voormalige voorsitter van die Algemene Kerkvergadering van die Nederduitsch Hervormde Kerk van Afrika.

Johan Buitendag is op 20 November 1953 gebore. Hy word op 27 November 1977 as predikant van die Nederduitsch Hervormde Kerk georden en bedien die gemeentes Parkrand, Randburg en Stellenbosch. Gedurende die periode 1984 en 1985 studeer hy onder die internasionaal

1985, he pursued further studies in Erlangen, Germany, under the supervision of Lutheran scholar, Friedrich Mildenerger. With Prof. Mildenerger, he delved deeply into the theological thought of Karl Heim, Friedrich Gogarten, Günter Altner, Karl Barth and Jürgen Moltmann.

Johan Buitendag is an active member of the South African Academy for Science and Arts, member of the renowned American Academy of Religion (AAR), member of the International Reformed Theological Institute (IRTI), member of the European Society for the Study of Science and Theology (ESSSAT), member of the Ian Ramsey Centre for the Interdisciplinary Study of Religious Beliefs in Relation to the Sciences and Medicine at the University of Oxford, Society for the Study of Theology (SST) in the United Kingdom and member of the Theological Society of South Africa.

He was the first South African theologian to complete a doctoral thesis in the field of eco-theology. In 1985, the degree DD was conferred on him by the University of Pretoria. From 1989 to 1994, he held the position of Head of the Religion Department of the South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC). He received the MCom degree in Business Management from the Rand Afrikaans University (RAU), today the University of Johannesburg, in 1995. In 2001, he was appointed as professor of Systematic Theology and Christian Ethics at the University of Pretoria, as Deputy Dean of the Faculty of Theology in 2004 and as Dean in 2010.

His theology is characterised by a relational understanding of reality. His critical evaluation and revision of Karl Barth's theology of creation inspired the development of his distinctive theology of nature. From a comprehensive knowledge of Reformed theology, he demonstrated that Protestant scholasticism overstressed the term 'sola Scriptura'. Johan Buitendag is an existential believer who strives to understand reality in dialogue with the natural sciences. The foundation of his theological understanding is ethically responsible life in the presence of God. His ecotheology is especially relevant to his understanding of time and eternity. His rich publication output takes the form of academic articles and chapters in books.

In the capacity of Dean of the Faculty of Theology at the University of Pretoria since 2010, his contribution to theological formation has been invaluable. With his critical solidarity, he embodies the Netherdutch Reformed Church's ideal of a Reformed theologian. Historical records reflect that, during the period of his leadership from 2004 to 2007, Johan Buitendag and the Executive of the General Assembly led the Netherdutch Reformed Church across the Rubicon on a road of no return. This brought the Church back into the fold of the worldwide Reformed family.

erkende Lutherse geleerde Friedrich Mildenerger in Erlangen, Duitsland. Saam met professor Mildenerger delf hy diep om die teologiese denke van Karl Heim, Friedrich Gogarten, Günter Altner, Karl Barth en Jürgen Moltmann te begryp en te verduidelik.

Johan Buitendag is 'n gewaardeerde en aktiewe lid van die Suid-Afrikaanse Akademie vir Wetenskap en Kuns, lid van die vooraanstaande American Academy of Religion (AAR), lid van die International Reformed Theological Institute (IRTI), lid van die European Society for the Study of Science and Theology (ESSSAT), lid van die Ian Ramsey Centre for the Interdisciplinary Study of Religious Beliefs in Relation to the Sciences and Medicine, gesetel by die Universiteit van Oxford, lid van die Society for the Study of Theology (SST), en van die Dogmatologiese Werkgemeenskap van Suid-Afrika.

Hy was die eerste teoloog in Suid-Afrika wat 'n doktorsale proefskrif oor die ekoteologie voltooi het. In 1985 ontvang hy sy DD van die Universiteit van Pretoria. Hy beklee die pos 'hoof Godsdienste' by die Suid-Afrikaanse Uitsaaikorporasie (SAUK) in die periode 1989 tot 1994. Hy behaal in 1995 die graad MCom in Ondernemingsbestuur aan die destyds Randse Afrikaanse Universiteit (vandag: Universiteit van Johannesburg). In 2001 word hy benoem as professor in Sistematiese Teologie en Christelike Etiek aan die Universiteit van Pretoria, as adjunkdekaan van die Fakulteit Teologie in 2004 en as dekaan in 2010.

Sy teologie word gekenmerk deur 'n dinamiese werklikheidsverstaan. 'n Kritiese waardering en aanpassing van Karl Barth se skeppingsleer bring hom tot die ontwikkeling van 'n eie kenmerkende teologie van die natuur. As deurwinterde Reformatoriese teoloog toon hy aan dat die Protestantse skolastiek die begrip *sola Scriptura* oorspan. Johan Buitendag is 'n dinamiese Christengelowige wat in konstante dialoog met natuurwetenskap die werklikheid probeer verstaan. Die grond van sy teologiese beklemtoning is 'n eties verantwoorde lewe in die teenwoordigheid van God. Sy ekoteologie het veral relevansie vir sy verstaan van tyd en ewigheid. Sy publikasies is talryk en bestaan uit akademiese artikels en hoofstukke in boeke. Sy bydrae tot teologiese opleiding, in sy hoedanigheid as dekaan van die Fakulteit Teologie aan die Universiteit van Pretoria sedert 2010, is onberekenbaar in waarde. Met sy kritiese solidariteit verwesenlik hy die ideaal van wat in die Hervormde Kerk van 'n Bybels-Reformatoriese teoloog verwag word.

In die historiese annale is dit opgeteken dat Johan Buitendag en die Kommissie van die Algemene Kerkvergadering tydens die periode van sy leierskap gedurende 2004 en 2007 die Hervormde Kerk oor die Suid-Afrikaanse Rubicon op 'n toekomsfad van geen terugkeer meer gelei het en die Hervormde Kerk weer deel gemaak het van die Hervormde kerkfamilie in die wêreld.

Response to muniment by Johan Buitendag

The obvious response by the laureate would be grateful acceptance. My special thanks to the author of the commendation as well as the Curatorium and the Executive of the Church who endorsed the proposal of the award.

Firstly, I would like to acknowledge certain theologians who had gone before me in receiving this award, specifically some of those who were lecturers at the University of Pretoria. I sincerely appreciate their contributions and regard it as an honour to be counted among them.

The name HCM Fourie, of course, also calls forth associations that are less than positive. Dr Fourie strongly supported the establishment of a theological faculty at a university and was a contributor to the first translation of the Bible into the Afrikaans language, which was published in 1933. However, he also participated in the Rebellion of 1914, which caused much discord in the Netherdutch Reformed Church. He was involved in activities that were detrimental to individuals, the Church and the gospel.

Maybe, what we have here tonight is one of those ironic situations to which Desmond Tutu often refers as a sign of *God's sense of humour*, which the names of Johan Buitendag and HCM Fourie are joined together in a positive way! This is probably also an accurate reflection of my understanding of reality: paradoxical, provisional and surprising!

After these introductory paragraphs, I now present my acceptance of this award from two perspectives: Firstly, through the language of others and then through the contours of my own personal journey.

I begin with the language of others. Often one does not remember the titles of the books you have read or you remember them incorrectly. However, some titles are simply too powerful to forget. Seven titles immediately jump to mind, probably resulting from my theological genome. It is the number seven: not six, ending on the day of the creation of human beings, but seven, the day when God and human beings rested together in creation.

In 2009, André P Brink published his memoirs titled *A fork in the road*.³ In the prologue, he mentions that people often think that once they have made a choice they have excluded the other option. It is either the one or the other. For Brink, and in this I agree with him, other possibilities are not necessarily excluded when one makes a specific choice. When a sentence or a story is written, for example, every word that has not been chosen, shimmers through the ones that were utilised. The coexistence of possibilities contributes to the *texture* of life. The traditional 'either ... or' should be replaced by the infinitely more complex 'and ... and'. He concludes with the appeal: *Whenever we reach a*

3.The Afrikaans title of the book is translated into English.

Antwoord op oorkonde deur Johan Buitendag

Geagte voorsitter van die Algemene Kerkvergadering, dr W.A. Dreyer, lede van die Algemene Kommissie, voorsitter van die Kuratorium, ds J.F. van der Merwe, lede van die Kuratorium, eregaste, afgevaardigdes, my persoonlike gaste, broers en susters:

Die vanselfsprekende openingsparagraaf van so 'n aanvaardingswoord deur die laureatus sal uiteraard woorde van dankbare erkenning wees. My besondere dank gaan aan die voorsteller en opsteller van die huldeblyk, asook aan die Kuratorium en die Algemene Kommissie wat die toekenningsvoorstel bekragtig het.

My erkenning gaan vanaand veral aan al die teoloë wat hierdie toekenning voor my ontvang het, met spesifieke verwysing na diegene wat aan die Universiteit van Pretoria gedoseer het. Ek het ek die grootste waardering vir van hulle bydraes en beskou dit as 'n eer om my in hulle geleedere te bevind.

Die naam HCM Fourie roep natuurlik ook assosiasies na vore wat glad nie net positief is nie. Afgesien daarvan dat dr Fourie 'n sterk beyweraar vir die daarstel van 'n teologiese fakulteit aan 'n universiteit was en later bekend geraak het as een van die vertalers van die eerste Afrikaanse Bybel wat in 1933 verskyn het, was hy ook aandadig aan die Rebelle van 1914, wat tweestryd in die Hervormde Kerk laat opvlam het. Hy was dus ook betrokke by bedrywighede as gevolg waarvan individue, die Kerk en die evangelie ernstige benadeel is.

Miskien is dit ook die *humor van God* waarvan Desmond Tutu dikwels praat as hy na sekere ironiese situasies verwys, soos dié wat ons ook vanaand hier het: Johan Buitendag en HCM Fourie se name word in 'n positiewe sin met mekaar verbind! Dalk is dit juis tekenend van hoe ek die werklikheid verstaan: Paradoksaal, voorlopig en ja, verrassend!

Na hierdie paar inleidende paragrawe wil ek nou my aanvaarding van hierdie toekenning vanuit twee perspektiewe aanbied: Eers vanuit die taal van ander en dan vanuit die kontoere van my persoonlike reis.

Laat ek dan met die taal van ander begin. Dikwels onthou 'n mens – altans ek – nie die titels van boeke wat jy gelees het nie, of jy onthou dit verkeerd. Tog is daar boektitels wat jou eenvoudig net aanspreek. Jy vergeet hulle nooit nie. Sewe titels het hulle onmiddellik aan my herinnering opgedring. En dalk voortspruitend uit my teologiese genom, is dit sewe in getal en sluit dit nie af op die sesde dag, toe die mens gemaak is nie, maar op die sewende dag toe God en mens saam in die skepping gerus het.

*fork in the road: Let us take it.*⁴ Boundaries need not separate, they can also unite. The wall between two jail cells can be seen as a membrane in the coexistence of two people.

In 1996, Julian Müller published a book in the field of narrative pastoral care with the provocative title *Om tot verhaal te kom* (literally: 'to come to your story/narrative', but idiomatically meaning something like recovering from an experience and coming to speech again). Though his theological approach is autobiographical or auto-ethnographical, it is not meant only for the self. Marcus Borg's latest monograph begins with the words: 'This book is personal, but it is also more than personal' (Borg 2014). Various episodes in a person's life are woven together into a narrative with many characters. These narratives transcend the author.

Denise Ackermann's award winning book, *Surprised by the man on the borrowed donkey*, was published in 2014. She had been diagnosed with cancer in 2005. She relates how, time and again, she was surprised by the Man who entered Jerusalem on a borrowed donkey to be crucified as a criminal and who three days after his crucifixion – totally unexpectedly – appeared to his disciples. The paradox is particularly evident in the middle one of her seven beatitudes: 'Blessed are those who listen with discernment, for they will hear "the sound of sheer silence"'.⁴

A jewel of a work is Alister Edgar McGrath's 2008 book, *The Open Secret*, which was followed by *Surprised by Meaning*, in which he re-evaluates revelation and nature. There are some notable similarities to the second article of the Belgic Confession. In typically Calvinistic fashion, he argues that knowledge of God leads to knowledge of human beings and nature – for those who have eyes to see. Nature should be interpreted and, like various psalms do, it glorifies creation and the Creator.

In 2005, Luco van den Brom described the role and person of the theologian with the title *Theoloog als jongleur*. A juggler is an artist who succeeds in keeping objects such as balls, plates, clubs or the like in the air simultaneously through excellent hand-eye coordination. It is about the relationship between subject and object. Outside of that nothing can really be known. The meaning and the unity of reality lie in the person of the theologian, inspired by the Spirit.

Another title that remained with me is *Menslike mense* ('Humane humans'), a 1993 book by Adrio König. Humans are relational beings and become human through others. The expression 'humane humans' is not tautology, but rather expresses the core of what it means to be human: To be humane and become increasingly so. Sin robs us of our humanity and humaneness. Through the Holy Spirit, Christ transforms us to become humane humans.

4. Translation of the original Afrikaans.

André P Brink publiseer in 2009 sy memoires onder die titel *'n Vurk in die pad*. In sy voorwoord wys hy daarop dat mense gewoonlik reken dat elke keuse wat gedoen word, die ander opsie uitskakel. Dit is óf die een, óf die ander. Brink is egter van mening, en ek stem saam, dat nadat 'n opsie uitgeoefen is, ander keuses nie noodwendig uitgeskakel is nie. Dit is soos by die skryf van 'n sin of 'n storie: Elke woord wat nie gekies word nie, bly skemer agter die een wat wel gekies is. Die saambestaan van moontlikhede bepaal die *tekstuur* van die lewe. Die tradisionele óf-óf moet vervang word met die oneindig meer komplekse én-én. Hy sluit af met die oproep: *Elke keer as daar 'n vurk in die pad is: kom ons vat hom*. Grense skei nie, maar verbind, en die tronkmuur tussen twee selle kan juis die membraan wees van die saambestaan van twee mense.

Julian Müller publiseer in 1996 'n boek in narratiewe pastoraat met die treffende titel *Om tot verhaal te kom*. Hierin beoefen hy 'n tipe outobiografiese, oftewel outo-etnografiese, teologie. Maar dit is nie net vir die self bedoel nie. Marcus Borg se nuutste boek begin met die sin: *Hierdie boek is persoonlik, maar ook méér as persoonlik* (Borg, M., 2014, *Convictions*, HarperOne, New York, Kindle Edition). Los episodes in jou lewe word in verhale ingeweeft, verhale waarin etlike akteurs is, maar ook verhale wat bo die outeur uitstyg.

Denise Ackerman het in 2014 haar bekroonde boek, *Surprised by the man on the borrowed donkey*, die lig laat sien. Die leser moet in gedagte hou dat kanker in 2005 by haar gediagnoseer is. Sy skryf hoe sy telkens verras is deur die Man wat Jerusalem op 'n geleende donkie binnegery het om as misdadiger gekruisig te word en drie dae na sy kruisiging – totaal onverwags – aan sy dissipels verskyn het. Die paradoks kom veral duidelik na vore in die middelste van haar sewe saligsprekinge wanneer sy sê: *'Blessed are those who listen with discernment, for they will hear "the sound of sheer silence"'*.

Alister Edgar McGrath se boek *The open secret* word in 2008 gepubliseer en is 'n juweel. Dit word opgevolg met die titel *Surprised by meaning*. Hierin word 'n herwaardering van openbaring en natuur bepleit, interessant genoeg is daar 'n sterk ooreenkoms met die tweede artikel van die Nederlandse Geloofsbelijdenis. Hy redeneer in tipies Calvinistiese trant dat ons kennis van God ons lei na kennis van die mens en die natuur. Wie oë het om te sien, moet sien. Die natuur is daar om geïnterpreteer te word en, soos etlike psalms ook doen, laat dit 'n heerlike loflied weerklink wat die skepping en die Skepper besing.

In 2005 gebruik Luco van de Brom die titel *Theoloog als jongleur* om die rol van die persoon van die teoloog in die posisionering van die Christelike geloofsleer te verduidelik. 'n Jongleur is 'n kunstenaar wat allerlei voorwerpe soos balle, pierings, kegels of dergelike deur goeie hand-oog-koördinasie in die lug kan hou. Die werklikheid is 'n verhouding tussen subjek en objek, en niks kan eintlik

Jürgen Moltmann's autobiography, *A Broad Place*, was published in 2007. In Psalm 31, he notices, God is called both strong fortress, a safe space, and gives *freedom of movement*. Theology should characterise this exodus. What God created in time, was completed in space. It is not humanity that is the crown of God's creation, but the Sabbath. It is the only day in the story creation that does not conclude with the refrain 'and it was evening and it was morning'. There is no night to follow this day. It opens up to the future. The time of Sabbath is called to be fulfilled in Sabbath space. A Sabbath ethics that is not only based on the first 6 days, but also rests on and in the seventh day, should be developed. Does not use God, he says, enjoy God! When God comes, people are free. It is a theology of joy.

These seven titles impressed themselves on me. They chose me. They are not only a cold and neutral part of my formation. And in the language of the Heidelberg Catechism – that is no coincidence. I will now proceed to systematise these internalised convictions.

I neither construct nor do I present here a comprehensive or even delineated theological design. Theology is too broad and deep and high for such an attempt. My published work was, therefore, never intended as a set of final convictions. My theological journey, which dates back to my high school years, found its contours in searching and exploring.

My theology is still emerging. It is constantly being developed, refined and expanded. That is why I like the image of a rhizome as utilised by Gilles Deleuze. It is like a pot of spaghetti – without beginning or end, everything is middle and anchored laterally. It is a metaphorical description of Faraday's field theory of electro-magnetic radiation – reality is not in the elements or atoms, but in the energy fields between them.

The concept of triangulation provides language for such internalised observation. It is a mathematical concept based on the insights of Pythagoras, according to which a third unknown point can be calculated on the grounds of two known points. The one who interprets (*interpretans*) and that which is interpreted (*interpretandum*), are connected, and so also the presence of God, or transcendent immanence, and vice versa, immanent transcendence. God grants us hand-eye coordination in our reality.

For me theology is an understanding of reality, or rather, a humble attempt at being a responsible conversation partner in the human search for knowing and understanding. In my opinion, theology as an academic discipline can contribute to understanding reality. Therefore, I prefer the term *understanding* to a concept such as *view*. Though understanding is in essence subjective, it also strives to provide a critical and rational responsiveness.

daarbuite geken word nie. Maar die sin en die eenheid van die werklikheid lê in die persoon van die teoloog, geïnspireer deur die Gees.

Nog 'n titel wat my altyd bybly, is *Menslike mense*, 'n boek wat in 1993 deur Adrio König geskryf is. Die mens is 'n verhoudingswese en is 'n mens deur mense. Menslike mense is geen tautologie nie, maar dring deur na ons wese: Om menslik te wees en om ons in te span om dit toenemend te word. Die sonde ontnem ons van ons menslikheid, en Christus wil deur die Heilige Gees menslike mense van ons maak.

Jürgen Moltmann se outobiografie, *A broad place*, het in 2007 verskyn. In Psalm 31:9 lees hy dat God 'n veilige vesting is, maar veral ook *vryheid en beweging* bied. Teologie moet hierdie Eksodus karakteriseer. God het alles in tyd begin, maar voltooi dit in ruimte. Die kroon van die skepping is ook nie die mens nie, maar die Sabbat. Dit is die enigste skeppingsdag wat nie met die refrein van *dit was aand en dit was môre* afsluit nie. Daar volg nie nag nie. Dit is oop na vore en die Sabbat tyd roep om vervul te word in die Sabbatsruimte. Ons moet 'n Sabbatsetiek ontwikkel wat nie bloot op die eerste ses dae gebaseer is nie, maar ook op die rus van die sewende dag. Moenie God gebruik nie, sê hy, geniet God! God kom en mense word vry. Dit is 'n teologie van vreugde.

Hierdie sewe titels het hulle as't ware aan my opgedring. Hulle het my gekies. Hulle is dus nie koud of neutraal in my vorming nie. En in die taal van die Heidelbergse Kategismus, ook nie toevallig nie. Vergun my nou om hierdie geïnternaliseerde oortuigings te sistematiseer.

Ek het natuurlik geen afgeronde of selfs definieerbare teologiese ontwerp daargestel of probeer aanbied nie. Daarvoor is teologie net te wyd en te diep en te hoog. Ek het gevolglik ook nooit my publikasies aangebied vanuit finale oortuigings nie. My teologiese reis wat terugdateer na my hoërskooljare, het soekend en tastend bepaalde kontoere gevind.

My teologie is daarom ontluikend van aard. Dit ontwikkel voortdurend en algaande vind verfyning en uitbreiding plaas. Dit is waarom ek hou van die beeld van 'n risoom wat Gilles Deleuze gebruik. Dit is soos spaghetti. Dit het nie 'n begin of 'n einde nie, alles is middel en word lateraal veranker. Dit is vir my 'n metaforiese beskrywing van Faraday se veldteorie in elektromagnetiese straling – die werklikheid is nie in die elemente of atome nie, maar in die energieveld daartussen.

Die begrip triangulasie verskaf taal vir so 'n geïnternaliseerde waarneming. Dit is 'n wiskundige begrip wat gebaseer is op Pythagoras se insigte, waarvolgens 'n derde punt op grond van twee bekende punte bepaal kan word. Die een wat interpreteer (*interpretans*) en dit wat geïnterpreteer moet word (*interpretandum*), is onlosmaaklik

This is why interdisciplinary dialogue is so important. We should listen to and learn from one another. It is logical to me that theology should be located at a university and should contribute to the human search for truth. The idea that faith and reason speak two different languages (Einstein) reminds of a Babel-like cacophony. Theology should also participate in the *lingua franca* of our times.

I focus mainly on two disciplines in the natural sciences: physics and biology. Physics is of importance in order to understand time and space and biology for an understanding of evolution. The topic of my doctoral thesis was creation and ecology. There I already discovered a theologically justified understanding of reality. The Apostolicum places creation in the realm of the Father. Karl Barth's exposition of it is Christological. In my opinion, we should reflect on the pneumatology of creation. I, therefore, appreciate the *pneuma-theology* of Gijs Dingemans.

My involvement with the insights and findings of the natural sciences influenced me to reflect in a more inductive and a posteriori way on reality. Theistic revelation language is not understood or appreciated by people outside the field of theology. I realised what irreparable damage was caused to Protestant theology by its fierce opposition to natural theology. Protestant theology became elitist and disappeared from the world stage.

Specific *theologoumena* should be interpreted anew, the most important of which is probably the radical revision I have had to make in my life regarding our understanding of revelation and the Bible. I agree with Brunner that human beings have a specific capacity for interacting with God and that nature can provide some insights in this respect. Quantum physics' description of reality not only offers a model to the humanities, but also a particular understanding of reality. The same goes, for instance, for the ant or the bee. Empirical studies have shown that what takes place in a termite nest or beehive, can be applied *mutatis mutandis* to human community. Nature does not provide a blueprint, but can provide metaphors.

When I was appointed Dean of the Faculty of Theology seven years ago, I was to spend 80% of my time on management and 20% on research, according to the then Deputy Vice-Chancellor. I soon realised that this was idealistic. Before long I was spending 120% of my supposed working hours on management and did my research in the *small hours* of the night. A combination of management and academia is possible, however, and I have published at least two articles in the field of theology at a public university.

It is possible precisely because I am convinced that theology should be located at a university and, vice versa, that a university without theology is paralysed. Science pursues truth, so does theology, but should take care that it does so in love.

verbind, en so ook die teenwoordigheid van God, oftewel transendente immanensie, en omgekeerd, immanente transendensie. Ons hand-oog-koördinasie laat God in die werklikheid gebeur.

Teologie is daarom vir my: Werklikheidsverstaan, of meer korrek gesê, 'n beskeie poging om 'n verantwoordelike gespreksgenoot te wees in die mens se soeke na begrip en verstaan. Na my mening kán teologie as wetenskaplike dissipline 'n bydrae lewer tot die verstaan van die werklikheid. Daarom verkies ek ook die woord *verstaan* bo 'n woord soos *beskouing*. Verstaan is weliswaar subjektief, maar dit het darem kritiese verantwoording of minstens sodanige pretensie.

Om dié rede is die dialoog met ander wetenskappe so belangrik. Ons moet mekaar hoor en van mekaar leer. Dit is vir my logies dat teologie ook 'n staanplek by 'n universiteit moet hê en 'n bydrae moet kan maak in die mens se soeke na waarheid. Die idee van twee verskillende tale wat geloof en rede praat (Einstein) klink vir my al te veel na 'n Babelse by mekaar verbypraat. Iewers moet teologie ook deelneem aan die *lingua franca* van die dag.

Ek het my ook met veral twee natuurwetenskaplike dissiplines besig gehou: Fisika en biologie. Fisika was vir my belangrik om tyd en ruimte te verstaan, en biologie om meer uit te vind oor evolusie. My proefskrif het oor skepping en ekologie gehandel, en reeds daar het ek die kontoere ontdek van 'n teologies verantwoordbare werklikheidsverstaan. Die Twaalf Artikels plaas die skepping by die werk van die Vader. Karl Barth het dit Christologies uitgelê, terwyl dit vir my duidelik was dat ons pneumatologie oor die skepping moet besin. Daarom het Gijs Dingemans se *pneuma-teologie* by my byval gevind.

Hierdie betrokkenheid by natuurwetenskaplike insigte in en bevindings oor die werklikheid, het my stelselmatig gevorm om al meer induktief en a posteriories oor die werklikheid te besin. Teïstiese openbaringstaal word nie deur mense buite die teologie gehoor of gewaardeer nie. Ek het toenemend tot die besef gekom dat die felle stryd teen 'n natuurlike teologie die Protestantse teologie groot skade berokken het. Dit het elitisties geraak en sigself uit die wêrelddebat gehaal.

Bepaalde *theologoumena* moes na my mening noodwendig nuut vertolk word. Die belangrikste is waarskynlik 'n radikale hersiening wat ek moes maak oor ons verstaan van openbaring en van die Bybel. Soos Brunner is ek ook van mening dat die mens 'n bepaalde kapasiteit het om met God te verkeer, en dat die natuur aan ons baie insig kan bied. So is die kwantumfisika se beskrywing van die werklikheid nie net 'n model vir die menswetenskappe nie, maar 'n besondere verstaan van die werklikheid. Dieselfde geld byvoorbeeld vir die mier en wat empiriese studies toon dat dit wat in die termietnes of byekorfe gebeur, *mutatis mutandis* op die menslike samelewing toegepas kan word.

In conclusion, I would like to share my definition of theology with you:

Theology is the academic endeavour of believers in the public domain to come to an understanding of multidimensional reality, in such a way that it matters.

May I also share my understanding of a university with you?

Universities are spaces of discussion and scientific investigation where new knowledge is developed through intellectual activity and freedom of ideas.

Because the HCM Fourie Honorary Medal, as the founding statute specifies, is awarded to me for my contribution to biblical Reformed theology and since my contribution fits this description, I hereby accept the award with gratitude and humility.

Synodal muniment presented to Yolanda Dreyer

With the award of the HCM Fourie Honorary Medal, the Curatorium of the Netherdutch Reformed Church of Africa expresses its gratitude and appreciation for your academic and pastoral work.

We are grateful to God for your service in the Netherdutch Reformed Church on a variety of levels: as an outstanding academic, a much loved lecturer at the University of Pretoria and minister of the Dutch-speaking congregation Maranatha in Johannesburg. We especially appreciate your spirituality, commitment, dedication and many achievements, and look forward to what you are still going to accomplish in the Church and academy.

Ons lees nie net waarheid in die natuur nie, maar ons lees dit ook daarvan af.

Toe ek sewe jaar gelede as Dekaan by die Fakulteit Teologie aangestel is, het die destydse vise-reaktor vir my gesê dat ek 80% van my tyd aan bestuur moes bestee, en 20% aan my navorsing. Ek het vinnig agtergekom dat dit uiters idealisties was. Kort voor lank het ek 120% van my veronderstelde werkure aan bestuur spandeer en my navorsing in die *klein uurtjies* van die nag gedoen. 'n Kombinasie van bestuur en akademie is egter moontlik, en ek het ek minstens twee artikels oor teologie by 'n openbare universiteit gepubliseer.

Dit is moontlik juis omdat ek die oortuiging huldig dat teologie 'n plek by 'n universiteit moet hê en, omgekeerd, dat 'n universiteit sonder teologie lam is. Wetenskap jaag die waarheid na, teologie doen dit ook, maar moet sorg dat dit in liefde gedoen word.

Vergun my om ten slotte my persoonlike definisie van teologie met u te deel:

Teologie is 'n wetenskaplike poging van gelowiges in die openbare sfeer om 'n greep op 'n multidimensionele werklikheid te kry, sodat dit saak maak.

Sal u my toelaat om sommer ook my verstaan van 'n universiteit met u te deel?

Universiteite is ruimtes van debat en wetenskaplike ondersoek waar nuwe kennis deur intellektuele aktiwiteit en vryheid van idees ontwikkel word.

Geagte voorsitters van die Algemene Kommissie en die Kuratorium, terwyl die HCM Fourie Erepennig, soos die oprigtingstatuut dit stel, vir 'n bydrae tot Bybels-Reformatoriese teologie aan my toegeken is, aangesien my bydrae na my mening aan hierdie vereiste voldoen, aanvaar ek die HCM Fourie Erepennig met dank en in beskeidenheid.

Sinodale oorkonde aan Yolanda Dreyer

Die Kuratorium van die Nederduitsch Hervormde Kerk van Afrika wil met die toekenning van die HCM Fourie erepennig die Kerk se opregte dank en waardering uitspreek vir u akademiese en pastorale diens werk.

Ons is dankbaar dat die Here u aan ons geskenk het om diensbaar in die Hervormde Kerk te wees. Op verskeie gebiede lewer u hoogstaande diens en is u 'n buitengewone akademiese presteerder, en u is geliefd as dosent aan die Universiteit van Pretoria en as leraar in die Nederlandssprekende gemeente Maranatha in Johannesburg. Ons het besondere waardering vir u

We are, especially, grateful for your appointment as Head of Department, Practical Theology since 2010 and the quality of your academic work. You are an appreciated and respected academic not only in this country, but also in countries such as the United States, Germany and the Netherlands. Your postgraduate qualification from the *Princeton Theological Seminary*, two doctoral degrees, many academic contributions published nationally and internationally, the papers you have presented at high profile international conferences, attest to your diligence, abilities and the recognition of your academic peers. The fact that you have been appointed Head of Department of Practical Theology, as vice-chair of the *Society for Practical Theology in South Africa*,⁵ the recognition you receive in the circle of the *International Academy of Practical Theology*, the invitation to become part of the research project, *New Directions in Practical Theology* at the *Princeton Theological Seminary*, and the invitation to become part of the *Global Network of Theologians* that advises the WCRC on theological matters, further bear witness to your achievements of which we in the Netherdutch Reformed Church are particularly proud.

The Church wishes you and your loved-ones the very best. May you always experience the presence of God in your life, find joy in God's service and, when our Lord comes, receive the crown of glory.

Response to muniment by Yolanda Dreyer

In my childhood home, there was much focus on language. My father was a language practitioner. At the dinner table, we were often challenged to try and find a solution to some translation problem. We had to speak good Afrikaans and in shops always first start speaking Afrikaans and then switch to English when necessary.

Probably the most precious heritage of my father is his conviction that using a proliferation of words and pompous language is not an achievement. The challenge is to speak concisely, clearly and simply.

He taught me to love language. That is probably why I also have such an appreciation for proverbs and expressions. I often conclude a lecture with: 'As we say in Afrikaans ...' and then the proverb or expression summarises the whole issue we have been dealing with in a few concise words. Our cultural wisdom. The insight of our people into the way of the world.

The two faces of this event can be described by two Afrikaans expressions. One is proven wrong tonight, the other confirmed.

'A prophet is not without honour save in his own country', is not true tonight. A prophet is someone who says 'so says the Lord', and people do not always like it. I sometimes

5. Yolanda Dreyer was elected as chair of the *Society for Practical Theology in South Africa* during 2014–2017

spiritualiteit, toegewydheid, harde werk en die talle prestasies wat u al behaal het, en sien uit na wat u nog in die Kerk en in die akademie gaan bereik.

Ons is besonder dankbaar oor u aanstelling as Departementshoof, Praktiese Teologie vanaf 2010 en die hoë gehalte akademiese werk wat u lewer. U is nie net in ons land nie, maar talle ander lande soos die Verenigde State van Amerika, Duitsland en Nederland, 'n gewaardeerde en hooggeagte akademikus. U nagraadse kwalifikasie aan die *Princeton Theological Seminary*, u twee doktorsgrade, u talle akademiese publikasies wat u op nasionale sowel as internasionale vlak al gelewer het, en u voordragte by hoë profiel internasionale konferensies, spreek van u ywer, vermoëns en akademiese eweknie erkenning. Die feit dat u aangestel is as hoof van die Departement Praktiese Teologie aan die Universiteit van Pretoria, verkies is as vise-voorsitter van die Suid-Afrikaanse Werkgemeenskap vir Praktiese Teologie (*Society for Practical Theology in South Africa*), die erkenning wat u kry vanuit die kring van die *International Academy of Practical Theology*, u benoeming as deel van die werkgroep *New Directions in Practical Theology* van die *Princeton Theological Seminary*, en u benoeming as lid van die *Global Network of Theologians* wat die *World Communion of Reformed Churches* adviseer ten opsigte van teologiese sake, getuig van prestasies waarop ons in die Hervormde Kerk trots is.

Die Kerk bid u en u geliefdes seën en voorspoed toe vir die jare wat voorlê. Mag u altyd die nabyheid van die Heer ervaar. Mag u steeds vreugde vind in hierdie besonderse dienswerk, en wanneer die Opperherder kom, die heerlikheid as onverganklike kroon ontvang.

Antwoord op oorkonde deur Yolanda Dreyer

Ek het in 'n taalhuis grootgeword. My pa was 'n vertaler. Ons uitdaging saans aan die etenstafel was dikwels om die een of ander vertaalprobleem te probeer oplos. Ons moes suiwer Afrikaans praat en in winkels altyd eers met Afrikaans begin.

Seker die kosbaarste erfenis van my pa vir my is sy oortuiging dat 'n omhaal van woorde en die rondgooi van groot woorde, nie 'n kuns is nie. Die kuns is om iets kort en bondig, helder en duidelik, eenvoudig te sê.

Dit is seker daarom dat ek waardering het vir spreuke en uitdrukkings in taal. Dikwels verduidelik ek iets in die klas en sluit af met: 'Soos ons in Afrikaans sê ...' en dan vat die uitdrukking of spreuk die hele saak netjies in 'n paar woorde saam. Ons volkswysheid. Mense het gesien hoe 'n ding werk.

Twee kante van hierdie geleentheid kan verwoord word met behulp van twee Afrikaanse uitdrukkings. Die een word vanaand verkeerd bewys, die ander bevestig.

say: 'the gospel of Jesus Christ requires us to ...' and the people do not always like it. Nevertheless, here I am tonight, in my own country. Thank you.

The expression that is confirmed here tonight: '*Al loop die leuen nog so snel, die waarheid agterhaal dit wel*' (literally: though the lie may be very fast, the truth will eventually catch up with it).

This award is for Reformed theology and I am a Reformed theologian. Though in my own country many lies have been told and labels given, people from faraway lands have invited me to join their network of theologians to serve the WCRC. I am part of the *Sola Scriptura*, a small group – more Reformed than that would be hard to find. Tonight we can celebrate the truth of my theological identity here together in my own country. Thank you.

I wondered whether I should refer to recent events in the history of our church or not. A big noise. An unpleasant business. In Afrikaans: '*Veel lawaai, weinig wol*'. In English: '*Empty vessels make the most noise*'. I was sorely tempted to ignore it. Does it have sufficient *content* to warrant attention? If not, and it does receive attention, does one then give it credibility? That I would not want to do. I much prefer to ignore empty vessels.

However, my field of specialty is pastoral care: caring for those who have been hurt and traumatised. They cannot be ignored. An earthquake, a rock breaking off from the mountain face and shattering into a thousand pieces makes a big noise and does much damage. People are traumatised and have to grieve. Congregations have lost their churches and now gather in school halls. Families are divided. Pastoral care in the grief process begins with allowing the pain and emotions of loss. The sadness, grief, shame, humiliation, injustice, powerlessness and anger. Sit respectfully with the emotions as long as is necessary.

And then ask what now? We know that we are small, impoverished, weak and humiliated. This reality can paralyse us, rob us of our human dignity, of your 'church dignity' and of the confidence to make our contribution in the world. Or we need not be paralysed and robbed of all that is precious if we take note of the excellent company in which we find ourselves. Jesus, humiliated on a cross, powerless. If we find ourselves hanging there right next to him, we know that we can be with him in his kingdom. Paul reminds us that what seems to the world to be weak and foolish is in fact strong and wise. For the one who glories in the Lord.

Pastoral care in the grief process comes to an end when the question is: how do we go forward? The answer is simple: go and be church. Church of Christ. Church for the world so loved by God that God sent God's only beloved son, Jesus. And Jesus sends us.

'n Profeet word nie in die eie land geëer nie', is vanaand nie waar nie. 'n Profeet is iemand wat sê 'so spreek die Here' en die mense hou nie altyd daarvan nie. Ek sê soms: 'die evangelie van Jesus Christus vra van ons ...' en die mense hou nie altyd daarvan nie. Nogtans staan ek vanaand hier in my eie land. Dankie.

Die een wat bevestig word: '*Al loop die leuen nog so snel, die waarheid agterhaal dit wel*'. Hierdie toekenning is vir Reformatoriese teologie en ek is 'n Reformatoriese teoloog. In my eie land is heelwat leuens rondgestrooi en etikette omgehang. Mense van ander lande het my genooi om deel te wees van die netwerk van teoloë wat die *World Communion of Reformed Churches* van teologiese advies bedien. Ek is lid van die kleingroep *Sola Scriptura* – meer Reformatories kan jy nie kry nie. Vanaand vier ons die waarheid saam hier in my eie land. Dankie.

Ek het gewonder hoe ek in my dankwoord moet maak met die konteks waarin vanaand plaasvind – die onlangse geskiedenis van ons Kerk. 'n Groot lawaai, 'n onverkwiklike gedoente. In Afrikaans: '*Veel lawaai, weinig wol*'. In Engels: '*Empty vessels make the most noise*'. Die versoeking om dit te ignoreer was sterk. Het dit genoeg *inhoud* om aandag te verdien? Indien nie, en 'n mens gee wel aandag daaraan, gee jy dit geloofwaardigheid. Dit wil ek nie doen nie. Ek ignoreer graag 'veel lawaai, weinig wol'.

Maar my vak is pastoraat: sorg, veral vir wie seergekry het en getraumatiseer is. Hulle kan nie geïgnoreer word nie. 'n Aardbewing, 'n stuk krans wat afbreek en in duisend stukke versplinter, maak 'n groot lawaai, rig skade aan. Daarna is mense getraumatiseer en moet verliese verwerk. Gemeentes het hulle kerkgeboue verloor en hou kerk in saaltjies. Families is verdeel. Pastorale sorg in die rouproses begin met: voel die verlies en die emosies wat daarmee gepaard gaan. Die hartseer, die rou, die skaamte, die vernedering, die onreg, die magteloosheid, die kwaad. Staan met respek stil by die emosies solank as wat dit nodig is. En vra dan: hoe nou gemaak met ons werklikheid? Ons is klein, arm, swak, verneder. Die wete kan ons lamlê, van ons menswaardigheid, ons 'kerkwaardigheid' beroof, van die wete dat ons 'n bydrae het om te lewer. Óf nie. Want ons kan oplet in watter goeie geselskap ons verkeer. Jesus, verneder aan 'n kruis, magteloos, uitgelewer. As ons langs Hom hang, kan ons saam met Hom in die paradys wees. Paulus wat meen dat wat swak en dwaas lyk vir die wêreld, eintlik sterk en wys is. Wanneer 'n mens in die Here roem.

Pastorale sorg in die rouproses eindig met: hoe vorentoe? Die antwoord is eenvoudig: gaan wees kerk. Kerk van Christus. Kerk vir die wêreld vir wie God só lief was dat God Jesus gestuur het. En Jesus stuur ons.

My pleidooi aan u aan die begin van hierdie vergadering: kies vir ons leiers wat dit sal doen. Wat nie bly terugkrabbel

Let us choose leaders who will help us be church. To not hark back to the past, becoming entangled with Afrikaner cultural conflicts and thinly disguised racial politics, but to forge ahead, the eyes firmly fixed on Jesus. To not be afraid and retreat to an Afrikaner laager, but to follow fearless leaders and go and do what we are called to do as Christian believers. Choose decent human beings and dignified people who will make us proud. Fearless believers who are willing to go where God sends them. We have probably never needed such leaders more than we do now.

Synodal muniment presented to James Alfred Loader

With this award, the Curatorium of the Netherdutch Reformed Church of Africa recognises the extraordinary academic achievements of Professor James Alfred Loader, and also his much valued leadership in and service to the Church.

James Alfred Loader was born on 12 July 1945 in Pretoria and matriculated also in Pretoria in 1962. He commenced with theological studies at the University of Pretoria in 1963 and received all his degrees, BA, BA (Hons), MA (Semitic Languages), BD and DLitt (Semitic Languages), with distinction. He continued his theological studies at the University of Groningen, the Netherlands, and received from that university a second doctoral degree, namely a ThD in Old Testament Studies. This was followed by a third doctoral degree, a DTh in Church History from the University of South Africa in 1984. In recognition of his exceptional academic achievements, he was awarded an honorary doctorate, the degree DPhil, by the University of Pretoria in 2009.

Professor Loader's academic career began in 1968 as lecturer in Semitic Languages at the University of Pretoria. He was soon promoted to Senior Lecturer and in 1979 he was appointed professor in Semitic Languages. A year later he accepted an appointment as professor in Old Testament Studies at the University of South Africa. In 1997 he was appointed as professor in Old Testament Studies and Biblical Archaeology at the University of Vienna (Austria) where he served as Dean of the Faculty of Theology from 2006. In 2008 he was appointed honorary professor at the University of South Africa.

His academic contribution comprises more than 219 scholarly articles and 39 books (as author, co-author or editor). His work is highly acclaimed internationally and regarded as authoritative in the field. If other professional and popular publications are also taken into account, it amounts to some 480 contributions published by him in the course of 42 years. He is often invited as guest lecturer or guest speaker by universities all over the world. He has received various international academic awards, including the Teyler Award for Theology (1989) in the Netherlands.

en in Afrikaner kultuurgoedere verstrengel raak nie, of nog erger, in dun-verskuilde raspolitiek nie, maar wat vorentoe gaan, die oog gevestig op Jesus. Wat nie bang terugtrek in die Afrikanerlaer nie, maar wat ons vreesloos lei om die taak in die wêreld waarvoor ons as Christengelowiges geroep is, te gaan volvoer. Kies vir ons netjiese mense op wie ons kan trots wees. Mense wat ons met waardigheid sal lei. Vreeslose gelowiges wat sal gaan waarheen God ons stuur. Ons het dit seker nog nooit só nodig gehad soos nou nie.

Sinodale oorkonde aan James Alfred Loader

Met hierdie toekenning aan professor James Alfred Loader gee die Kuratorium van die Nederduitsch Hervormde Kerk van Afrika erkenning aan sy buitengewone prestasies op akademiese gebied en sy leierskap en diens in die Kerk.

James Alfred Loader is op 12 Julie 1945 in Pretoria gebore en matrikuleer in 1962 in Pretoria. Hy begin sy teologiese studies aan die Universiteit van Pretoria in 1963 en behaal die grade BA, BA (Hons), MA (Semitiese Tale), BD en DLitt (Semitiese Tale), alles met lof. Hierna sit hy sy teologiese studies voort aan die Universiteit van Groningen waar hy 'n tweede doktorsgraad (ThD) in Ou Testament behaal, wat hy in 1984 aan die Universiteit van Suid-Afrika met 'n derde doktorsgraad (DTh) in Kerkgeskiedenis opvolg. As erkenning vir sy akademiese uitmuntendheid ontvang hy in 2009 'n eredoktorsgraad (DPhil) van die Universiteit van Pretoria.

Professor Loader se akademiese loopbaan begin in 1968 as dosent in Semitiese Tale aan die Universiteit van Pretoria. Hy word baie gou tot senior dosent bevorder en in 1979 word hy aangestel as professor in Semitiese Tale. 'n Jaar later aanvaar hy die aanstelling as professor in Ou Testament aan die Universiteit van Suid-Afrika en in 1997 word hy aangestel as professor in Ou Testament en Bybelse Argeologie aan die Universiteit van Wenen (Oostenryk) en is sedert 2006 dekaan van die Fakulteit Teologie aan dieselfde universiteit. Hy word ook in 2008 benoem as honorêre professor aan die Universiteit van Suid-Afrika.

Wat sy akademiese bydrae betref, het daar reeds meer as 219 akademiese artikels en 39 boeke (as outeur, mede-outeur of redakteur) uit sy pen verskyn. Verskeie van hierdie publikasies word internasionaal as gesaghebbend gereken. Indien prof. Loader se ander professionele en populêre publikasies in ag geneem word, het hy die afgelope 42 jaar 480 publikasies die lig laat sien. Hy tree gereeld by ander universiteite regoor die wêreld as gasdosent en gasspreker op en het reeds verskeie internasionale akademiese toekennings ontvang wat onder andere insluit die Teyler-prys vir Teologie (1989) in Nederland en 'n toekenning as een van die top 100 navorsers van die Universiteit van Pretoria die afgelope

During the Centenary celebrations of the University of Pretoria in 2008 he was nominated as one of the top 100 researchers of the University in the 100 years. He is member of a number of international academic bodies and scholarly societies.

Professor Loader's first position as minister of the Church was in the Kensington parish in Johannesburg in 1969. He also served the parishes Villieria, Newlands, Johannesburg North and the Afrikaans Protestant Parish in Vienna, Austria. As a young minister he served on various councils of the Synod of the Church, notably Youth Ministry, Church and the Arts, Social Issues, and the Legal Council. A number of hymns written by him were included in the Church's Hymnal.

Professor Loader is an academic of note as well as a committed church person. He is a formidable debate partner and his astute and consistent thought is impressive. His theology is typical of the biblical theology of the Netherdutch Reformed Church. He has always maintained solidarity with his spiritual mother, the Church. This solidarity has, however, never been an impediment to his criticism of the Church when necessary. Examples are: his stance on the Netherdutch Reformed Church as nation church ('volkskerk') and his theological criticism of Article III of the then Church Order. Even when he was condemned for his standpoint he was always compelled to examine the resolutions and viewpoints of the Church in the light of the gospel. Though Professor Loader has lived in Europe for many years, he has retained his deep affection for South Africa. Just as he stands in critical solidarity with the Church, so also with the country of his birth. This is evident in his Afrikaans short stories written under the alias of Kees van den Brom.

Lastly, it is commendable that Professor Loader, in spite of his impressive academic career and uninterrupted work in the church, has succeeded in living a well-balanced life. An award from the National Parks Board as Honorary Ranger attests to this.

With this award, the Netherdutch Reformed Church honours Professor James Alfred Loader's outstanding service to academia and the Church for the past 40 years. The Church is grateful to God for someone with such special gifts, who has served – and still continues to serve – the Church and academia with integrity, commitment and compassion. The Church commends him and his family to God.

Response to muniment by James Alfred Loader

What an honour to stand here before the Church and convey my thanks for such a special award! I would never have dreamt this to be possible. I who – as someone put it in the *Beeld* some time ago – do not hold a position in

100 jaar. Hy dien op verskeie internasionale akademiese liggame en is lid en erelid van verskeie internasionale werkgemeenskappe.

Professor Loader se kerklike betrokkenheid het in 1969 in die gemeente Kensington begin. Hy was ook predikant van die gemeentes Villieria, Newlands en Johannesburg-Noord en is tans predikant van die Afrikaanssprekende Protestantse Gemeente in Wenen. Reeds as jong predikant was prof. Loader sinodaal by verskeie rade van die Kerk betrokke. Hier kan veral sy betrokkenheid by die rade vir Jeugbediening, Kerk en Kuns, Sosiale Vraagstukke en Regsadvies genoem word. Verskeie van sy liedere is ook in die Liedboek van die Kerk opgeneem.

Professor Loader is sowel akademikus as kerkmens. Hy is 'n gedugte debatsvennoot en sy vermoë tot skerp en konsistente denke bly beïndruk. Die teologie wat hy beoefen dra 'n duidelike Hervormde stempel en is tipies van die Bybels-Reformatoriese teologie wat eie aan die Hervormde Kerk is. Hy is en was nog altyd solidêr met sy geestelike moeder. Hierdie solidariteit het egter nooit vir hom beteken dat hy nie ook krities teenoor sy moeder mag staan nie. Sy standpunt oor die Hervormde Kerk as volkskerk en sy jarelange teologiese afwysing van Artikel III is hiervan goeie voorbeelde. Selfs in tye van verguising oor bepaalde standpunte het hy nooit opgehou om die lig van die evangelie oor die besluite en standpunte van die Kerk te laat val nie. Alhoewel professor Loader die afgelope 13 jaar in die buiteland woon, het sy liefde vir Suid-Afrika nie getaan nie. Soos in die geval van die Kerk, is professor Loader krities-solidêr met sy geboorteland. Hierdie ingesteldheid kom veral na vore in die verskeie kortverhale wat hy in Afrikaans onder die skuilnaam Kees van den Brom gepubliseer het.

Ten slotte moet vermeld word dat professor Loader, ten spyte van sy uitmuntende akademiese en kerklike loopbaan, gebalanseerd sy menswees uitleef. Die toekenning wat hy as ereveldwagter van die Nasionale Parkeraad van Suid-Afrika ontvang het, is hiervan 'n sprekende bewys.

Met hierdie toekenning eer die Hervormde Kerk professor James Alfred Loader se besondere dienswerk op akademiese en kerklike gebied die afgelope meer as 40 jaar. Die Kerk is God dankbaar vir iemand wat met integriteit, toewyding en deernis die Kerk en akademie gedien het – en nog steeds dien – met die gawes ontvang uit die hand van God. Die Kerk se bede vergesel hom en sy familie.

Antwoord op oorkonde deur James Alfred Loader

Hoogerwaarde Voorsitter, Hoë Vergadering,

Wat 'n eer om hier te mag staan en die Kerk te mag dank vir 'n besondere toekenning! Ek het so iets nooit

church leadership; never even made it to the Drafting Committee; has not had the experience of addressing the General Assembly from the stage but could only speak with trepidation from the floor. I may now convey my gratitude. As befits my humble past, I will do so not with sophisticated theological rhetoric, but in the way in which the ancient Israelites theologised: through story. It is a short story from the recent history of the Church.

I was present when the General Assembly decided that neither the Chair nor the Assembly should be addressed as 'the honourable'. At that time I knew so much about theology, I agreed: hierarchical forms of address such as 'the honourable', from church councils, to the Circuits, and right up to the General Assembly – it is wrong. Because the honourable principle of church polity is that all in the Reformed tradition are of equal value. Armed with this principle, which admittedly is not to be found in the Bible but could just as well have been, I attempted to establish it at my very first General Assembly in the Alps. The Chair, with typical Viennese courtesy, invited the new brother to consider that this Calvinistic assembly is called 'honourable', not because it *is* honourable, but because it has been called to honourable service. With that I could not argue, so I sat down. I had learned my lesson.

But the story has another chapter. I was determined to introduce something of what I had learned in the Netherdutch Reformed Church to them. And, lo and behold, a few assemblies later it worked! The Afrikaans Parish of the Reformierte Kirche, established on the mandate of the Executive of the Netherdutch Reformed Church, is the only church in the German-speaking world whose members are exempt from paying church tax. With the principle that Afrikaans Calvinists do not *pay*, but rather give offerings out of gratitude, they, in turn, could not find fault. Sometime later a dissertation in Practical Theology arguing that the Afrikaans view should be adopted, was submitted in our faculty. The dissertation was passed with distinction. Though only on a small scale, the Netherdutch Reformed view did have an impact. It has been documented in minutes. It has been discussed in journals. They have taken note of us. We did not initiate a schism to become a so-called free church, but remained in the church and maintained our character in such a way that they could learn something of true Reformed gratitude from us, as we could learn from them that our calling to higher service is, indeed, honourable.

The aim of this fragment of salvation history is to illustrate my profound gratitude to the Church for the insight that the Reformed tradition can also make a contribution on the other side of the Alps. There are no grounds to fear transalpine contamination. This is to be commended – not only in a commendation *to* me, but also in one *by* me. Honourable service is not honourable in the sense that it should be seen and rewarded. It need not tower above everything like a giant Alpine spruce or linden tree, but can

kon droom nie. Ek wat – soos iemand dit destyds in *Beeld* gestel het – geen posisie in die kerkkleiding beklee het nie; wat dit nooit eers tot die Formuleringskommissie kon maak nie; wat nie weet hoe dit voel om die Algemene Kerkvergadering van die verhoog af toe te spreek nie en altyd maar met bewing van die vloer af gepraat het. Ek mag nou hier 'n dankwoord uitspreek. Om te pas by so 'n beskeie verlede, doen ek dit ook nie met 'n gesofistikeerde teologiese redevoering nie, maar soos die ou Israeliete geteologiseer het: met 'n vertelling. Dis maar kort en kom uit die resente kerkgeskiedenis.

Ek was by toe die Algemene Kerkvergadering besluit het dat nóg die Voorsitter nóg die Vergadering 'hoog' of 'hoogerwaarde' genoem behoort te word. Destyds het ek só baie van die teologie geweet dat ek saamgestem het: hiërgiese aanspreekvorme van eerwaarde, weleerwaarde en hoogerwaarde, onder van die kerkraadsvergadering vandaan af op oor die ringsvergadering tot die Algemene Kerkvergadering – dis verkeerd. Want die oudeerwaarde kerkregtelike beginsel is dat almal in die Reformatoriese tradisie gelykwaardig is. Gewapen met dié beginsel wat nou wel nie in die Bybel gestaan het nie, maar so goed soos daar gestaan het, het ek hom sommer by my eerste Algemene Sinode in die Alpe probeer vestig. Toe sê die voorsitter met tipies Weense hoflikheid: hy wonder of die nuwe broeder nie maar daarmee wil reken dat hierdie Calvinistiese vergadering 'hoog' genoem word, nie omdat hy hoog *is* nie, maar omdat hy tot 'n hoë dienswerk geroep is. Daarmee kon ek nie stry nie en toe gaan sit ek met my les geleer.

Maar die verhaal het nog 'n hoofstuk. Ek was vasberade om wel iets wat ek in die Hervormde Kerk geleer het, daar anderkant deur te voer. En sowaar as my heer die Voorsitter leef en u dienaar leef, 'n paar sinodes later werk dit! Die Afrikaanse Gemeente van die Reformierte Kirche, wat in opdrag van die Hervormde Algemene Kommissie tot stand gekom het, is die enigste in die hele Duitssprekende wêreld wie se lidmate vrygestel is van kerkbelasting. Met die prinsiep dat Afrikaanse Calviniste nie kerklike ledegeld betáál nie, maar offergawes uit dankbaarheid géé, kon hulle op hulle beurt nie fout kry nie. Toe verskyn daar 'n verhandeling in die Praktiese Teologie by ons fakulteit wat pleit dat die Afrikaanse siening die oorhand kry en die dominee wat dit geskryf het, kry 'n onderskeiding daarvoor. Al is dit op klein skaal, het die Hervormde opvatting 'n impak gemaak, dit is nou in notules gedokumenteer, in tydskrifte word daarvoor geskryf en met ons word gereken – want ons het ons nie afgeskei en 'n sogenaamde vrye kerk geword nie, maar ons karakter só gehandhaaf dat ons vir ander iets van die ware Reformatoriese dankbaarheid kon leer en op ons beurt by hulle kon leer hoe hoogerwaarde ons roeping tot dienswerk is.

Die doel van dié stukkie heilsgeskiedenis: om te toon waarom ek die Kerk dank vir die insig dat die Hervormde tradisie ook anderkant die Alpe 'n bydrae kan maak, en dat vrees vir transalpinse kontaminasie ongegrond is.

also be an insignificant little tree transplanted from the Highveld to the mountains. This experience has not only demonstrated my debt of gratitude to the Church, but has also shown that our Reformed theology can make a contribution on a world-wide scale. In that context, I have learned what significance the Netherdutch Reformed Church can have. The honourable service of witnessing to Christ in the whole world and sharing our particular vision with others in a credible way, can only be rendered if one is there, present, takes part, is seen and heard. The way in which we practise biblical theology is second to none. My work in the Church has taught me the motto 'critical solidarity is love', and my work in Europe has opened my eyes to the potential of our Reformed theology. If snatches of my theology can be seen here and there, or have proven useful to the Church in some way, then I thank the Lord of the church and the church of the Lord for that.

That the Netherdutch Reformed Church tolerated me at a time when it was frowned upon to teach Hebrew rather than 'dedicate oneself fully to the service of the Church' (as it was phrased), when the Article III debates raged like the scene of flames in 'Die Walküre'; that throughout all of this the Church granted me the privilege to serve in parishes, and eventually entrusted me with the task of gathering a congregation in Vienna – all of this motivated me to practise academic theology *outside* of the ivory tower, down to earth, without fear of the unknown.

The Netherdutch Reformed Church now presents me with an honorary medal, but it should actually be the other way around. Medals and awards I do not have, but what I have, I give you: my sincere thanks, and my prayer that the light entrusted to you will be put on that stand to which the Lord referred when He said that it should shine for *all*. I pray that the Church will become, what Jesus called a city on a mountain that cannot be hidden. My heartfelt thanks to you all.

Synodal muniment presented to Andries Gideon van Aarde

With this address to Professor Andries Gideon van Aarde, the Netherdutch Reformed Church of Africa acknowledges his extraordinary academic achievements and service to the Church.

Andries van Aarde was born in Pretoria on 25 April 1951 and grew up in an area colloquially called the 'Moot'. He completed his secondary education at the High School Wonderboom, where he was also the student leader. He received the degrees BA and BD, as well as a MA degree in Semitic languages and three doctoral degrees namely DD (New Testament Studies) in 1982, PhD (Ancient Culture

Daarvoor is erkenning gepas – nie áán my nie maar déúr my. Hoë dienswerk is nie hoog om gesien en beloon te word nie. Dit hoef nie soos die reuse Alpyense sparhout- of lindebome bo alles uit te staan nie, maar kan ook 'n verpotte boompie wees wat van die Hoëveld af berge toe verplant is. Hierdie ervaring het vir my nie alleen onderstreep wat ek aan die Kerk verskuldig is nie, maar ook getoon wat die Hervormde teologie op wêreldskaal kan bydra. Eers in daardie konteks het ek geleer watter betekenis die Hervormde Kerk werklik kan hê. Die hoë dienswerk om getuies van Christus in die hele wêreld te wees en om ons spesifieke visie daarop geloofwaardig bekend te maak, kan alleen uitgevoer word as mens dáár is, deelneem, gesien en gehoor word. Ons beoefen 'n Bybelse teologie wat vir niks hoef terug te staan nie. My werk in die Hervormde Kerk het my die leuse 'solidêre kritiek is liefde' bygebring, en my werk in die buiteland het my die potensiaal van die Hervormde teologie laat sien. As hier en daar iets van my in die teologie verskyn het of in die kerk gebeur het wat bruikbaar is, dan dank ek die Heer van die kerk en die kerk van die Heer daarvoor.

Dat die Hervormde Kerk my verdra het toe dit nie welkom was dat mens Hebreeus gee in plaas van (soos dit geheet het) jou 'volle kragte in diens van die Kerk stel' nie, toe die Artikel-III-debatte in ons midde soos die slottoneel van 'Die Walküre' gevlam het; dat die Kerk my deurgaans in gemeentes ingestuur het en my daarna die opdrag gegee het om 'n gemeente in Wenen bymekaar te maak – dit alles het my die impuls gegee om die wetenskaplike teologie *buite* die ivoortoring, plat op die grond en sonder vrees vir die vreemde te beoefen.

Die Hervormde Kerk gee nou aan my 'n erepenning, maar dit behoort eintlik omgekeerd te wees. Pennings en pryse het ek nie, maar wat ek het, gee ek u: 'n dankwoord waarmee ek u toebid dat die lig wat aan u toevertrou is, op dié staander sal kom waarvan die Here gepraat het toe Hy gesê het dit moet vir *almal* skyn, 'n bede dat die Kerk sal word wat Jesus genoem het 'n stad bo-op 'n berg wat nie weggesteek kan word nie. Van harte bedank.

Sinodale oorkonde aan Andries Gideon van Aarde

Met hierdie toekenning aan professor Andries Gideon van Aarde gee die Nederduitsch Hervormde Kerk van Afrika erkenning aan sy buitengewone prestasies op akademiese gebied en sy diens in die Kerk.

Andries van Aarde is op 25 April 1951 in Pretoria gebore en word groot as 'kind van die Moot'. Hy matrikuleer aan die Hoërskool Wonderboom, waar hy ook hoofseun was. Benewens die grade BA en BD, verwerf hy 'n MA-graad in Semitiese Tale en drie doktorsgrade: DD (Nuwe-Testamentiese Wetenskap) in 1982, PhD (Antieke Kultuurgeskiedenis) in 2000 en DLitt (Antieke Grieks) in 2004. Na vier jaar diens as predikant is hy van 1979 tot met

Studies) in 2000 and DLitt (Ancient Greek) in 2005. After 4 years in ministry, he served as lecturer at the University of Pretoria from 1979 until his early retirement in 2005. He was one of the youngest persons ever to be appointed as professor of the Church. He received numerous academic awards. Five times he received the Academic Achievers Award of the University of Pretoria. From 2002 onwards he has been a rated researcher of the National Research Foundation of South Africa and has received several senior research awards. He also received a Federal Government Award from the United States of America for the advancement of humanities. He has an impressive list of research publications to his name. He has edited and authored several books, authored a variety of chapters in books, as well as a host of research articles and popularised research contributions.

Professor Van Aarde is well-known and well respected in international academic circles for his innovative contributions to the field of New Testament Studies, his academic leadership especially in Matthew research and historical Jesus studies, and for his academic and personal integrity.

In 1985, he was appointed editor of the *HTS Theological Studies*. Under his leadership, it has become one of the top internationally recognised academic journals in South Africa. The journal contributes greatly to theological research in general, as well as to theological reflection and development in the Netherdutch Reformed Church specifically. Through his continued and exceptionally productive involvement with the journal he has become one of the most versatile and well-read theologians in the country.

His active service in the Netherdutch Reformed Church began when, as an adolescent, he served in the parish of Northern Pretoria as deacon and sexton and, as a university student, in the parishes Philadelphia and Wonderboom South as deacon, elder and catechist. As theologian, Professor Van Aarde is one of the leading thinkers in the Church. He produced many working papers and reports for general assemblies and official meetings, and many of his proposals have been adopted as important resolutions of the Church.

As a person and theologian, Andries van Aarde is appreciated for his critical solidarity with the Church – from childhood onwards he has been a loyal member of the Church, but also one who does not shy away from speaking honestly about how he sees his beloved Church in the light of the gospel. Greater than his love for the Netherdutch Reformed Church is his love for and compliance with the gospel message, which he not only teaches and preaches, but also lives. With child-like faith he, especially in his later years, first discerns the guidance of God's Spirit and what would best serve the gospel, before he speaks or acts. He has always shown a special love and compassion for wounded

sy vervroegde emeritaat in 2005 dosent aan die Universiteit van Pretoria. Hy word een van die jongste professore van die Kerk en word bekroon met verskeie akademiese toekennings. Die Universiteit van Pretoria het hom vyf keer as uitnemende akademiese presteerder aangewys. Vanaf 2002 is hy 'n gegradeerde navorser van die Nasionale Navorsingstigting van Suid-Afrika en ontvang hy verskeie senior navorsingstoekennings. Hy ontvang ook 'n Federale Regeringstoekening van die Verenigde State van Amerika ter bevordering van die menswetenskappe. As uitmunterende navorser het hy 'n lang lys publikasies agter sy naam. Hy is outeur en redakteur van boeke, outeur van hoofstukke in boeke, en het 'n groot verskeidenheid navorsingsartikels en populêr-wetenskaplike bydraes gepubliseer.

Prof. Van Aarde is bekend en word gerespekteer in internasionale akademiese kringe vir sy innoverende bydraes tot die Nuwe-Testamentiese Wetenskap, sy leiding veral ten opsigte van Matteus-navorsing en historiese Jesus studies, en vir sy akademiese en persoonlike integriteit.

In 1985 word hy die redakteur van die *HTS Teologiese Studies*. Hy bou die tydskrif uit tot een van die beste internasionale vaktydskrifte in Suid-Afrika. Die tydskrif lewer 'n besondere bydrae tot die teologiese navorsing in Suid-Afrika én tot teologiese nadenke en ontwikkeling in die Hervormde Kerk. Deur sy voortgesette betrokkenheid by die tydskrif en sy uitsonderlike werkywer word hy een van die veelsydigste en mees belese teoloë in die land.

In die Hervormde Kerk begin sy aktiewe diens toe hy as skoolkind diaken en koster was in Gemeente Noordelike Pretoria en as student diaken, ouderling en kategeet in die gemeentes Philadelphia en Wonderboom-Suid. As teoloog is prof. Van Aarde een van die rigtinggewende denkers in die Kerk. Verskeie van sy studiestukke en rapporte dien op amptelike vergaderings en van sy voorstelle lei tot belangrike besluite in die Kerk.

As persoon en teoloog word Andries van Aarde gewaardeer vir sy kritiese solidariteit met die Kerk – van kindsbeen af 'n lojale Hervormer, maar wat nie skroom om na sy geliefde Kerk te kyk in die lig van die evangelie en eerlik te sê wat hy sien nie. Meer nog as sy liefde vir die Hervormde Kerk, is sy liefde vir en gehoorsaamheid aan die evangelie wat hy nie net onderrig en verkondig nie, maar ook lééf. Op kinderlik gelowige wyse maak hy veral in sy later jare altyd eers vir homself uit waarheen God se Gees hom lei en wat die saak van die evangelie sou dien, voordat hy praat of optree. Uit sy evangeliese hart vloei 'n besondere liefde en deernis vir verwonde mense en diegene wat na die rand geskuif word. Vir hom is die evangelie inklusief – niemand mag uitgesluit word van God se genade nie.

Soms self verwond en gemarginaliseer, bly Andries van Aarde getrou aan wat hy verstaan as sy roeping. Vir die bydrae en integriteit van hierdie besondere gelowige, lidmaat en akademikus is die Kerk God diep dankbaar.

and marginalised people. He sees the gospel message as inclusive – no one is to be excluded from the grace of God.

Himself at times wounded and marginalised, Andries van Aarde remains faithful to what he understands as his calling. For the contribution and integrity of this special follower of Jesus, member of the Church and academia, the Church is truly grateful to God.

Response to muniment by Andries Gideon van Aarde

This year, I will have been a minister of the Church for 32 years. On retirement from the university in 2005, I had completed 25 years in academia in service of theology and the formation of ministers for the Netherdutch Reformed Church. Another 10 years could have been added to these 25, but that was not to be. All in all, I was able to serve for a relatively long period of time and regard myself as blessed that I can remain useful as much as my energy and health will allow.

Most of you, as I myself, probably did not expect that I would be awarded the HCM Fourie medal of honour, since my career was and is controversial to many. In spite of everything, I can honestly say here tonight that, given the opportunity, I would undoubtedly have made the same choice again, namely to be a minister and theologian.

I understand the Church's motivation for conferring this award on me as two-fold because of service to the Netherdutch Reformed Church and/or for a theological contribution that was of value to the Church. I believe that I have been deemed worthy to receive this award on the grounds of my specific contribution to Reformed theology. Just as I have felt at home in the Netherdutch Reformed Church all of my life and with heart and soul, so too did I feel thoroughly at home in Reformed theology for all of the 25 years that I served as professor. On different levels, I always aimed to practice my theology to the benefit of the Church.

For me, the core of Reformed theology is, as Paul Tillich expressed it, *the willingness to risk*. He called it the *courage* of the Protestant tradition. The courage to risk, is about daring to be critical of all that happens inside or outside the church, to critically evaluate whether it is in harmony with the heart of the gospel of Jesus Christ. This description of Reformed theology by Tillich derives from the context of French philosopher, Jean Paul Sartre. Sartre was rather critical of the church. He, for example, spoke of the 'curse of conscience'. He used negative terms to denote something positive. He called it 'the curse of conscience' because one tends to want to shy away from pangs of conscience. Knowing full well that the choice you made was *your* choice, it is easier to blame others or use God, the Bible or the church to lend authority to your own very human choices.

Antwoord op oorkonde deur Andries Gideon van Aarde

Geagte Voorsitter van die Algemene Kerkvergadering van die Nederduitsch Hervormde Kerk, deur u, die Voorsitter van die Kuratorium vir Teologiese Opleiding, afgevaardigdes na en gaste van die 68ste Algemene Kerkvergadering.

Ek is bevoorreg om vanjaar twee en dertig jaar lank predikant te wees en het met my universiteitsemeritaat in 2005, vyf en twintig jaar voltydse diens in die akademie ter wille van die teologie as wetenskap en die opleiding van predikante van die Hervormde Kerk, agter die rug. Ek sou nog tien jaar tot hierdie vyf en twintig jaar kon toevoeg, maar dit was vir my nie so beskik nie. Tog, menslik gesproke, was ek relatief lank in diens en ag ek myself geseënd dat ek, soos die energie en gesondheid dit moontlik maak, steeds diensbaar kan bly.

Die meeste van u hier vanaand het waarskynlik – net soos ek – seker nie verwag dat ek met die toekenning van die HCM Fourie erepenning, vereer sou word nie. U is daarvan bewus dat my loopbaan vir sommiges omstrede was en is. Tog kan ek vanaand eerlik vir u sê, dat as ek weer voor die keuse gestel sou word, ek sonder twyfel weer sou kies om predikant en teoloog te wees.

Ek verstaan die motivering van die Kerk by die toekenning van die HCM Fourie erepenning só, dat dit veral om twee sake gaan: dat 'n persoon diens aan die Hervormde Kerk gelewer het en/of dat 'n persoon 'n teologiese bydrae gelewer het wat vir die Hervormde Kerk diensbaar is. Ek meen dat ek waardig gereken is om hierdie toekenning te ontvang op grond van spesifiek my bydrae tot Hervormde teologie. Net soos ek my lewe lank hart en siel tuis was en is binne die Hervormde Kerk, so was ek die 25 jaar wat ek professor was, hart en siel tuis binne die Hervormde teologie. Dit het ek ook op verskillende terreine in die Kerk probeer diensbaar maak.

Ek beskou die hart van die Hervormde teologie dat dit gaan, soos Paul Tillich gesê het, om *die bereidheid om te waag*. Hy het daarna verwys as die *moed* van die Protestantse tradisie. Die moed om te waag gaan oor die moed om alles wat binne en buite die kerk gebeur, krities onder die vergrootglas te plaas om te kyk of dit in harmonie is met die hart van die evangelie van Jesus Christus. Hierdie beskrywing van Hervormde teologie, soos ons dit by Tillich vind, kom eintlik uit die konteks van die Franse filosoof Jean Paul Sartre. Sartre was buitengewoon krities ten opsigte van die kerk. Hy het byvoorbeeld gepraat van die 'vloek', oftewel die 'euwel van die gewete'. Hy het in negatiewe terme gepraat om iets positief te sê. Wanneer hy oor die 'euwel van die gewete' praat, bedoel hy dat 'n mens nie graag wil hoor wanneer jou gewete jou aanspreek nie. So dikwels weet jy dat 'n keuse wat jy uitoefen, *jou* keuse is, maar jy soek liever die oorsaak by die ander of gebruik God, Bybel of kerk om gesag aan jou menslike keuse te verleen.

The Protestant believer is the one who would be willing to acknowledge that what is often said in the name of the Bible or God, was actually devised by the group to which you belong or by you yourself. A Protestant has the courage to question: is this really the will of God, or is it what people want? I chose and choose to serve this Protestant tradition. I believe that I am the recipient of this award because I am known as a *critical* theologian.

Despite my position as a critical thinker in the Church and theology, I honestly have no desire that everyone in the Church should think as I do. The chair of the Curatorium [Dr Daan van Wyk jr] knows the extent to which the students to whom I have been a *Doktorvater* have opinions that differ from mine!

It is my heartfelt desire that, in these times of great uncertainty about many things in life – within the circle of the Netherdutch Reformed Church, in faith communities worldwide and among people in general – we will trust one another and take the other's critical views seriously, in order that we can search together, with a multitude of minds, voices and especially hearts filled with love, faith and hope, for what will truly serve the church of Jesus Christ.

I accept the HCM Fourie honorary medal with deep gratitude, and with a plea and a question: let us live together in reconciling diversity, as we keep searching for the answer to the question: what is truly in harmony with the gospel?

I thank you for the award!

Declaration regarding apartheid in church and politics – Resolution 54 of the General Assembly of the Netherdutch Reformed Church in Africa, 2010

Compiled by:

Andries van Aarde

Johan Buitendag

Yolanda Dreyer

Ernest van Eck

James Alfred Loader

Introduction

A moment of truth may dawn on a believer through the Holy Spirit when the gospel message appeals to one's heart. Such a moment has arrived for us as ministers and theologians of the Netherdutch Reformed Church of Africa. We cannot but respond. If we do not, the stones will cry

Dit is die Protestantse gelowige wat bereid is om te erken dat jy dikwels dinge in die naam van óf die Bybel óf God sê, maar nie herken dat jy of jou groep waaraan jy behoort, dit eintlik self uitgedink het nie. 'n Protestant het egter die waagmoed om te vra: is dit werklik die wil van God, of is dit die wil van mense? Ek wou en wil steeds hierdie Protestantse tradisie dien. Ek glo dat ek die penning ontvang omdat ek bekend staan as 'n *kritiese* teoloog.

Ten spyte van my kritiese posisie in die Kerk en in die teologie, wil ek wel iets van my hart oopmaak deur te sê dat ek nie meen dat almal in die Kerk moet dink soos ek dink nie. Vra maar net vir die voorsitter van die Kuratorium vir Teologiese Opleiding [dr Daan van Wyk jr] hoe verskil my studente, vir wie ek soos 'n *Doktorvater* voel, van my!

My verlanse is dat ons in hierdie tyd van groot onsekerhede oor soveel dinge in die lewe – onsekerhede binne die kring van die Hervormde Kerk, in geloofsgemeenskappe wêreldwyd en by mense oor die algemeen – mekaar moet vertrou én mekaar se kritiek ernstig moet neem, sodat ons met meer koppe en met meer stemme en veral met meer harte vol van liefde, geloof en hoop, sal soek na wat werklik diensbaar vir die kerk van Jesus Christus is.

Ek ontvang met diep dankbaarheid die HCM Fourie erepenning met 'n vraag en 'n appél, te wete: laat ons in ons verskeidenheid versoenend met mekaar saamleef terwyl ons soekend bly vra: wat is werklik in harmonie met die evangelie?

Ek dank u vir hierdie toekening.

Verklaring oor apartheid in kerk in politiek – Besluit 54 van die Algemene Kerkvergadering van die Nederduitsch Hervormde Kerk van Afrika, 2010⁶

Opgestel deur:

Andries van Aarde

Johan Buitendag

.....
6. Die 69ste Algemene Kerkvergadering het soos volg oor Beskrywingspunt 54 besluit (Notule van die buitengewone sitting van die Algemene Kerkvergadering van die Nederduitsch Hervormde Kerk van Afrika, Gemeente Wonderboom, Dinsdag 04 Oktober en Woensdag 05 Oktober 2011, Argief van die Nederduitsch Hervormde Kerk van Afrika, Pretoria): Die beskrywingspunt word aanvaar:

BESKRYWINGSPUNT 54: VERWERPING VAN APARTHEID:

Die 69ste Algemene Kerkvergadering maak in die lig van die 68ste Algemene Kerkvergadering se besluit dat dit verkeerd was om 'n bepaalde regeringsbeleid (apartheid) goed te praat, onomwonde die uitspraak dat apartheid nie teologies geregtig kan word nie. Die Kerk verwerp apartheid omdat dit in stryd is met die evangelie van Jesus Christus, gebaseer is op die idee van onderlinge onversoenlikheid, onreg sanksioneer, die beeld van God in mense aantast.

Die 69ste Algemene Kerkvergadering het soos volg oor Beskrywingspunt 54 besluit:

Die volgende amendement word aanvaar: Die tweede sin van die beskrywingspunt word gewysig om te lees: Die Kerk verwerp sy goedkeuring van apartheid omdat dit ... Die volgende sin word bygevoeg: Die vergadering beklemtoon die Bybels-teologiese aard van hierdie verklaring.

out. Along with many others we are sad about what has happened in the Netherdutch Reformed Church and are ashamed before God. This sadness has a long history.

The history

On Friday, 06 March 2009, members of the Executive Committee of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches met with the Executive of the NRCA in connection with the latter's possible readmission to WARC. The NRCA's membership had been suspended during the 21st meeting of the WARC in Ottawa in 1982.

In order to be readmitted, an 'unequivocal motion by the synod' rejecting Apartheid as contrary to the gospel message was required. Unfortunately the NRCA was – and still is – not prepared to make such a statement. In an article on 10 March 2009, the Afrikaans daily newspaper, *Beeld*, pointed out that a proposal had been included in the agenda of the previous Synod meeting which would have met these requirements, but 'there was such dissension on the matter that it was not tabled'. The Secretary of Synod was quoted as seeing a dead end approaching for ecumenical relations.

Declaration

In light of these recent developments, we as ministers of the Netherdutch Reformed Church of Africa declare unequivocally that apartheid is sinful in essence and in its consequences, and that an attempt at any theological justification whatsoever of apartheid is misguided.

For the following reasons apartheid cannot be accepted or justified by Christians:

- because it was based on the premise of inequality and, therefore, impedes the ministry of reconciliation in Christ
- because it allocated privileges to white people at the expense of black people
- because it perpetrated injustice and oppression, among other things by the forced removal of people from specific areas, which destroyed the lives of countless individuals and families
- because it obscures the image of God in people – which saddens the Holy Spirit.

The only gospel message we know is that of God's love, which requires us to have compassion for others, as God is compassionate towards us. Apartheid as a system in church, society and politics is inherently dehumanising and as such can only be regarded as evil. Dehumanising others can neither be justified biblically nor theologically or morally.

Having shared in the privileges generated by an unjust system, we accept co-responsibility for the trauma suffered

Yolanda Dreyer

Ernest van Eck

James Alfred Loader

Inleiding

'n Oomblik van waarheid word ongevraagd deur die Heilige Gees in gelowiges se harte gelê. Dit gebeur wanneer die appèl van die evangelie onweersstaanbaar op die kind van die Here inwerk. As predikante en teoloë van die NHKA het daardie oomblik vir ons aangebreek. Ons kan nie anders nie. As ons stilbly, sal die klippe uitroep. Ons is saam met baie ander seer oor wat in die Hervormde Kerk gebeur het en is skaam voor God. Hierdie seer kom 'n lang pad.

Die lang pad

Die afgelope Vrydag het lede van die uitvoerende bestuur van die Wêreldbond van Hervormde Kerke die Algemene Kommissie van die NHKA ontmoet oor die kerk se moontlike hertoelating tot hierdie liggaam. Die lidmaatskap van die NHKA is tydens hierdie liggaam se een en twintigste vergadering in 1982 te Ottawa gesuspendeer. Om hertoegelaat te kan word, is toe van die NHKA verwag om 'n 'ondubbelsinnige sinodale besluit' te neem wat apartheid as onevangelies verwerp. Hiertoe was – en helaas – is die NHKA nie bereid nie. Beeld verwys na die voorstel in die agenda van die vorige Algemene Kerkvergadering wat wel aan die vereistes sou voldoen het, 'maar daar was soveel verdeeldheid daaroor dat dit nie ter tafel gebring is nie' en wat ekumene betref, sien die skriba vir die kerk 'n 'doodloopstraat' (*Beeld* 10 Maart 2009).

Verklaring

Ons as predikante van die NHKA verklaar onomwonde dat apartheid sowel in uitwerking as in wese sonde is en enige teologiese regverdiging daarvan 'n mistasting.

Apartheid kan nie aanvaar of goedgepraat word deur Christene nie omdat:

- dit gebaseer is op 'n beweerde ongelykheid tussen mense wat in die pad kom van die bediening van die versoeningswerk van Christus;
- dit eksklusiewe voordele aan wit mense ten koste van swart mense gegee het;
- daar ongeregtigheid en onderdrukking plaasgevind het in onder andere die destydse gedwonge menseverskuiwings wat die gesinslewe van miljoene mense verwoes het;
- dit die beeld van God in mense aantast – wat die Heilige Gees bedroef.

Ons ken geen ander evangelie nie as God se liefde wat van ons vra om deernis te hê vir ander, soos God met ons deernis het. Daarom kan ons nie anders as om apartheid as sisteem in die kerk, samelewing en politiek te sien as inherent mensonterend en daarom as boosheid nie. Die aantasting van mense se menswaardigheid kan op geen manier Bybels, teologies en moreel geregtig word nie.

by others. The gospel message urges us not to perpetuate this suffering.

Unity and diversity in Christ

Ecumenical relations demonstrate that believers across the globe are one in Christ. Therefore, we cannot isolate ourselves, but should answer to our calling inside and outside our church. The NRCA, together with other Christians, should demonstrate in this world how to live according to the values of God's kingdom.

Though the church of Christ is multi-faceted, the gospel message calls for unity. While the various manifestations of spirituality should be respected, differences should be embraced in order to enrich our work in the kingdom of God. This entails respect for the great variety of cultures among believers, sincerely listening to one another, and learning together how to demonstrate our love for one another in our words and deeds.

Prayer

Conscious of living and breathing in the presence of the most holy God, we pray: Lord, have mercy. We confess our sins before you and before all who have been dehumanised by us. Teach us to hate what you hate, and to love you with all our heart, with all our soul, with all our mind and with all our strength, and to love others as we love ourselves. We want to love as you do. Strengthen us when we shy away from that love. May your kingdom manifest itself in what we think and do. Let us be true to your gospel message and grant us the courage not to compromise it. We do not want to be ashamed of your gospel. Your will be done wherever we live and work. Renew us, God. Amen

Invitation

One often feels isolated and powerless when the light of the gospel has become dim around one. Those who fight for themselves are often rather vocal, whereas the voices of the majority of believers in our church who believe that all are included in God's love and should be invited into the body of Christ often remain silent. These are the people we would like to invite to join us and let their voices be heard in a respectful way. In mutual solidarity, we would welcome the addition of your voice to ours.

As mense wat voordeel getrek het uit onregverdiges strukture aanvaar ons mede-verantwoordelikheid vir die trauma wat ander gely het. Die evangelie dring ons om nie daaraan mee te werk nie.

Eenheid en verskeidenheid in Christus

Ekumeniese verhoudings demonstreer dat gelowiges dwarsoor die wêreld één is in Christus. Ons kan ons nie isoleer nie, maar behoort ons evangeliese roeping na binne én na buite uit te leef. So kan die NHKA saam met ander gelowiges die waardes van God se koninkryk uitleef in hierdie wêreld.

Die kerk van Christus is veelkleurig, maar eenheid is die eis van die evangelie. Terwyl ons skakerings in spiritualiteit respekteer, werk ons saam om verskille diensbaar te maak in die koninkryk van God. Ons doen dit deur mede-gelowiges se onderskeie kulture te respekteer, na mekaar te luister en by mekaar te leer wat die kern van die evangelie van Christus is, naamlik mekaar opreg lief te hê met woord en daad.

Gebed

Bewus daarvan dat ons elke oomblik in die teenwoordigheid van die heilige God lewe, bid ons:

Here, ontferm U! Ons bely ons skuld voor U en voor almal wat deur ons toedoen ontmenslik is. Leer ons om te haat wat U haat, en om U lief te hê met hart, siel, verstand en kragte, en ander soos onself. Ons wil liefhê soos u liefhet. Bekeer ons tot U in daardie oomblikke waarin ons vir hierdie liefde terugdeins. Laat u koninkryk sigbaar word in wat ons dink en doen. Maak ons getrou aan u evangelie en gee ons die moed om dit nie op die spel te plaas nie. Ons wil ons nooit vir u woorde skaam nie. Laat u wil geskied oral waar ons leef en werk. Maak ons nuut, Here! Amen

Uitnodiging

'n Mens voel alleen en magteloos wanneer die lig van die evangelie dof om jou geword het. Die téénstem (téén alles en almal daarbuite, vir net onself) is luid en sterk, soms selfs gewelddadig. Die meerderheidstem is dikwels stil. Ons nooi predikante en lidmate van die NHKA wat by hierdie roepstem aanklank vind uit om hulle stemme op 'n respekvolle en evangeliese manier te laat hoor. Laat die stem van die kerk gehoor word!⁷

7. In 2011 het 'n buitengewone Algemene Kerkvergadering plaasgevind na aanleiding van kritiek op Besluit 54 van 2010, en met die hoop dat kerkskeuring vermy kan word. Besluit 54 is egter herbevestig en 'n nuwe aansluitende resoluë is met baie groot meerderheid geneem, te wete: 'Die Nederduitsch Hervormde Kerk van Afrika verklaar dat die politieke beleid van apartheid wat toegepas is in die Republiek van Suid-Afrika, nie teologies geregtig kan word nie en herroep hiermee alle goedkeurings in die verlede van die beleid in uitsprake deur en namens die kerk. Dit was in stryd met die evangelie van Jesus Christus.' Die formulering van hierdie addisionele resoluë is opgestel op die voorraand van die Buitengewone Algemene Kerkvergadering deur voorsitters van vorige Algemene Kerkvergaderings, te wete J.P. Oberholzer, D.J.C. van Wyk sr., T.F.J. Dreyer en J. Buitendag. Die formulering is opgestel op inisiatief van A.G. van Aarde en deur bemiddeling van A.P.J. Beukes, en is opgestel in die universiteitskantoor van Van Aarde. T.F.J. Dreyer het die voorstel as beskrywingspunt namens die genoemde vorige voorsitters tydens die Buitengewone Algemene Kerkvergadering ingedien.

The National Colloquium's joint declaration of intent made by the Netherdutch Reformed Church in Africa⁸

Mission

The content of our mission as church is God-given and determines our identity. We believe that God has called us, as the body of Christ, to preach the gospel of Jesus Christ in the world and to the world. In our changing world, we should continuously consider whether we still abide by God's will in the way we live and act.

Church

The fact that our identity is determined by the values of God's kingdom and not those of the world, makes us unique. The church is a community unlike any other, yet it comes to life within the context of its own tradition, culture and language. We must propagate this mission to all people, and the term national church may impede upon our efforts.

God's involvement in the lives of people is so rich that it cannot be adequately expressed in a single form. The church of Christ is multi-coloured, as reflected by the diversity of churches, congregations and believers. Varying nuances of spirituality, experiences of God and liturgical forms are, therefore, respected within the contours of the church tradition and are regarded as enriching. We do not find pluriformity and diversity threatening, neither do we believe that all people should speak with one voice. However, unlike diversity, unity is indeed an evangelical demand.

Personal preferences may not result in conflict or discord, but should resonate together in a symphony to the glory of God.

Hervormde Kerk in Suidelike Afrika

The relationship between the NHKA and the HKSA illustrates something of the multi-coloured nature of the church of Christ. In our interactions with other churches, we become even more aware of our own identity. The HKSA and NHKA are drawn closer together by the Word of God, the unity in Christ, our confession and our solidarity. We realise that this unity is not always reflected in our mutual conduct. We are convinced that a more official form of unity between the NHKA and the HKSA should be pursued by means of church ordinances, following a process that takes into consideration the individual identities of the different religious communities. The unity should also become tangible in the cooperation between congregations locally and at synodal level. Within this cooperation a symmetrical

relationship is pursued, where people listen to one another with love and respect, and learn from and are strengthened by one another's faith, hope and love.

Ecumenical orientation

We regard it as important to participate actively in the ecumenical arena. We should actively strive to live ecumenically, also on congregational level. This way the one, holy, Catholic Christian Church becomes visible, enabling us to make a difference in the world.

World

The church is God's servant in the world and therefore has no choice but to be involved in the distress of people both in and out of the church community. In this process, the NHKA joins forces with other churches and organisations. We pray that God will help us to not take part in the wounding of people, and that He will open our eyes to recognise and alleviate their need. Where the church makes a difference, the world experiences hope.

Confession/Creed

To confess flows from an encounter with the living God. We distinguish between homology (to confess existentially) and credo (that which is confessed). With the former, we wish to convey that all aspects of a person's existence should express that he or she belongs to God. The latter is an attempt to give structure to the experience of redemption through formal doctrines, such as confessions of faith. We distinguish between a confession church and a confessing church. The NHKA wants to be a confessing church because we believe that a doctrine cannot adequately capture the truth. Truth is first and foremost a Person and transcends all human attempts at formulation. The process of being church is primarily a life issue and not an academic issue for an institutional church that wishes to be a confessing church. We live in the presence of God by God's grace alone. Building on the formulations of confessions of the past, every new context requires of us a renewed confession. The expression of our confession may, therefore, be different today than in the past. We are acutely aware of the fact that God is great and that we are small. This makes us humble when we talk about God.

Future

We confess that God calls the church to proclaim to all people that Jesus Christ is the hope for the world. Fellowship with the Holy Spirit creates the space for fellowship with God and one another. We want to celebrate our faith in word and song, bear witness of the salvation in Christ, and serve all people. The values we strive to uphold and live according to in this ministry are level-headedness in our dealings with the Word, humility in our life before God, and love and compassion towards other people. Our failure to realise this calling reminds us that despite being church of God, we are still broken human beings. As church, we therefore wish to

8.Excerpt from Buitendag, J., 2006, 'Coming in from outside: A crucial event in the history of ecumenism of the Nederduitsch Hervormde Church', a reworked version of the opening address by the Moderator of the NHKA at the meeting with the World Alliance of Churches' (WARC's) official delegation in Pretoria on 05-08 June 2006, pp. 17-25, published in *HTS Theological Studies* 62(4), 1-26.

continuously confess our sins before God and to turn towards Him in utter dependence.

A letter from the General Secretary of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches as response to the NRCA's National Colloquium joint declaration of intent

Dear Prof. Johan Buitendag and Rev. Wim Dreyer.⁹ Warm greetings from the WARC family. Since we left Pretoria, I had one full day in the office in Geneva on Monday and had to leave for the USA on Tuesday. I am still here in Birmingham, Alabama, for the Presbyterian Church (USA) General Assembly. Hence, it is only now that I am getting back to you.

I write to express appreciation for the time the WARC team spent visiting the NHKA. We are grateful for your hospitality and all the investment of time and commitment to the process which brought us to Pretoria. Please extend our gratitude to all who participated in one way or the other in making our visit successful. We thank especially Ms Charmain Lines who took care of most of the logistics.

After the last session with the Commission, the team spent its last three hours together back at the Guest House finalising the documents. The attached are in their final shape. Each has some changes which reflect both the discussions we had with you in the morning and some additional reflections of the team. We have tried to accommodate as much as possible the reflections from the morning – though not all of them. And we also felt a couple of omissions from the document we presented needed to be reinserted.

The paper from our visit is now final. That is what we are now submitting to you and to our Officers and Executive Committee. The second paper is the joint agreement. That is submitted now only to you. Once we receive your feedback and changes you would like to suggest, then we will go through the process of finalising it and then we will submit it also to WARC Officers and the Executive Committee.

We praise God for the commitment we all (WARC and the NHKA leadership) have in wanting to do the hard work that will result in seeing the NHKA back in the family. May God bless you. Sincerely yours.¹⁰

9.This letter is dated 16 June 2006. It was mailed from the address: World Alliance of Reformed Churches, 150 route de Ferney, PO Box 2100, 211 Geneva, 2 Switzerland. It is addressed to Prof. Johan Buitendag, The Moderator, and to Dr Wim Dreyer, Secretary, of the Nederduitsch Hervormde Kerk van Afrika (NHKA, PO Box 2368, Pretoria 0001, South Africa).

10.Enclosures to the letter included the abovementioned 'NHKA paper' (see section 6 of this article and (b) the abovementioned 'NHKA Joint Resolution' (see section 7 of this article). As conclusion, the letter was signed by Rev. Dr Setri Nyomi, General Secretary.

Summary of conclusions of the WARC team visit and main question for the way forward

Preamble¹¹

The WARC team visited the NHKA from Monday, 05 June to Thursday, 08 June 2006. The team held discussions with the leadership of the NHKA in a number of configurations:

- the Moderature
- an expanded Commission of the NHKA General Assembly
- the Ecumenical Council
- the NHKA members of the Faculty of Theology of the University of Pretoria.

The team also visited the leaders of the HKSA, as well as the leaders of WARC member churches in South Africa.

We also received a number of documents, which were very informative in the process. We regret that we received some of the critical documents only while we were in Pretoria. The documents include the current Church order, the 2001 General Assembly agenda, the 2004 General Assembly minutes, the April 2006 Colloquium report and the opening statements of the Moderator at the April colloquium and also of the team in June 2006.

The main task was to help WARC's Executive Committee, which will meet in October 2007, to determine the extent to which the NHKA in its actions and practices has fulfilled the conditions set by the 21st General Council for warmly restoring our sisters and brothers to the full privileges of membership. These are:

- Black Christians are no longer excluded from Church services, especially Holy Communion.
- Concrete support in word and deed is given to those who suffer(ed) under the system of apartheid.
- Unequivocal synod resolutions are made which reject apartheid and commit the Church to dismantling this system in both church and politics.

Conclusions and recommendations

We appreciate what we learned from the documents and from the meetings. It is from these that we came to the following conclusions.

We thank God for what we have heard from the Moderature both from the Moderator's statements and from the responses to questions:

- The church has moved from where it was in the 1980s.
- A number of recent actions since 2004 demonstrate this move even more concretely.

11.This 'Joint Resolution' is introduced by mentioning the names of the WARC team members: Rev. Dr Setri Nyomi (General Secretary), Rev. Peggy Mulambya Kabonde (Zambia), Rev. Sandy Horsburgh (Scotland), Rev. Dr Felix Chingota (Malawi), Rev. Dr Egbert Rooze (Belgium), Rev. Prof. Thias Kgatla (South Africa), Rev. Dr Kobus Gerber (South Africa).

- A recent National Colloquium held in April 2006 confirms that there is a widespread desire to move towards union with the HKSA.
- The notorious Article 3 in the church order has been removed since 1997, and on responding to a relevant question, there is readiness to deal with a similar notion in Ordinance 4 of the current church order.
- The church may be ready to do a proper confession along the lines called for by the Ottawa General Assembly.

While there may be a serious opposition in the 68th General Assembly, the commission was confident that the directions it has taken in recent months (including the colloquium results) and the call for a confession will be agreed by the General Assembly.

The team was disappointed by some of the decisions reflected in the 66th General Assembly in the 2001 minutes, especially around the issue of public confession. It was amazed that the NHKA had among its choices a formulation close to the Ottawa decision and chose not to take it. It was also disappointed by the existence of the Ordinance 4 in the shape it is currently in the church order. The team was disappointed by what it felt as lack of full disclosure. Nevertheless, the team appreciated the explanation of the Commission that things have moved beyond the 2001 Synod, especially since the year 2004.

The team was very much encouraged by the contents of the joint declaration of intent at the April colloquium. It is hoped that the last sentence of the paragraph under church will be interpreted as 'the term national church will impede our efforts'.¹² The team was also encouraged by the contents of the opening address of the moderator to the April colloquium, and his opening address to the team. It noted that none of these yet constitute an official General Assembly document, and urges the NHKA to make decisions contained in these at the next General Assembly.

The team indicates that the NHKA at this point has not yet fully met the conditions set by the 21st General Council – especially the third condition. That condition called for the rejection of apartheid and commitment to dismantling the system to be unequivocally done through Synod resolutions.

The team appreciates the commitment of the current leadership of the NHKA to change and therefore takes very seriously the call for WARC leadership and the team to help the NHKA comply and move beyond the legacy of apartheid. It is in view of these that we state clearly the following as elements of what needs to be in place for the NHKA to demonstrate clearly and unequivocally that the changes called for in Ottawa are in place, and that they are ready for readmission:

12. The term used in the Afrikaans Church Order is 'volkskerk' which carries a connotation of a specific ethnicity – in this case Afrikaners (during the 71st General Assembly of the NRCA, the term 'volkskerk' was deleted from the official Church Order, and this resolution was taken by an overwhelming majority, much more than the prescribed two-thirds – editor).

Need for a proper public confession that includes an indication that apartheid is sin and the theological justification of its heresy. In the process, the NHKA needs to do the drafting in consultation with the WARC leadership. The process needs to be concluded by a formal action of the NHKA's 68th General Assembly in September–October 2007.

A clear change in the church order, removing all references to any notion of 'volkskerk'. Much of what is in the current church order Ordinance 4 seems to reflect what was in the former Article 3 which clearly violates the first Ottawa condition. Such an action will leave no doubts that black people are welcomed as members of the NHKA. Action on this needs to be concluded in the 2007 General Assembly.

Follow through on the joint declaration of intent between the NHKA and the HKSA in the following months and in the 2007 General Assembly. Concrete proposals which lead towards structural unity between the NHKA and HKSA should be evident within the agenda of the 2007 General Assembly.

WARC and the NHKA develop a joint declaration that follows the format of what was declared by WARC and the NGK just before the NGK's admission. This declaration needs to have an affirmative vote by the NHKA General Assembly and the WARC Executive Committee – both of which are taking place around October 2007.

Contacts should be made with WARC member churches either individually or together in a joint meeting in order to begin to build mutual relations. WARC will inform its member churches so that they open themselves up for such contacts. That the NHKA continues its contacts with the SACC for membership.

Efforts are made to demonstrate that the theological training offered to HKSA (and the location of it) with funds from the NHKA do not show any hints of apartheid. That subject to university regulations, the two churches explore ways of training in which the two have access to the same facilities.

The team reiterates the necessity of having the General Assembly taking decisions on the items as indicated. In point No. 5. To assist in this, the WARC General Secretary and the team are ready to help. For the help to be effective, it will be important to share the agenda of the 2007 NHKA General Assembly with the WARC General Secretary and members of the team in a timely fashion – latest mid-August 2007.

WARC would like to have a delegation at the NHKA General Assembly in 2007. The team takes note of the request of the NHKA Moderature to be invited to the WARC Executive Committee meeting in October 2007 and will pass it on to WARC's Officers.

The team indicates an appreciation that they found within the NHKA structures the resources that can help in

this process. These resources include the will of the current Moderature, the ecumenical council, the NHKA members of the Theology faculty in the University of Pretoria, and the current discussions of unification between itself and the HKSA. The team encourages the NHKA leadership to use these resources strategically.

The team reiterates its desire to see the NHKA welcomed warmly by WARC at the end of the 2-year process mandated by the Executive Committee – ending with the Executive Committee meeting of October 2007. It is hopeful that under the leadership of the current moderature and the Commission of the NHKA General Assembly, the remaining elements of the conditions of Ottawa would be fulfilled.

NHKA response

On Thursday, 08 June 2006, the team discussed these points with the NHKA General Assembly Commission. The points were accepted as the way forward. Both the team and the NHKA leadership looked forward to a good flow of communication between now and the respective meetings in September and October 2007. All prayed that we will continue to work under God's guidance in the 2-year process.

The Joint Resolution between the WARC and the NHKA

Both the WARC and the NHKA express their desire to restore the membership of the NHKA after their withdrawal from the Alliance in 1982 following their suspension by the 21st General Council, and to see the NHKA warmly welcomed back into active membership with full privileges in the family of WARC.

As part of this action, the Alliance reaffirms its repudiation of any theological justification of apartheid as a matter of *status confessionis* for the churches inasmuch as such a theological justification is a travesty of the gospel and in its persistent disobedience to the Word of God, a theological heresy.¹³

As part of this action, the NHKA through its General Assembly, meeting in 2007, within the framework of the decision of WARC (paragraph 1 above), assures the Alliance that it rejects apartheid as wrong and sinful not simply in its effects and operations but also in its fundamental nature.

13. For the purposes of this resolution, the word 'heresy' is to be interpreted in terms of the following extract from the pastoral letter to the Dutch Reformed Church from the Alliance: There has been some confusion over what the Ottawa General Council meant when it called the theological justification of apartheid 'heresy'. This term should not be understood to imply 'excommunication'. WARC is not a church but a fellowship of churches; therefore, it possess no authority to excommunicate. WARC does not presume to judge whether those who in the past taught the rightness of apartheid will be damned or saved. Reformed people leave the dead to the merciful judgment of God. WARC intended to convey its profound concern for the responsibility of the living church to teach faithfully the gospel of Jesus Christ, for the teachers of the church stand under God's judgment, accountable for their stewardship of the mysteries of God. 'Heresy' is persistent and deliberate teaching of false doctrine after the error has been pointed out by the wider church. This term conveys WARC's conviction that the theological justification of apartheid was not simply an 'error' in stating doctrine or a disagreement in matters where there is freedom to disagree but rather a fundamental perversion and deformation of the heart of the gospel.

WARC pledges to continue to work pastorally with the NHKA and other churches in Southern Africa in the process of unity and reconciliation.

Upon visible concrete changes expressed clearly in all NHKA instruments of governance and intent for church unity called for in the WARC team visit of June 2006 by the NHKA General Assembly of 2007, and after the WARC Executive Committee of 2007 is fully satisfied that is the case, the NHKA will be re-admitted into WARC.

Both WARC and the NHKA give thanks to God for this act of reconciliation and pray that it will strengthen the joint witness of all Reformed Churches both in Southern Africa and throughout the world.

Centenary Celebration of the Faculty of Theology at the University of Pretoria: Cloud of witnesses – Johan Buitendag, 05 April 2017

Ladies and Gentleman

As Dean of the Faculty of Theology it is my privilege to welcome you at this part of the conference 'Gateway to the Future from a Deconstructed Past'. Particularly, I would like to mention the names of:

- Prof. Jürgen Moltmann
- Prof. Chris de Beer, Interim Vice-Chancellor of the Sefako Makgatho Health Sciences University (SMU) and former Senior Vice-Principal at UP and Mrs Ingrid de Beer
- Special guests on personal invitation, Prof. Van Aarde, Prof. Masango and Ms Masango, Prof. Meiring and Ms Meiring and Ms Bartlett on behalf of her husband
- Prof. Daniela Preda, Head of International Relations of Lucian Blaga University, Romania
- Dr Daniel Buda, Program Executive, Faith and Order, World Council of Churches
- Our Church Partners, alumni, students and other esteemed guests.

Today, we have extensively listened to the deconstruction of our history and even come close to a sort of confession. Thank you to the organisers. This is the only way in which one comes to terms with your history.

And we have a lovely and bright future! The gates are open and God's inclusive love prevails. Professor Moltmann's address of tonight has the title, 'Future of Theology'. His theology opens a vista of hope and joy. In a conversation with Miroslav Volf, he once said, and I quote: 'And now hope is for me anticipated joy, as anxiety is anticipated terror'.

But let me return for a while to the past and focus on this hinge in the programme. Ubuntu! We are because you are. Or to tweak it a bit: we are because others were. We have to acknowledge our predecessors – inside and outside the

Faculty, who have contributed to our nature and ethos today, as expressed in our Faculty's vision and mission.

A survey was conducted by the dean to identify the giants of the past, sung and unsung. Hebrews 13:7 says: 'Remember your leaders who have spoken God's word to you. Think about how their lives turned out, and imitate their faith'.

It is now my privilege to acknowledge 10 people who have made us what we are today, as being reflected in our centenary theme of open gates. (People whom we have acknowledged in the past or will acknowledge with Chancellor's Awards and honorary doctorates are excluded).

This survey was done among the academic staff of the Faculty. People from both inside and outside the Faculty who have made us what we are today could be nominated and measured against the yardstick of our current vision and mission.

The Faculty's vision and mission epitomise what we regard as important in shaping our future and determining our strategy.

Vision: To be a faculty recognised for its creative engagement with life-giving theology and religious insight, of service to academia, church and community.

Mission: To achieve this, we commit ourselves to:

- providing relevant theological and religious education
- nurturing transformative leaders
- undertaking quality research
- promoting justice, peace, the integrity of creation and a reconciling diversity
- engaging with people on the margins of society.

Hundred years is no short period. Only four of the 10 are still with us and I am delighted that they have availed themselves to attend this part of the conference tonight to receive their accolades.

All these certificates (officially embossed with the University's seal) will be on display in the foyer leading to the Dean's office and will be a lasting testimony as a cloud of witnesses.

The following 10 people are acknowledged today.

André Ludik Bartlett (represented by his wife Elma)

Dr Andre Bartlett champions the theological investigation of LGBT rights in the Dutch Reformed Church. He is known for his brave public witness and has become a 'gateway' to the exploration of new ideas and possibilities.

Louis Ernst Brandt

Reverend Louis Brandt, not only had the view that a truly comprehensive university should reflect a multidimensional

reality, but also opposed the governmental onslaught on the Faculty in 1927, *inter alia* by depicting the Faculty of Theology at the University of Pretoria as of multi-ecclesial nature.

Berend Gemser

Professor Berend Gemser was the pioneer of the academic study of Semitic languages in South Africa and the driving force behind the establishment of *HTS Theology Studies*. He advocated a theology free from fundamentalism and liberal modernism.

Albertus Stephanus Geyser

Professor Albert Geyser unpacked the political and spiritual consequences of biblical exegesis by emphasising the universal implications of the gospel message, and exposed separatism, racism and sexism. He was the doyen of Afrikaner theologians who actively resisted apartheid legislation and was subsequently dismissed as professor.

Cristiaan Rudolph de Beer

As Vice-Rector, Professor Chris de Beer was responsible for the amalgamation of the two sections of the Faculty of Theology in 2000. With his legal mind, managerial skills, unbiased approach and sensitivity to church matters and values, he facilitated the current agreement between church and university and reinforced a strong scholarly approach to theology.

Johan Adam Heyns

Former President Mandela said about Professor Johan Heyns: 'Heyns was my favourite kind of Afrikaner. Morally and physically brave, honest to the core, he had the courage late in his life to admit to the error of his ways.'

Barend Jacobus Marais

Professor Ben Marais opposed the Afrikaner churches' support of apartheid and co-authored the ground-breaking publication, *Delayed action: An ecumenical witness from the Afrikaner church* [Vertraagde Aksie], which challenged the theological support of apartheid.

Maake Jonathan Masango

Professor Maake Masango's journey with the Faculty of Theology began in 2000 when he was appointed the first permanent black academic in the Faculty. He is a truly ecumenical theologian, known for his concern with the upliftment of disadvantaged people. He has developed a unique pedagogy for African students.

Andries Gideon van Aarde

Employing the methodology of engaged hermeneutics and focusing on the historical Jesus, Professor Andries

van Aarde is concerned with the poor, marginalised and oppressed. Since 1985, he has been editor-in-chief of the renowned scholarly journal *HTS Theological Studies*, which is rated as one of the top journals of religion in the world.

Adrianus van Selms

Professor Adrianus van Selms was known for his academic excellence and uncompromising devotion to Christ, both of

which assumed radical inclusivity. This became evident in his strong opposition to Article 3 of the Netherdutch Reformed Church.

On the shoulders of these giants we want to build our future.

Reference

Borg, M.J., 2014, *Convictions*, HarperOne, New York. Kindle Edition.