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BY THE RECTOR

There is music in the TUA

For the TUA, the expansion of two new endowed chairs is quite notable, especially since Prof. A. de Muynck's endowed chair has recently been converted into a regular chair. And now - together with the RMU - a chair of 'Church, Law and Society', held by Prof. Dr. W.A. Zondag LL.M., and a chair of 'Theology and Music', led by Prof. Dr. A.A. Clement. The new professors are known as people who deliver quality and who know in the fields of theology, church and science. However, it is especially important that we, as the TUA also know this.

Professor Zondag's chair concerns developments in which the church, Christian organisations and Christian families are increasingly faced with legal issues. These questions need to be considered from a theological perspective, but this requires legal expertise, which we have now brought in thanks to the RMU.

That theology and music have everything to do with each other needs no explanation. Nor that theological reflection on music in the church is urgently needed and permanently relevant. With the new chair in this area, we are going to work hard to achieve



this. Professor Clement is a theologian and a musicologist. An ideal combination, just like that of Professor Zondag, who is a theologian and a lawyer. As the TUA, we want to expand our range and strengthen our service with

the conviction that Reformed theology is alive and well. So there is music in the TUA and you will certainly hear more of it!

Prof. Dr. H.J. Selderhuis, Rector

'(...) the day of death is better than the day of birth'

(Ecclesiastes 7:1)

No matter how wise Ecclesiastes may be, this sounds jarring to you, doesn't it? It is like the sound of an ambulance during a sunny autumn run: a disturbance. What kind of crude language is this, what kind of unpastoral words are these?

Ecclesiastes has been on the road to fathoming wisdom and foolishness for some time now. He keeps his eyes and ears open and encounters both joy and sorrow. Life is beautiful and yet so difficult. His 'partial conclusions' are always: life is vain, fleeting. Halfway through, he asks himself the question once again: who knows what is good for man? (6:12). This is followed by a series of comparisons in 7:1-8. Your death day is better than

your birth day; it is better to go to a house of mourning than to a banquet; sorrow is better than laughter. Take that to heart! What then is being wise? When you take into account in your thoughts and desires the reality that life is finite. That is not pessimistic, but realistic. And suffering and sorrow, as it were, nurture you in that realisation. Is this 'hard reason' not wisdom after all? Make your choices in the light of the finiteness of your life! It is just possible that your list of priorities will be turned upside down... Precisely in the light of our culture in which we are masters at keeping death at bay, these confrontational words are healing. Also in light of the fact that fortunately not every-

thing turns out to be equally important.

At the same time, these words hold something unsatisfying. The wisdom of Ecclesiastes is relative; he gets no further than 'better than'. Ecclesiastes knows how to stop. For what does his wisdom amount to in the light of who God is? His wisdom does not last. Therefore, the conclusion: 'Fear God' (12:13).

Thus, Ecclesiastes' searching, his despair, calls for things to become new. The way things are now, a world in which death seems to rule, cannot stay that way, can it? In the words of Mr. Tumulus from the famous series Narnia: 'Always winter, but never Christmas'. It is a world that demands that the 'conditions of

existence' be broken open. And that is why we still celebrate a day of birth, the day on which Jesus Christ's path of suffering began. He submitted to our broken, sinful existence. And connected to Him, the words of Ecclesiastes change colour. 'Better than' becomes 'best' in life with the Crucified One, the Wisdom of God. A house of mourning becomes a day of birth, the end becomes a beginning. Thanks to His resurrection, death is swallowed, and Paul can ask: 'Death, where is your sting?' Is that your perspective when you think with Ecclesiastes about 'the day of death'? Then you may, in the meantime, sigh with the creation and the Spirit until the day when all things are truly new.



Paspoort

Name: Willem Kater
 Date of birth: August 6, 1988
 Marital status: Married to Ruth Berkhof
 Children: Charlotte (6), Isabel (3) and Josephine (newborn)
 Residence: Ede
 Congregation: CGK Ede
 Study stage: Master stage (candidate for ordination)

Colophon

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Events Calendar

15 December 2021

4 p.m. (CET) – in Dutch
 Degree certificate ceremony.

6-12 January 2022

- in English
 Online Graduate Week,
 intended for participants of
 the Graduate Programme.

31 January - 2 February 2022

– in Dutch
 Thematic seminars in Leuven
 (Belgium) for students and
 lecturers.

2 February 2022

4 p.m. (CET) – in Dutch
 Degree certificate ceremony.

See Page 15 for the continuation of this calendar.

Activities take place Deo
 Volente and under the condi-
 tion of COVID-19 regulations.
 More information on these
 and other events is available in
 the calendar, see www.tua.nl.

Via detours to the pulpit: the study period of rev. C. Westerink

He was still very young when he started to play at being a pastor. Whether there was already a spiritual longing for the ministry behind this, rev. C. Westerink (71) does not remember. What he does know is that at primary school in Zwolle, when asked what he wanted to be when he got older, he always said 'pastor'. The required gymnasium diploma, however, turned out to be too ambitious.

So the path to Apeldoorn was blocked, and in its place came an education in social work. 'But the earlier desire did not let go of me. Shortly after completing the course, in 1973, the then professor of dogmatics, Prof. Van Genderen, pointed me in the direction of the Saturday School of Ancient Languages in Utrecht, where the first year of theology could also be followed.'

The couple, who had just married, settled in Zierikzee. Initially, Greek and Latin did not go well. Rev. Westerink's vocation sense entered a crisis. 'I had to discover that until then I myself had mainly wanted to become a pastor. But when it was no longer necessary for me, the call came from above. Then all of a sudden my studies succeeded and unexpected possibilities opened up.' Thanks to a monthly gift of the church in Zierikzee, Coen Westerink was able to stop working at the end of 1976. At the beginning of 1977, he was admitted to the theological study programme in

Utrecht, where he was also able to complete the propaedeutic year before the start of the new academic year. That spring, he applied with a certificate from the Zierikzee church council for the admission examination at the (then) Theological College in Apeldoorn. The curatorium acknowledged his vocation and admitted him to the course. There he was permitted to begin in the second year of study. 'The Lord had shown the way and made it passable'.

The home base for the study years became Nunspeet. 'It was more than a beautiful coincidence that I met two brothers from Nunspeet as fellow students: Hans van de Gronden and Harm Fahnner. Hans already had a business career behind him and had a BMW at his disposal, with which the distance to Apeldoorn could be overcome easily. It is with great gratitude that I mention his name here, because my friendship with him meant a lot to me in those years. In early 1993, after less than twelve years in office, the Lord



Rev. C. Westerink at the ceremony of the declaration of ordination by Rev. J.H. Velema.

called him to higher glory. In the Apeldoorn years we worked closely together. Together we attended lectures, studied the English texts and took exams with Professor Oosterhoff, the Old Testament professor. We prepared not only the material for the exam, but also the interview, hoping to tempt him not to spend too much time on researching our knowledge.'

As a so-called 'late candidate', Rev. Westerink had an urge to graduate as quickly as possible. Under God's blessing this did happen, partly due to a restructuring of the study programme (from college to university). This shortened the candidate phase (now bachelor) by six months, while the subsequent doctoral phase (now master) was not yet obligatory. However, the material to be studied was not reduced! 'For me, this meant that my course of study became

an examination hunt, leaving little opportunity for theological deepening. Later on, I missed it, but by then I was 27 years old and in a hurry to get started in the congregation.'

'I think back with gratitude to the teaching of professors Oosterhoff, Versteeg, Van Genderen, Van 't Spijker and Velema. All of them were distinguished Reformed theologians in their own field, who also, in their dealings with their students, reflected Voetius' motto that theology is science combined with piety. They gave us much, but they also asked much. And if we sometimes complained because of the large amount of material for exams that Professor Van Genderen always gave us, his answer was: "Sirs, you must not count, but weigh!"'

'Even after more than forty years, it is a great miracle that the Lord wanted to call me and use me in the ministry of the Word and the sacraments in His church. I still consider it a great privilege that I received the first training for this purpose through "the school of the churches", for which I am especially thankful to Him. As far as I am concerned, there is every reason for our churches to take care of what the King of His Church has given us in the TUA.'



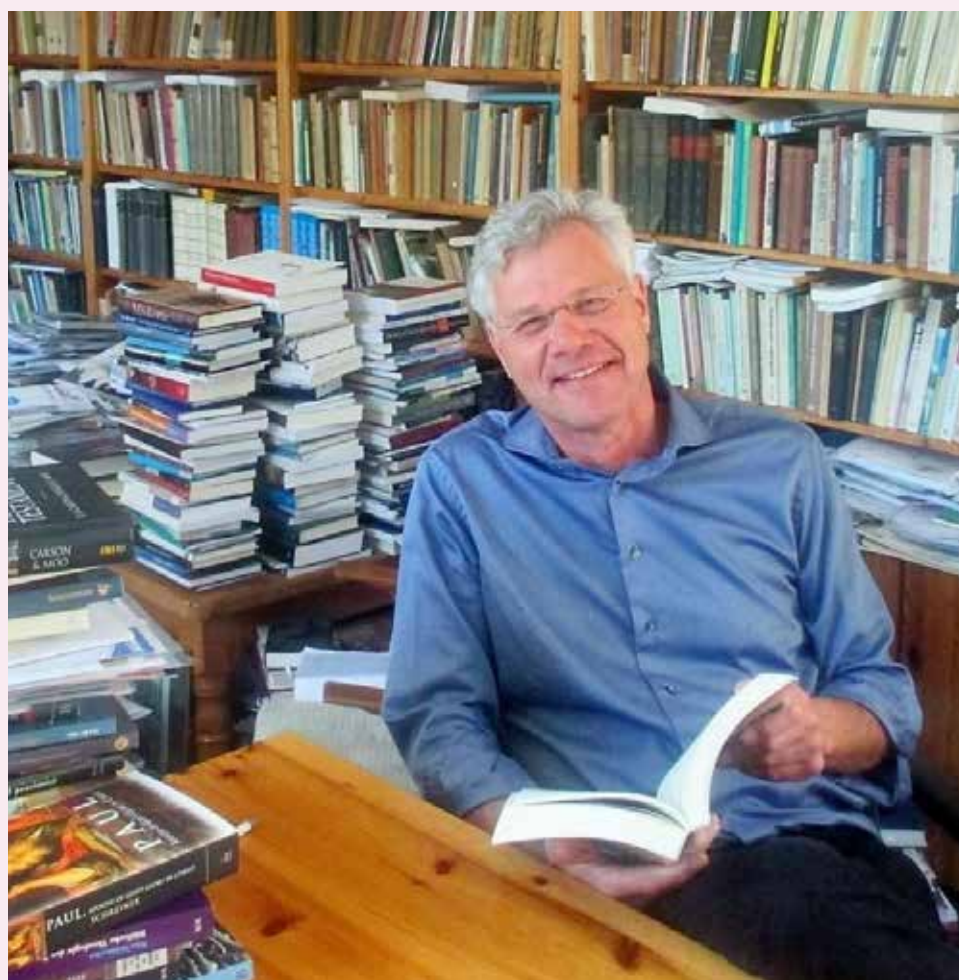
Paspoort

Name:	C. (Coen) Westerink
Date of birth:	11 November 1950 in Elburg
Marital status:	married to Annemarie van der Veen
Children:	4 married children (1 son and 3 daughters), 17 grandchildren
Period of study at TUA:	1977-1981
Posts:	Den Helder, Baarn, Bennekom en Rijnsburg (retirement in 2017)

New Testament teaching: discovering new and old treasures

The Bible is the basis for education at the TUA. That is why the Biblical disciplines are given a special place. In this TUA Connect we will zoom in on the New Testament. What will be discussed in the New Testament lectures over the course of the academic years?

The lecturer:
**'It is a privilege to help the students
with exegesis'**



In the first year, we start with an 'Introduction to Biblical Hermeneutics', the art of translating the text from its context in the past to that of today. In the following years, we build further on this and ask how the biblical message can effectively break into our post-modern culture, in the subject 'Hermeneutics in a secular age'. 'Canonicity' is about the historical context and the message of each of the books of the Bible individually. With each letter an apostle had a specific goal, a good explanation cannot ignore this.

'Theology of the NT' deals with the bigger picture of the message, especially in relation to the Old Testament and the fulfilment of God's promises in Jesus Christ. It is a good development, therefore, that the Old Testament and New Testament lecturers teach a number of modules together, such as the subject 'Biblical Themes', in which this year we explored the Biblical message of God's love.

The core of the New Testament lectures is the module 'Exegesis of the NT', in which students practice explaining a text by listening to it word for word. They do this independently, but in each year of study also in groups with other students. It is a privilege to help students on that road and to see how the Word of God is a treasure from which they discover new and old treasures.

*Dr. M.C. Mulder, lecturer in
New Testament and Judaica*

Besides knowledge of Greek, indispensable to understand the text in which the Word of God comes to us, the context of the time and culture in which the New Testament was written is of great importance. The more students become acquainted

with the Jewish way of thinking and with the Hellenistic world in which the Biblical writers lived, the more clearly the uniqueness of the message of the Bible comes to light. This is discussed in the modules 'Bible in Context' and 'Judaica'.

The student: 'Unravelling a text together is so much more rewarding'

During the bachelor programme, the New Testament is examined in a variety of courses. Each time a specific aspect is dealt with and thus, as a student, you gradually become familiar with a new world. Dr. M.C. Mulder is our guide in all of this.

It all starts with the lectures 'Bible in Context'. Here you learn that taking off your 21st century view of the Bible is necessary for a good understanding of the New Testament. To understand what was written around the beginning of our era, you have to put yourself in the shoes of a Jew and a pagan at the time. A little imagination might be useful!

The next topic is 'textual criticism'. Since, unfortunately, we have no original letters of Paul, we have to deal with copies from

later times. Now these copies often offer different textual variants; a mistake in copying is easily made. Through textual criticism we try to find out what the most original text was. Personally, I found this a very interesting part! It taught me how important it is to have good knowledge of the original language of the New Testament - Greek - and to use it. It also showed me that you shouldn't blindly just trust any Bible translation.

After all this, it is time for the most important part, which is the exegesis of a passage. In other words: what message does the author want to convey to us? Here it comes down to careful and sustained listening. After we had been shown this in Galatians 3, we also learned to exegete in groups. This taught me that examining



a text together is so much more rewarding than reading it on your own.

I myself always enjoy these lectures, because they are both interactive and topical. We regularly study and discuss articles that bring the matter into focus. I am curious which revelations are still awaiting us!

Jaap-Bram Hannessen, bachelor student

The researcher: Reading the Bible in the light of the Holy Spirit

Every Sunday, when the Bible is read, the church prays for the enlightenment of the Holy Spirit. This is done with the conviction that God's Spirit must open people's hearts to God's Word and God's Word must open itself to people. However, what



does this mean in the actual practice of reading the Bible? Is that enlightenment there for everyone? What is the difference between an enlightened and an unenlightened reading of the Bible? People think very differently about this.

I am currently working on a doctoral dissertation on this subject, and from a Biblical-scientific perspective, I want to take further the discussion of the role of the Spirit in the explanation of the Bible. So it is research in the field of Biblical Hermeneutics - the interpretation of the Bible - that I approach from what the New Testament says about the enlightenment by the Spirit. Think of texts like those in which Paul says that an unspiritual/natural man cannot accept the things of the Spirit (1 Cor. 2:14), or in which he prays for the enlightened eyes of hearts (Eph. 1:18). Such ideas are also found in John: the Kingdom of God can only be

seen by those who have been born again by the Spirit (John 3:3) and the Spirit will guide Jesus' followers into all the truth (John 16:13). These texts are often referred to in discussions of the hermeneutical meaning of the Spirit. Most texts, however, do not say anything directly about reading the Bible. Can they be used for that?

These are the questions that I will address in my research. The main part is formed by an exegesis of the relevant New Testament texts. Based on this, the aim is to sketch a framework within which the hermeneutical meaning of the Spirit's illumination can be done justice.

Rev. B.A.T. Witzier, pastor Apeldoorn-Centrum and is researching for his doctorate in the field of New Testament, on the function of the Holy Spirit in interpreting the Bible.

The pastor: 'In the unity of the Old and New Testaments we see that the LORD fulfils His promises'

As a congregational pastor, I like to preach in sermon series'. It keeps me focused and the congregation is included in the accumulation of knowledge. But also in a series of sermons, the choice of text remains the beginning of the making of the sermon. This is easy to explain in a way. No one is surprised at this time of year by a sermon from Luke 1, for example. When choosing a text, it is all about the answer to prayer and about the feeling: 'Lord, what does the congregation need?'

I like to make the choice of texts (for various reasons) at the beginning of the week. One of those reasons I would like to share here. When I do, I can read the text during visits with members of the congregation, prior to Sunday. This is not always possible, but when it is, they 'help' in a way with the sermon. For example, I hear where their questions lie, or how this section has been a blessing in the past.

Parallel to this process in the congregation, a process takes place in the study during the week. This is where what I learned at the TUA comes back to me. The Greek lectures of Dr. Oosterhuis, which enabled me to understand dictionaries and commentaries and to make choices. The lectures of Professor Hofman, who insisted on doing exegesis with word studies. And Dr. Mulder, who pointed out delicately that the New Testament is God's revelation to Israel in which we may share. So I like to find out how Greek key words are used in the Greek translation of the Old Testament. In the unity of the Old and New Testaments, we see that the LORD fulfils His promises. And that is important, because we too live by those promises! By the way, there was also learning outside the lecture rooms. It was helpful when a professor pointed to a book at a book sale and said: 'That is a good book, you must buy it!'



But not everything needed for a sermon was lecture material. A sermon does not become a sermon in the lecture room or study area, but upon the pulpit. It becomes a sermon by wanting to serve with what you have learned. Prayer is necessary for this. Only in this way am I able to listen first and then to speak in such a way that the congregation can listen again. So that the people notice: there is not only a graduated theologian standing there, but also a man sent by God who proclaims Christ to us.

Rev. J.J.G. den Boer, pastor in Nijkerk

Join us for a day?

Are you considering what you would like to study next year? Are you considering the study of theology? Then you are very welcome to come and follow the lectures at the TUA as a guest for a day! This is possible every week during the three lecture periods:

Unit 2 – 11 November t/m 21 December 2021

Unit 3 – 2 February t/m 15 March 2022

Unit 4 – 21 April t/m 3 June 2022

Welcome! We have a gift package waiting for every participant.

For more information, please visit www.tua.nl.



Join us
for a day

A generation past

The death of Prof. Van 't Spijker marks the definitive end of a generation of professors who for years formed the face of the TUA and were widely regarded as authoritative Reformed thinkers.

It was also a generation that contributed significantly to the development of the TUA from a high school to a university, and especially to a university that aims to be vitally and ecumenically Reformed.

The church and the school

Van 't Spijker was - just like his colleagues - on the road and in the churches on Sundays. His first calling was to be a servant of the Word and a servant of the churches. He was both in his lectures. Van 't Spijker continued to speak about 'the school', not out of nostalgia but out of conviction that it was a 'schola', an institution for education and formation. The link between school and church was inseparable for him, and that a church without theological nourishment becomes stiff and theology without the church becomes sterile. This conviction was echoed in his lectures. Whether it was church law or church history, in each lecture he passed on pastoral and homiletic tips and experiences. With seriousness and humour, and always with love for God and people.

School and the academy

Van 't Spijker was ordinary and special. Ordinary in his dealings with students, in his speaking and writing. It was not immediately noticeable that he was a particularly great scholar. His knowledge of the sources was impressive. Church Fathers, Reformers, Puritans, new theologians, Van 't Spijker knew them all and could quote them faultlessly. Internationally, he was counted among the best Reformation experts of his time. This meant that he had plenty of opportunities to make a career elsewhere, but he remained loyal to Apeldoorn.

The academy and confession

Van 't Spijker lived and worked according to Voetius' motto that science and piety must be connected. For him, there was therefore no contradiction between scientifically justified and confessionally reformed. His position was that if you deliver quality, it is not a problem for anyone to be fully Reformed. An institution that asks its people to commit themselves to the Reformed confession is perfectly capable of delivering scientifically high-quality and generally respected work. He proved that



Prof. Dr. W. van 't Spijker (21 September 1926 – 23 July 2021)

this was possible. By doing so, he has also given an example and a mission to future generations of professors and teachers.

The confession and ecumenism

Based on his knowledge of the Reformation, Van 't Spijker was able to show how ecumenical the Reformers were in their theology and actions and how much variation in vision and spirituality is possible within the Reformed confession. With this knowledge he was able to show that what is offered as 'reformed' today does not always correspond to what the Reformers themselves stood for. Van 't Spijker was an amiable and friendly man, but when it came to Reformed ecumenism, he was completely clear and uncompromising. This applied to the criticism of the unification that he observed now and then in the CGK and that he denounced in clear language in

De Wekker, for example. But that also applied to his increasing warnings against developments in other Reformed churches that he saw as a threat not only to the authority of Scripture and Confession, but also to true Reformed unity.

Ecumenism and true unity

Luther, Bucer and Calvin were Van 't Spijker's favourites. In that order. They differed from each other, but were nevertheless one. Central to them and to all the others was the community with Christ. Van 't Spijker wrote wonderful things about that. That is now over. It is no longer necessary, now that he can fully experience that fellowship with Christ himself. Soli Deo gloria.

Prof. Dr. H.J. Selderhuis, successor to Prof. Dr. W. van 't Spijker

A new academic year

Due to the circumstances surrounding the coronavirus, it was not possible to open the academic year in a joint meeting last year. Fortunately, we had the opportunity to do so this year, even though the number of participants was limited.



The annual opening took place in the Apeldoorn Barnabas Church, where a limited number of people could attend.



Rector Prof. Dr. H.J. Selderhuis gave a brief reflection on the past academic year, the so-called *Fata Academica*.



As is customary, the chairman of the curatorium, rev. J.G. Scheenau, gave a short homily to close the meeting. He did this with reference to Romans 1 and 11.



Professor of Christian Pedagogy Prof. Dr. A. de Muynck held a lecture on 'How do school, church and family work together in religious education?'



The meeting was accompanied by the TUA Choir, led by Gerben Budding.

Fata Academica

A short selection out of the *Fata Academica* that Prof. Selderhuis gave:

- 'In recent weeks I have spoken to several pastors who were dreading the new season because they were unsure whether they could really be a pastor, catechist and minister as the LORD asks and as the church of Christ needs. Many, if not all, of those who work in the church and love and want to serve the congregation have this difficulty. We as the TUA cannot do everything, but we can do a lot. We have limited manpower but very enthusiastic people. We have limited financial resources, but we do have churches and people who are willing to provide us with those resources. Above all, we have a powerful and merciful God and His clear Word. In all that is uncertain, His faithfulness is certainly not. That is why we begin a new academic year in good spirits and even with joy. *Soli Deo gloria*.'
- In January 2021, the RMU established a chair in 'Church, Law and Society' at TUA, which will be held by Prof. Dr. W.A. Zondag LL.M.
- The endowed chair 'Christian Pedagogy', which has been established at the TUA by Driestar Educatief since 2016 and is held by Prof. Dr. A. de Muynck, will be transferred to a regular chair at the TUA as of 1 September 2021. Prof. De Muynck will thus become the first non-ordained regular professor at TUA.
- As of 1 September, the chair 'Theology and Music' will also commence. This position will be held by Professor Dr. A.A. Clement, who will fulfil this function alongside his professorship in Musicology at Utrecht University, for which he works at the University College Roosevelt.
- Dr. J. van 't Spijker has been appointed student pastor/mentor as of 1 September in order to provide spiritual and pastoral guidance to the students.
- Six PhDs were obtained in the past academic year. Nine bachelor's degrees and six master's degrees were conferred. Three students were admitted to be ordained in the Christian Reformed Churches. One student received a preaching licence. The current number of candidates for ordination is 14.
- For the new academic year 2021-2022, 13 new full-time students have registered for the bachelor and 3 for the three-year master. The 60 EC Master's Degree 'Living Reformed Theology' will start with 16 students. In addition, 5 new contracting students and 6 students who will study at TUA as part of a second enrolment have registered.
- The total number of students is 156, of which 99 are full-time students and 57 are contractors, second enrollments, etc. There are also 76 PhD students, 34 of whom are from abroad. This adds up to a total of 232 people who are studying at TUA or who are supervised in their PhD research.

I joined the TUA for a day...



My name is Rinske den Hertog, third-year student of philosophy in Nijmegen and assistant at the party ChristenUnie Gelderland. Because I like studying and I am curious about the questions that theology has to deal with, I signed up at the end of the summer of 2021 for a trial day at the TUA. Within my network, the TUA is not unknown, and the small-scale and personal character really appealed to me. I was allowed to come and join the students immediately in the first week after the summer holidays. I was free to choose the topics that I found interesting.

At the beginning of the day, I was kindly received and matched with students who would be present in those sessions. The atmosphere was very nice, and because it was only the first study week, I could follow the lessons very well. Both the students and the lecturers had a nice chat with me in between, which gave me a welcome feeling. The study advisor was also available for a short talk to answer any questions I might have. They were very helpful in thinking of different possibilities, and actually no combination was beyond the limits of their abilities.

On the way home, I couldn't imagine not coming back the following week. I decided to just put it off. After a phone call to the study advisor and some small arrangements I was enrolled at the TUA! A week later I was in one of the courses that I had followed during my trial day. In the meantime I have also registered for a course for the next term (the year is divided into four terms). This way I can experience in a non-committal way whether the study is suitable for me.

The image I have of the study programme is that it offers tools for getting to know the Bible, among other things through the classical languages and subjects that provide context for the books of the Bible and the tradition and culture in which they were written. In addition, tools are offered to reflect on major theological questions. Here too, the Bible is the starting point. This basis appeals to me very much, and seems a valuable addition to both my study of philosophy and my job in the Christian Union. Therefore, there is a good chance that next year I will start a full bachelor's programme in theology at TUA.

If you are curious about studying theology at the TUA, I can tell you from experience that a trial day is an accessible and pleasant way to get an impression of the programme and the atmosphere!

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Prayer and thanksgiving

We depend on God in all matters. Please join us in prayer and thanksgiving for:

- A good fulfilment of the two vacancies for a professor of Old Testament and New Testament;
- Wisdom regarding the corona issue;
- That students may get clarity about the way the LORD wants to go with them;
- Thanks for good results, good atmosphere and joy in studies?

The new Master's programme 'Living Reformed Theology'

'Everyone contributes to the discussions and lectures from his or her own field of expertise'

For everyone who has always wanted to do something with theology on an academic level, TUA started the master's programme 'Living Reformed Theology' in September 2021. This part-time master's programme of 60 EC (credits) aims to connect theology to the (professional) practice of the students. Two of them, Sabrina Kraft and Ditty Meerkerk, relate here their first experiences.



On Wednesdays, the LRT students meet in Apeldoorn.

'Every week it is a joy to join the lectures'

Two years ago I was converted to the faith. Now God has led me to this master's programme. What I find very special here is that we students come from such diverse backgrounds and are of such different ages. And yet we are all following the same study programme!

I try to learn as much as I can from the master's course, and that works out very well. I am immersed in new terminologies, backgrounds and history. It is a joy to join the lectures every week. So far, this study has given me a lot of knowledge and experience.

In advance, I had the idea of learning a lot about faith, and so far I have succeeded well. Yet it is also difficult for me as a newcomer to the faith. I don't always have the 'ballast' that some other students have, but on the other hand, of course, I still lack

some knowledge. So I try to absorb as much as I can, although I don't always succeed. It is a lot of information that is poured out on us students!

It is actually quite special that it is also a suitable study for me as a fairly inexperienced Christian. I am still open-minded in some areas and always look at other believers with amazement, but I also notice that my sometimes surprising view of certain things can lead to a very pleasant conversation, and that in turn gives the whole thing a dynamic.

Precisely because I have such limited prior knowledge, I have learned a great deal here. For example, about the doctrine of trinity. Powerfully interesting, but also difficult to understand if you have no Christian background. Or take church history: the Reformation with all its reformers, zooming in on

the Reformed scholastics. And what about homiletics, how do you look at preaching? I could go on like this for a while, but these are a few subjects that make me enthusiastic about this study programme.

I can only say that we are a nice group of students, with good professors, whose humour provides the lectures with both sharpness and lightness. I experience that as very pleasant. The literature is definitely spicy, and in some respects tough. Starting to read early helps to keep up with the lectures and hopefully also helps to be prepared for the exam.



Sabrina Kraft, in September started the master's degree 'Living Reformed Theology'

'TUA has good and passionate lecturers'

Every week, it is something to look forward to: attending lectures on Wednesdays with sixteen other highly motivated people who also want to connect theology with their profession. What have they been talking about so far? Dogmatic approaches to the Trinity led to beautiful conversations about the value of the Reformed faith in the midst of other believers. The term 'reformed theology', for example, sparked a discussion about the current vision of man and the perception of children in the practice of education, among others, with the question of what a Christian pedagogy actually means. A plea followed to study and know the sources today. A direct consequence of this was a proposal I made for a reading group with my colleagues at the school where I work.

In the Old and New Testament lecture, we explored the significance of the Old Testament for understanding the New Testament, and what clues there are to Christ in the Old Testament. What, for instance, do rabbis read in a text like 'Out of Egypt I have called My son' (Hosea 11:1)? These kinds of themes



relate directly to our Bible reading today. It is also wonderful how scholasticism was portrayed in church history, by a lecturer who keeps lecture and farce very close to each other.

And what do we do with all that knowledge? The master's programme is intended to convert Reformed theology into appropriate coinage for today's practice. The value of the LRT master's is that everyone contributes from his or her own field in the discussions and lectures. But also in the research that is planned. Within the courses, you can choose some of your own literature to fill your portfolio. I myself plan to focus on the intersection of psychology and theology in my free space and research, because of my training as a contextual therapist and teacher of religion.

I really recommend the master's so far. Six lectures in one period fly by; in that respect it is hard work. It is a lot of reading, but it also allows you to gain more in-depth knowledge of the various topics. The TUA has good and passionate lecturers. The mutual contacts are also very good. I find it motivating to work and study together. So far, I am really enjoying doing this master's programme.

Ditty Meerkkerk, in September started the master's degree 'Living Reformed Theology'

Research on young people in the Church

A research project into the bonding of young people to the Church. This is what the Christian Reformed youth organisations LCJ and CGJO have been doing in recent years, in cooperation with TUA's Practical Theology section. An initial study has already been published.

In connection with this, both youth organisations have recently launched the website www.bindingaandekerk.nl. The aim is that this website will grow in the coming years as more research is done. It focuses on the bonding of young people with the church, the meaning and relevance of the church in the lives of young

people and the role of the peer group in this (the group with which the young person feels related).

The first study of the project has been completed and answers two research questions: How do we reach all young people in the congregation? And how can churches be equipped to do so? The youth unions have interviewed individual young people and groups of young people, and former TUA student Rick Schreur has added a literature study as his bachelor's thesis. The analysis, findings, conclusions and recommendations can be found at www.bindingaandekerk.nl.

TUA PhD student Anja Moesker is currently conducting research into (among other things) how parents experience their children's church leaving and what the experiences of church-leavers are themselves. In addition, under the supervision of Prof. De Munnick, two other PhD students are working on research into church loyalty and religious socialisation.

Through the new website mentioned above, the youth organisations hope to share the results of the research and make them fruitful for their members, among other things by means of videos and instructions for church councils, which can be downloaded.



RelReS has concluded

RelReS, a European project in which TUA participated since 2018, is over. In recent years, TUA has been committed to this research infrastructure for religious studies. This was done mainly by co-developing and offering a training programme in the field of (historical) religious studies, together with six other partners.

Twelve training courses

During twelve training sessions, participants were introduced to the available resources and expertise of RelReS partners. A multitude of subjects were covered, for example Jewish studies, medieval hymn books, ancient oriental sources, research methods, setting up an archive, etc. The digital aspect also received considerable attention: how do you study digital sources? Which digital tools can be used to decipher and edit manuscripts? What are the databases and how can you use them? And so on.

Transfer of knowledge

The meetings with experts from various disciplines provided many additional learning opportunities for the 231 participants in total. After their own training, 31 of them provided another training, transferring what they had



Fourth from the left is Rev. Remco de Jong, pastor in Urk (CGK Ichthus), third from the left is Karla Boersma (photo by Frédéric Labrousche).

learned to others, as was the case at TUA. A good example of the knowledge transfer that RelReS wants to stimulate, based on the idea that knowledge of religion has a positive influence on the peaceful coexistence of people in a multicultural society.

Rev. Remco de Jong

From the TUA community, students, staff and others participated in training sessions in Mainz, Sofia, Leuven and Paris. Among them was Pastor Remco de Jong from Urk. We asked him about his experiences in Paris. Rev. De Jong: 'I have noticed how

valuable it is that the TUA is involved in such an international project. Students and teachers can learn a lot from it, but they can also pass on much of what is happening in Apeldoorn.'

RESILIENCE

RelReS is over, but the building of the research infrastructure for religious studies continues via RESILIENCE (www.resilience-ri.eu). And TUA is involved in that too.

Karla Boersma, workpackage leader RelReS/RESILIENCE for the TUA

Graduates

The **bachelor's degree** was obtained by: *Martijn Bongiovanni, Hildert Bronkhorst, Helen Florijn, Jan Quinten Oskam, Robert Valkenburg*

On 31 August 2021, the **master's degree** was successfully obtained by:

- *D. (Dominik) de Bruijne*. His thesis was entitled 'Hananiah versus Jeremiah: an unequal battle. False and true prophecy according to Jeremiah 28'
- *F.N. (Fianne) de With*. Her thesis was entitled 'Reading. Perspectives from literature education and biblical wisdom literature on reading the Bible with pupils in secondary education'. Fianne received the qualification 'cum laude'.
- *E.J. (Beppie) Wessels-Schuurman*. Her thesis was entitled 'He makes us one. Research on the integration of refugees who have converted from Islam to Christianity in Reformed Churches'



Dr. J. van 't Spijker with the doctoral degree he has just received.

Promotions

- On 24 September 2021, Ch. Choi received his doctorate. The title of his dissertation is 'Herman Bavinck and John Calvin on the Doctrines of the Trinity and the Image of God: A Comparison'.
- On 1 October 2021 our Missiology lecturer J. van 't Spijker obtained his doctorate. His research was about 'To Participate in God's Mission: Looking for an ecclesial structure to be a witnessing church today'.
- On 7 October 2021 it was C. Leonard's turn, with the thesis 'Gordon J. Spykman's "New Paradigm": A Proposal for Renewed Theological Method in the Reformed Tradition'.

We ask for your support for the TUA library!

It is nice to meet students and lecturers again in the TUA library. After the lockdowns in 2020 and 2021, the study areas in the library and reading room are fortunately well occupied again. And for most people, browsing through the bookshelves and leafing through the books is much more enjoyable than having to search for and read books on a screen.

A good library is the indispensable information centre for searching and finding academic literature. We also notice this in the visitors to the TUA library and in the questions they ask us.

Why an academic library costs a lot and we need your support

To be able to maintain a good, scientific library, we need your financial support permanently (via either a periodical or a non-recurring donation). Your contribution will be spent on the purchase of necessary new books, journals and digital databases.

The TUA library has access to the following databases:

- *Digital Karl Barth Library*,
- *Digital Library of Classic Protestant Texts*
- *DROZ Calvin and Geneva 16*
- *Twentieth Century Religious Thought, Volume 1: Christianity - All Titles*

Within these databases, the text of books etc. is fully available. But obviously, access to them comes at a price. Every year, we pay a significant amount in licences.

It is still a misconception that literature is freely available digitally. Indeed, more and more books are becoming available digitally



and we are therefore critically evaluating whether the purchase of a book is desirable physically or digitally. Unfortunately, the price difference between an e-book and a printed book has been getting smaller over the past few years. And we notice this in our wallets. Besides, not everything is accessible digitally and we will still have to buy paper books in 2021 and 2022.

Another reason why our library requires continuous investment is that scholarship changes within courses and within disciplines, and to respond to this we need new material all the time. Science does not stand still, and we also follow the developments in theology in our book acquisitions.

*N. van der Mijden-Groenendijk,
bibliothecaris*

You understand: the costs for subscriptions and purchase of digital and paper books and magazines are substantial! Can we count on your support again? You

can register as a donor or make a non-recurring donation using the authorisation card that will be included in this TUA Connect. Thank you very much for your contribution to the TUA library!

Elsevier positively rates TUA bachelor

At the beginning of October, Elsevier Best Studies 2021 was published, with opinions of students, rankings, and facts about colleges and universities. The TUA bachelor was also put to the test and received second place in the ranking of university bachelors of theology.

The percentage of (highly) satisfied TUA students is high: 93% of the bachelor's students are (highly) satisfied with the atmosphere at TUA, the content of the programme scored 90%, as well as the items 'testing and assessment', 'information from the university' and the percentage of students who would choose this study again. The teachers received a good 87% (very) satisfied score.

The TUA master's programme has not been examined.

Find the TUA on social media

- f** facebook.com/TUApeldoorn
- @** instagram.com/tuapeldoorn
- in** linkedin.com/school/theologische-universiteit-apeldoorn/
- t** twitter.com/tuapeldoorn

Financial COVID support by the government



Students manned extra coffee points to maintain the 1.5 metre distance.

The COVID crisis has cost education - including the TUA - a lot of money. Fortunately, the government has also recognised this and has provided some financial compensation: the NPO funds, whereby the letters NPO stand for National Programme for Education ('Nationaal Programma Onderwijs'). For education in the Netherlands, the total amount is 8.5 billion euros, of which the TUA will receive a modest part of about € 145,000, spread over 2021 and 2022.

Costs

The extra costs we had to face as the TUA were, for example, in the appointment of extra student assistants, who helped to make the digital teaching of lectures possible. Students were also employed for extra coffee points, in order to maintain the 1.5-metre distance during the breaks. Another item of expense is lost tuition fees. The government has determined that because of COVID, tuition fees for students will be halved as of 1 September 2021. Therefore, TUA will receive considerably less tuition fees. The government will compensate this, which is already half of the NPO funds that have been allocated to us. Now, the amount of this money is determined by the number of students enrolled at TUA on 1 October 2020. Only: due to COVID, there were considerably fewer than now, because we could not yet start our new master's programme 'Living Reformed Theology' at that time. Thus, we miss out on approximately € 20,000.

How do we use the money?

In the previous section, we discussed the extra costs we incurred due to the COVID

pandemic and the income we lost. A significant part of the NPO funds was earmarked for this purpose.

In addition, TUA has chosen to use part of the allocated amount to strengthen the mentorship program. As of 1 September 2021, Dr. J. van 't Spijker has therefore been appointed central mentor/student pastor. More than ever, strong student guidance is important. Moreover, study coordinator Wilma van der Zande will pay extra attention to those students who need it.

Finally, a small amount has been earmarked to compensate for delays in researchers with temporary appointments. In the spring of 2022, we will assess which PhD students need an extension of their contract.



In this way, the NPO funds are given a useful purpose within the TUA.

*W.J.A. Hanekamp MSc,
President of the Executive Board*

STUDENT LIFE

Dinner stress

A jack-of-all-trades, that's what you are as an assistant to a professor. At least, that is the impression given by the variety of tasks I am given by Professor Selderhuis. Whether it is organising a symposium, translating this magazine into English, finding accommodation for foreign guests or editing texts, the Rector could easily call for help. It is precisely this versatility of the position of student assistant that makes me enjoy doing this work since June, 2019.

So it came to pass that in December 2019, I was responsible for assisting the American Professor Lillback, President of Westminster Theological Seminary in America. The professor would be staying in the Netherlands for a week, get-



ting to know the university better and giving some guest lectures. One morning during that week, the professor told me that he would be having dinner that evening with 'the professor of New Testament'. This, I suspected, had to be Dr. Mulder (our lecturer in New Testament), and in order

to coordinate where and what time the meal would take place, I contacted him. Dr. Mulder, who was at that very moment diligently painting a room, really knew nothing about it, but advised me to try to reach the Old Testament professor, Prof. Peels. I e-mailed him, but he too knew nothing. Despair gradually set in, because professor Lillback had an appointment that evening, but nobody had a clue with whom, and the day wore on. I called the rector. It turned out it was an appointment with Professor Van Willigen - well, New Testament and Bible interpretation of the Early Church are closely related. But it was impossible to get in touch with Prof. Van Willigen. The landline remained unanswered and because he had not been

a professor for very long, his mobile number was completely unknown within the university. Meanwhile, Prof. Lillback assumed that everything had been arranged. Should I tell him that the dinner could not take place because I could not get in touch with Prof. Van Willigen? Fortunately, towards the end of the afternoon I managed to make contact. What a relief! Prof. Lillback had a wonderful dinner that evening and was invited to take a look at Prof. Van Willigen's personal library.

As you can see, the work of a student assistant is multi-faceted and can sometimes even be stressful.

Niels Stouten, student-assistant of Prof. Dr. Selderhuis



Dr. Gert van den Brink, *Luther, aangenaam. Ontmoet de reformator*. Heerenveen: Royal Jongbloed, 2021. ISBN 9789088972911, 112 pages, € 13,99.

Luther's theology cannot be understood without insight into his life and personality. In this book, the author presents a portrait of the reformer in some 20 chapters. Starting from his own encounter with Luther and his writings, the author stimulates the reader to meet Luther himself. Each chapter thus contains two parts: first a text by Van den Brink on an aspect of Luther's work or life, then a section from (mostly) Luther's own writings. 'A clever book that makes one curious about more of Luther', according to Prof. Dr. H.J. Selderhuis.



A. Huijgen, 'The Key to the Bible: Bonhoeffer's Approach to the Psalms as Theological Interpretation', *Toronto Journal of Theology* 37.2 (2021).

In this article, Dietrich Bonhoeffer's approach to the Psalms as a hermeneutic key to the whole of the Bible is used to combine historical and theological readings of the Bible. The presence of the living Christ and the church's reading practice shape the interpretation: no longer does the reader interpret the Bible, but God 'interprets' the reader.



P.L. Rouwendal, 'Comrie and Holtius and their Doctrine of Predestination', *Puritan Reformed Journal* 3 (2021).

In this article, Dr. Rouwendal describes the doctrine of God's decrees and more specifically the doctrine of predestination of Alexander Comrie and Nicolaus Holtius as found in their Examen of the Design of Tolerance (Examen van het ontwerp van tolerantie) (1755-1756). After Kuiper and Honig, no more research had been done on this. Rouwendal gives several corrections to their conclusions. For instance, Comrie can be characterised neither as a supra- nor infralapsarian. Together with Holtius, he tried to arrive at a system in which elements from both positions were combined. It is striking that Comrie and Holtius base their view largely on philosophical rather than Biblical grounds, and that their view of predestination shows interesting similarities to that of John Duns Scotus.



Jan van 't Spijker, *To Participate in God's Mission: Looking for an ecclesial structure to be a witnessing church today*. Utrecht: Eburon Academic Publishers, 2021. ISBN 9789463013611, 246 pages, € 28,-.

This study seeks to contribute to finding an answer to the question of how to shape church in a missionary context. To this end, it looks at the missionary ecclesiological debate in the worldwide missionary movement of the 20th century, at the contribution of four influential missionary theologians in the Reformed context in the Netherlands, and at the debate on these questions within the Christian Reformed Churches in the Netherlands over the past hundred years. The study shows the foundations and elements that are necessary in the search for an ecclesial structure to be a witnessing church of Christ today.



Douwe Steensma, 'Bewust afzien van eten en drinken', *Radix. Tijdschrift over geloof, wetenschap en samenleving* 42/2 (2021), 142-151.

Conscious refraining from eating and drinking is increasingly in the spotlight of those who want to hasten the end of their lives because they consider their life to be finished. Some dispute that stopping eating and drinking in that situation is a form of suicide. Assisting suicide is punishable by law, whereas helping people who consciously give up eating and drinking is not. Yet conscious refraining from eating and drinking could be called a form of suicide. Church and theology can offer a different perspective to older people struggling with fatigue and questions about the meaning of continuing to live.



M.A. van Willigen, "'De paradiso" de Ambrosio: una fuente de inspiración para Agustín de Hipona', Translation in the Spanish journal *Augustine* (2021) of a previously published scientific article in *Studia Patristica*.

In this article, the author has investigated the origin of certain thoughts of Augustine on original sin. The research shows that Augustine had used certain works of Ambrose, but had neglected others.



Prof. Dr. W.A. Zondag LLM e.a. (red.), *Sdu Commentaar Arbeidsrecht Thematisch*. Den Haag: Sdu, 2021. ISBN 9789012406536, 3968 pages, € 320,-.

In November, a completely renewed and updated edition of a commentary on labour law was published for the 17th time. In 2005, our endowed professor of 'Church, Law and Society', Prof. Dr. W.A. Zondag LLM, initiated this most extensive commentary there is in the field of labour law. He is still a member of the editorial board. The commentary provides up-to-date, in-depth and practical commentary on over 300 articles of law that are relevant to everyday employment law practice.

Agenda

Continued Events
Calendar Page 2

5 March 2022

– in Dutch

TUA Ambassadors' Day,
for all TUA ambassadors.

17 March 2022

1.30-5 p.m. (CET) – in Dutch
Symposium 'Government
intervention and freedom
of conscience in times of
crisis', organised together
with the RMU.

25 April 2022

7.30 p.m. (CEST) – in English
Info-session for future PhD
students.

Activities take place Deo
Volente and under the
condition of COVID-19
regulations. More infor-
mation on these and other
events is available in the
calendar, see www.tua.nl.

Church pioneer Joost van den Berge: 'TUA has meant a lot to me'

Joost van den Berge (27) is two in one: on the one hand a 'normal' pastor in the small Groningen village of Sebaldeburen, and on the other hand he is a pioneer and is looking for new forms of church-being in that same village. 'TUA has prepared me on a theological and personal level for the work I am doing now.'

Together with his wife Boukje, Joost works full-time in these two different positions. He is a church worker and pastor in the Reformed Church of Sebaldeburen ('To the people there I am just "the pastor"'). There is also this pioneering spot, De Verbinding, in Sebaldeburen. 'The background of this pioneer place is that the old Reformed Church threatened to cease to exist,' says the young pastor. 'Then it was thought good to take a new path alongside the "old road". Pioneering: discovering new forms of being in the church.' Joost calls it 'an exciting, but also fascinating experience'. With joy he relates that at the moment things are going well on both "roads". The old church is growing in number of members and visitors, while the pioneering location is also taking shape and is managing to connect with society in the Groningen village in more and more ways. Good examples are the Kids Bible Week and the

Kids Club, which were started by Joost's wife Boukje, and a village room, which is currently being developed. We are grateful that the Lord blesses our presence and the work here in Sebaldeburen. Very often these blessings come beyond our efforts or despite our failures. God shows Himself to be a living and merciful God, here in the "far north".

Instructive and valuable

'TUA has prepared me on a theological and personal level for the work I am doing now. The biblical-theological training I received there is of great value to me, especially in the area of books of the Bible, languages and exegesis. In addition, I have always appreciated the personal formation programme at TUA. I clearly remember how I, along with two or three fellow students, discussed cases from our personal lives with Wilma van der Zande (study supervisor and teacher of personal and

professional formation, ed.). That was very instructive and valuable.'

Formation

'When I try to explain the Bible to others, whether during sermons, Bible studies or openings, the years of study at the TUA often come in handy. In addition, the academic training I received at the TUA has helped me a great deal almost every day - indirectly - because it has taught me to reflect on what I think, believe and do. With many choices it is wise to take a critical distance, consider how others view them and then determine your own position. This applies just as much to church work as it does to pioneering. I also notice very concretely that the science of church history helps me to understand people and situations. For some people, for example, church history is a barrier to going to church; in other situations it helps to know what has been tried in the

church's history, and how that has worked out. That helps me.'

Stimulating development

'I am at heart a practical theologian. I also studied theology with a view to practice. In that sense, I probably also had inadequate expectations about studying theology at an academic level. I do remember that in the first year I wrote a thesis with B.J. Dikken MA, the teacher of religious studies, about the differences between Ishmael and Isaac in the Bible and the Koran. A fun subject, but I am still grateful to Mr. Dikken for his patience with a first-year student like me. The same applies to Prof. Peels in the third year, for my bachelor's thesis. Looking back now, I sometimes feel sorry for my supervisors at the time. But it was wonderful that they were so committed to stimulating the development of students! I have always found that very valuable, and now, looking back, I see it even more so.'



Paspoort

Name:	Joost van den Berge
Residence:	Sebaldeburen
Date of birth:	8 January 1994
Marital status:	married to Boukje Hoefnagel, father of Obed (2 years old)
Period of study at TUA:	2014-2017
Thesis:	'The fear of the Lord, that is wisdom. An examination of the place and significance of the fear of the Lord in Old Testament wisdom literature'
Profession:	pastor and pioneer