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Connect

BY THE RECTOR

Receiving what we cannot create ourselves

In this magazine, we look back and we look forward. In constantly looking back and forward, we do run the risk of living beyond the moment of the 'present'. The moment of being still before God, the moment of doing nothing and letting go in order to receive in that very moment what we cannot create. We need not let ourselves be controlled by just being busy evaluating the past or trying to organise the future. We are not in control and fortunately we aren't. The first priority is to 'let the Lord work in me by His Spirit'. Theological practice without these hours of passivity sooner or later overshoots itself.

The interviews in this edition with a going, a staying and a coming man want to make it clear that there is no lifeless TUA institution. After all, TUA is formed by people who diligently do the work to which they feel called to serve church and theology

here. We are grateful that Dr. A. Heystek has served TUA in this way as a psychology lecturer for almost 25 years. Also worthy of mention are his place on the examination committee and his valuable contributions to the Department of Practical Theology. It also shows that cooperation between colleagues is of great importance. In this edition an illustration in the field of New Testament studies.

We want to add additional vibrancy to the TUA as a research and teaching community in the coming years. Dr. C.C. den Hertog has now joined that community with a full-time appointment. Expert in systematic theology, he will further specialise in public theology in the coming years. Reformed theology deserves to be heard in all kinds of contemporary societal issues. And such theology is up to date! Your partnership with the TUA community is greatly appreciated.



Prof. Dr. M.J. Kater, Rector

**November 3, 2023 TUA Day! Theme: 'Who am I actually?
Being human before God'. You are welcome to join us!**

Non-judgement: a matter of perspective

(Matthew 7:1-5)

Jesus demands that we do not judge. He does so using a seemingly simple example: people who have a mote in their eye and people who have a beam in their eye. Yet that is not such a simple example at all, because we are left with how exactly to interpret it. What is the mote and what is meant by the beam?

I am not extremely skillful, but every now and then I tinker together something from wood. Beams can hardly ever be bought in the desired length and that means you have to saw them to size. I often make the mistake of thinking it would be wise to blow away the sawdust. It drifts away and often ends up in my eyes. And that's not

pleasant, because it irritates them enormously! My eyes start to water and my vision is blurry. Sometimes my eyes still hurt days later. That's the effect of something as small as a speck of dust or mote in your eye: it's very tiny, but it has major consequences.

When we look at other people, the same thing often happens. Something very small gets into our eyes, making them irritated. For instance, it might be a strange characteristic or habit of the other person, which we find incredibly irritating. We tend to make what we find irritating huge. It entered our eyes as a tiny mote, but because we have it in our eye, it completely fills our field of vision and becomes,

as it were, a beam that blinds us. We can no longer see anything else.

And so therein lies our problem. When we look at someone else, there is often a 'beam' that stands in between. A (pre)judgment about that other person that is so great that we hardly see the other person. Jesus asks us to remove our judgment of that other person. Remove that beam from your eyes and look at the other person with a loving gaze that is not blurred by one little issue that stands between you.

But what about the mote in the other person's eye? That is a characteristic or habit of yours that is incredibly irritating for

the other person. We tend to justify our own behaviour. 'Does this other person really care about such a small thing? This is just how I am!' With such an attitude, we just don't help the other person. That other person has a splinter in their eye, which we have caused. It hurts enormously. So why shouldn't we do everything we can to remove it? However, we can only do that if we have first removed the 'beam' from our own eye.



Passport

Name:	Jan Willem Klaassen
Date of birth:	1 March 1977
Marital status:	unmarried
Residence:	Harderwijk
Congregation:	CGK Ermelo
Study stage:	Master's degree

Colofon

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Events Calendar

23 September 2023

In Dutch

Start of Formation Course (theology for those interested, on Saturday mornings in Apeldoorn, Drachten, Goes and Sliedrecht). See the agenda at www.tua.nl for the programme.

3 October 2023

In Dutch

Symposium organised from the chair 'Church, Law and Society' (together with the RMU). Topic: 'Macht of gezag?' (Power or Authority?)

3 November 2023

In Dutch

TUA day about 'Wie ben ik eigenlijk? Mens-zijn voor God aangezicht' (Who am I? Being human before the face of God).

13-17 November 2023

In Dutch

Week of the Early Church. Theme: Bishops in the Early Church. Including lectures, readings and mini-symposium with presentation of the jubilee book "Ordained bishop, what does it mean?" (Ben van den Baar).

Activities take place Deo volente. More information on these and other events is available in the calendar, see www.tua.nl/en.

Rev K. Hoefnagel: 'I am still reaping the benefits of the exegetical courses'

In 1980, Rev K. Hoefnagel (73) took the examination for admissions, for the third time. Rev J.H. Velema was a member of the curatorium all three times and said: 'So, Mr Hoefnagel, you thought to yourself: I'll try again?' Rev Hoefnagel then dared to speak his conviction: 'Yes pastor, and today I will be accepted!'

And so it happened, because, says Rev Hoefnagel, between the second and third times he was called by the Lord. And so in 1980 he began his studies at the (then called) Theologische Hogeschool (Theological College), where he found himself in a large class. Things were quite different from what he had expected beforehand. He had thought, for instance, that on Mondays people would talk about the previous Sunday, but that turned out not to be the case at all.

'Strange to think that of the then professors, no one is alive anymore,' he muses. 'I enjoyed the lectures and the exams also went well, although Prof Versteeg's exams on modern theologians were a disaster for me. He did not rehearse all the material studied, but stuck to one particular section. And if you just weren't very sharp on that section...'

He also remembers well an Old Testament oral examination. It was to be taken at Prof Oosterhoff's home, but he could be rather easily distracted. When Rev Hoefnagel arrived from Utrecht-Centrum, where he lived with his family, in Apeldoorn at Prof Oosterhoff's house, the professor was gone. 'At the college they found out where he was: in Utrecht-Centrum! Right next to our front door. So I had to rush back to Utrecht, where I took the exam in the church consistory, near our house. To compensate, he gave me an A-, or was it really a good exam?'

Sneaky

'Prof Van 't Spijker I admired for his amiability and geniality. Church history is a delightful subject. His house was packed to the brim with books and he said: "New books I sneak

'I never understood philosophers'

in because my wife thinks it's enough!"'

He also remembers Prof Van Genderen clearly. 'He was a distinguished man with whom I really felt like a young student. I regarded him highly because of his sincerity. In my first year as pastor in Nieuwpoort, Prof Van Genderen was also in church one Sunday. Then I felt like a student again for a moment. He also taught philosophy, but I never understood philosophers. That occasionally caused problems during philosophy exams. After my studies, I immediately removed the philosophy books from my



Rev. Hoefnagel as a student.

bookcase'. In 1985 he came into contact with Prof Van Genderen again, but this time in a very different way: Rev Hoefnagel was involved in a serious car accident in which a brother of Prof Van Genderen died. 'A compassionate man and a man who grieved because of his brother,' he recounted.

Accident

'I am very grateful for the education I was able to receive at TUA concluding in 1985. From the courses in Exegesis of the Old and New Testament I still reap benefits in preparing for preaching to this day. I was also grateful that I was able to complete my studies despite being married and having children at the time. Naturally as anyone with a family knows, I was at times really busy. One day, for instance, I had an examination with Prof Versteeg, when one of the children had an accident and I had to go to the doctor and the hospital holding the little one's hand. My wife came to the hospital and took over from me. I arrived in Apeldoorn panting and puffing. Was it to compensate for the misery I had gone through that I got a B-, or was this exam also just really well done?'



Passport

Name:	K. (Klaas) Hoefnagel
Date of birth:	30 October 1949
Marital status:	Married to Ria Sneep
Children:	had five children, the second of whom, Pieter, died
Period of study at the TUA:	1980-1985
Posts:	Nieuwpoort, Dundas (Canada), Katwijk aan Zee and Meerkerk. Rev Hoefnagel retired in 2019

Teaching New Testament together: 'Truly a privilege'

For over a year now, Dr A. (Arjan) van den Os has been teaching New Testament at TUA, alongside Dr M.C. (Michael) Mulder who has been teaching this subject area since 2014. How does such a collaboration actually work? 'I never had a sense of competition.'



Both New Testament lecturers. Dr Mulder on the left and Dr Van den Os on the right.

First things first. The TUA Connect readers are all familiar with the New Testament (NT), but what do you actually learn in the NT modules at TUA? What does the discipline entail?

Van den Os: 'That is actually very broad. It is about explaining the New Testament text and the theology of the NT. In doing so, we look at the text individually, but also at the text as a whole in which it appears. We look at the writers of the NT, but also at topics in themselves. We read the NT, asking the question: how do you do that? What about your hermeneutics?'

Mulder, with a wink: 'Arjan has a limited vision. You also have to look at the context of the NT.'

Van den Os: 'I wasn't finished either!'

Mulder: 'You can immediately see that we complement each other well. This puts us right at the heart of the interview. This was about our collaboration, wasn't it?'

Van den Os: 'So NT is also about the context in which these books

of the Bible originated. And we make plenty of use of Greek, for example when reading the gospels. Studying the NT cannot be done without Greek.'

Mulder: 'That is exactly a feature of New Testament teaching at TUA, which proceeds entirely from the sources. I consider it a privilege that we can quote and use the Greek text in our lectures.'

How do you experience being NT teachers together?

Mulder: 'Well, it really is a privilege to do that with the two of us. I love working together in education. Before, I also did a lot with Prof Peels. He taught Old Testament (OT), and we taught a lot of modules together. Arjan and I also constantly coordinate on the content and form of the modules. We don't want to divide the subjects in such a way that each one gets its own section, but we both want to be involved on a broad front and help each other. Therefore, we do not have the same division every year, instead we rotate. Each of us

teaches all subjects. In doing so, we each have our own expertise and place our own emphases. But subjects are always broader than that particular one. So it's good to rotate.'

Van den Os: 'It is good not to be alone. I now have someone with experience beside me, with a different specialization, but also a broad view of the field of NT and education. It's a pleasure to join forces and explore and think through the field together, both in terms of content and education. Because that is all in full development.'

Mulder: 'Over time, I have noticed that students adopt certain things that you yourself, as a lecturer, find important. Think of the focus on quotations from the OT in the NT, the connections between OT and NT, and how that works throughout the NT. What I'm curious about is what aspects students will take over from you Arjan, when we start working as a team and you bring in your own expertise.'

Where do your approaches differ?

Mulder: 'The bachelor's degree is actually an introduction to the field, which is broader. We both take the same approach. In the master's phase, we have more of our own focus.'

Van den Os: 'Well, that's about differences in emphasis. Mulder is specialised in OT quotations in the NT. Students can benefit from that.'

Where do you complement each other?

Van den Os: 'An example is the module "The Bible in context", which deals with the origins of the NT in the culture of then and there. There, last year, I built on the foundations laid by Michael, including from his knowledge of Judaism. Michael's emphases were on Hellenism, Judaism and chronology. To these I added a couple: archaeology and linguistics. For example, the question: what language did Jesus speak? And how does that affect the understanding of statements He made?'

Mulder: 'Next year, I will teach that module again, and so I will take some of those allusions from Arjan. We take over each other's work, so to speak. No, I've never had the feeling of competition. We just each have our own perspective and our own knowledge of literature. In fact, that works very nicely together.'

Apart from education, do you work together in research?

Mulder: 'We do indeed, especially in the BEST (Biblical Exegesis and Systematic Theology) research group. There we do integrated research, not only together with Old Testament and New Testament scholars, but also with systematic theologians. We reinforce each other's research and seek connections.'

Student about lecturer:

'Dr Mulder is a highly valued lecturer'

What significance does the Jewish Haftorah reading have for Paul's quotations from the OT? How does the honour-and-shame culture of the Greeks function in Paul? Who is Paul anyway, and what does the New Perspective have to say to us? Dr Mulder's lectures provide a conversation between the text and the context, and the latter concept can always be very varied: a study of a word within a book of the Bible; the connection with the OT and Jewish thought or also the meaning of a concept in Greco-Roman culture.

Dr Mulder shows that the NT is often much more Jewish than we think, while at the same time being at the centre of the culture of the time. The pace is often fast and much is asked of the students. He does not avoid difficult questions. Dr Mulder shows the richness of God's Word, partly through his knowledge of Judaism. At the same time, Dr Mulder also points out the applicability of exegesis when making a sermon or its pastoral relevance. This ensures that exegesis does not remain up in the air. With all the seriousness, there is also plenty of room for a joke; everyone can recall his roaring laughter. This combination makes Dr Mulder a highly valued teacher for us students.

Harm Jan Holsappel, master's student

Student over lecturer:

'We shouldn't muzzle this treading Ox'

A new teacher for the subject of NT. Exciting. A young man still! What should we do, brothers? Listen to his lectures. After all, he is not only living up to his promises to TUA with the fact that he can now put Dr. in front of his name; above all, he is honouring his own two letters: Os. That is why I would like to say to the TUA that they should not muzzle this hard-working treading Ox (Os in Dutch). What a gift this man has to accumulate such an amount of knowledge in his still short life and now convey it to his 'disciples'. It is truly enriching to hear this man lecture.

As an example, I would like to take the module 'New Testament - Paul', where he very openly and honestly covers all kinds of both old and new views on Paul. In doing so, he also looks at his own background, but substantiates these views very thoroughly. At the same time, there is plenty of room for questions and comments. So, on the one hand, students are taken into the world of the NT and learn to think from different points of view, but we also receive the wonderful Biblical toolkit we need to be able to work in the Kingdom of our Lord.



Paul van der Wiel, bachelor's student

After my PhD

On 12 April, I received my PhD. Now that my PhD has been finished, I sometimes get the question, "I guess you have a lot more free time?" I don't have more free time, because there is still so much of interest to explore. My research will focus on two areas. In line with my dissertation on the vengeance of God in the NT, I want to devote a few more articles to the image of God and the negative side of the NT. I have already written a contribution on judgement in the NT, and an article on God's wrath is forthcoming. On the other hand, in the coming years I want to focus on the notion of election in the NT, especially

with Matthew. If the years are given to me, I hope to eventually write a New Testament dogmatics.

The TUA and the General Synod have entrusted me with the New Testament discipline, but fortunately I am not alone. Together with my colleague Michael Mulder, I hope to build on the foundation of my predecessors in the coming years towards a vital field of research in which we investigate the text and theology of the NT and may share the results in lecture halls, association halls and church halls.

*Dr A. van den Os,
New Testament lecturer*



Handing over of the doctoral bull to Dr A. van den Os by Prof H.G.L. Peels (12 April 2023).

CURRENT AFFAIRS

Distant friends of TUA: hunger for Orthodox Reformed theology abroad

A good neighbour may be called better than a distant friend, but we at TUA notice how much distant friends are worth too. For example, our friends from the theological seminaries in Indonesia and South Korea with whom we have a cooperative agreement. Their students come to Apeldoorn to study and especially to obtain their PhDs, but we also visit them with some regularity. For example, I was in Busan and Seoul for a week at the beginning of April and in Jakarta for a week at the end of April. It's nice to be able to meet in person again, because that delivers so much more than digitally - however convenient that can be.

Eager

I am constantly struck by the hunger for Orthodox Reformed theology, the enormous interest in the Reformation and Dutch Reformed theology of the seventeenth century, and the eagerness with which lectures are listened to, lectures attended and books studied. I am grateful for what we at TUA have in this field and for what we are allowed to distribute worldwide. I am ashamed and also somewhat jealous when I see the zeal, sacrifice and dedication of students, lecturers and churchgoers in those lands. I enjoy it again and again, but also ask myself the question: is all this still sufficiently present in my own life?

Huguenot Museum

There is something else that strikes me again and again with every visit, and that is the increase in knowledge and theological understanding. By now we could also send our students there to learn and

experience how people do church and theology there. And how the Reformation tradition is kept alive there, as in a whole new, small but very high quality Huguenot museum in the middle of the more than one million inhabitants of Suwon, close to Seoul. Should you be in the area... when you visit, tell them you are TUA friends and they will welcome you as a good neighbour, a friend from the distance and above all a sister and brother.

Prof. Dr. H.J. Selderhuis, professor of Church History and Church Law



Prof Selderhuis at the Huguenot Museum in Suwon, South Korea.

Psychology lecturer Drs A. Heystek retired: 'TUA students rather one-sidedly developed'

For almost 25 years, Drs A. Heystek was a psychology lecturer at TUA. Actually, not that much has changed at TUA in those years, he says. On 9 June, TUA staff took leave of Drs A. Heystek in Amsterdam.

In September 1998, Drs Heystek joined TUA as a psychology lecturer. He then took over that course from Prof. Velema. The synod felt it was important that this course be taught by a specialist teacher. At the time, I was teaching methodology and psychology at the Christelijke Hogeschool Ede in the SPH and Theology programmes. 'Originally, I am a pedagogue,' he says, when asked about his background. 'I trained in developmental psychology, especially that of the adolescent, for which I also took a counsellor's course.' Dr. Heystek has always worked in education, especially vocational education, and has also had a counselling role within that. He also worked for five years as a diaconal counsellor in the Christian Reformed Churches. He also did a lot of administrative work. In this way, he was very directly involved in what is now Eleos.

What have you enjoyed, and what could be different at TUA?

'I enjoyed teaching the developmental psychology courses every year and getting students to reflect on their own development and what they may or may not have developed to be a good theologian. I also taught practically-oriented electives for many years, which students often enjoyed.

Many students at TUA have a highly developed cognitive ability. That usually makes them able to take in an enormous amount of literature.

Quite often this development came at the expense of the somewhat more social-emotional side of their person. Here, a lot often had to be done.

Once, for instance, there was a student who was dreading writing a paper on himself. He had graduated from grammar school with six A's on his list, but he was not keen on writing about himself. When I suggested to him "even if it's only three pages", he said: "I'd rather you give me three hundred pages of foreign-language

'I hope to develop a somewhat calmer pace of life after retirement.'



During a staff trip to Amsterdam, TUA staff said goodbye to Drs Heystek. In De Ark, he was addressed by A.J. Dorst MSc (President of the Executive Board) and Prof. Dr. M.J. Kater (Rector).

literature to read than for me to have to write three pages about myself." With most students, that does come more into balance. Hopefully, my course has contributed to that.

There could still be a bit more emphasis on students' professional and personal formation. But apart from that,

I respect what is offered in the context of the PPV (personal and professional development, ed.) modules, although as far as I am concerned, this could still have more integral attention. Perhaps in combination with the recent development of the undergraduate internship, some steps could be made in this regard.'

Have you seen much of change in the past 25 years?

'Actually, not even that much. There has been a lot of improvement in teaching quality under the leadership of various teaching staff, though. The bachelor's curriculum has also been invigorated, so that there is more emphasis on practical training than before. But apart from that, much has remained the same.'

After his retirement, Drs Heystek will slow down a bit and wants to develop a quieter pace of life with his wife, who suffers from post-COVID effects. 'Furthermore, I intend to take some more holidays. The church will also continue to call on me, both in the local church council and nationally, for example at the deputation for the diaconate.'

Dr C.C. den Hertog appointed lecturer/ researcher in public theology

Dr C.C. den Hertog has been a familiar face at TUA for many years. Not only because he studied there, but also because from 2019, in addition to being a pastor, he was attached to TUA for one and a half days a week as lecturer in systematic theology. On 1 April 2023, that changed: from that date he is full-time at TUA, namely as lecturer/researcher in public theology.

Public theology, what does it entail? 'When I am sitting at a birthday party and people ask me what public theology is, I say that while the message of the church is thought through within dogmatics, that is done not only with an eye on the church, but with an eye on the whole world. It is a relatively new field of interest within theology. The term was coined in 1974, which is the year of my birth. So I also have an interest in saying it is a "young subject",' Dr Den Hertog smiles. 'It is about the church realising that it has been entrusted with a message that concerns the whole world and can make its own contribution in many areas. You can think of the topics that are high on the public agenda in a society, but I myself would especially think of issues that are not so high on the public agenda, but to which our good God opens our eyes in Scripture. I am thinking of themes such as humanity, freedom and sin.'



So, the subject integrates all kinds of theological disciplines like dogmatics, ethics, apologetics and missiology. It forces you to think about big questions: how do you look at society? How do you look at the church's vocation in that society? How do you see the relationship of church and society? Is it better for the church to retreat behind safe walls? Or is it its calling to get involved in public debates? And how do you then guard that you let a true Christian message be heard and not adapt yourself to the terms of the public debate?

Your position is new at TUA, how are you going to give shape and substance to this? 'In my own research, I want to focus on the questions surrounding guilt, sin and forgiveness. Questions of guilt are in the spotlight in many ways. Think of the handling

of slavery's past, apologies towards Groningen, an unsafe culture from various editors of TV programmes. Yet as a society, we don't really know how to deal with it. In my opinion, the message of Scripture has something to say here that you don't hear anywhere else and that really opens a way forward: the mercy of the Lord God in Christ on a wandering world. That is what we ourselves live by, and that is what we may interpret.'

'You hear everywhere that the message of justification no longer attracts people. I don't believe any of that'

What should students expect from you in teaching?

'In the regular curriculum now, there is no subject "public theology". I hope that will change, so I will work with elective modules in their free space first.

For the coming academic year, I want to offer two elective modules. To start with, I want to explore with students a successful contribution to public debate. I will then stay close to home and talk about J. Koopmans as a public theologian. We will then look at different approaches (I am now thinking: a Roman Catholic view of society and a neo-Calvinist one), and then look at how Koopmans differentiates himself from those approaches and takes a more original-Calvinist path. We then also read important texts of his - more theological texts (his interpretation of Article 2 and Article 36 of the Belgic Confession of Faith), but especially his interventions in the public domain: his fiery pamphlet *Bijna te laat!* (Almost too late!) and his letter to the Reich Commissioner Seyss-Inquart in May 1943.

I call the other module "Mariken, Martinus en wij" (Mariken, Martinus and us). I then want to read *Mariken van Nieuwegein*. This is a text from around the turn of the 15th to the 16th century, in which we read about Mariken and the seven years she lives with the devil. When she comes to repentance, the church hardly has a message for her, except that she will have to do intense and long penance above all; possibly then there will be forgiveness. In the years in which Mariken's story plays out, a new insight breaks through to Martin Luther, which we often capture in the term: the justification of faith. So what was discovered there? And what does that tell us today? It is widely heard that the message of justification no longer attracts people. I don't believe any of that - and would like to ask in a third movement (hence the: "and we") how the church could interpret this message today. For both modules, whoever wants to join in is welcome!

Want to join the elective modules mentioned above? That's possible! For more information, see the Study Guide at www.tua.nl/en and on the same website under the heading 'Education' under 'Take separate courses'.

LRT student Steef Post researching conflict management in the church

One of the regular components in the part-time master's programme Living Reformed Theology (LRT) is the writing of a thesis. Students conduct research on a theoretical or more practical question appropriate to their interest or field of study. Steef Post conducted research on conflict management in the church.



Just when businessman, mediator, coach and trainer Steef Post (66) thought he could slow down a bit, an advertisement promoting the master's programme of LRT caught his eye. He had always been interested in theology, but had little idea how that profession was practised at the academic level. 'I was just curious to enter this new world. And I was not disappointed! Not in the new knowledge and insights I gained and certainly not in the ability of the LRT programme to consume your free time.'

The LRT master's programme allows you to take your knowledge and experience with you as you enter the field of theology, whatever your area of expertise. As a mediator,

Steef experienced how much suffering, sin and barrenness cause conflict in congregations. 'Even in the congregation where I attend church, things have not been going well recently, and so I experience first-hand how much pain conflict causes in the congregation.'

For his thesis, he researched conflict management in the church, and in particular conflict prevention. He says: "Conflicts are timeless, but certainly not decreasing. Even in church congregations, conflict can arise just like that. After that, there are only losers. If there really is a conflict, a church council or pastor cannot do much. The mayor can call in the riot police, but at best the church can remove someone from office, and even that is

fuel for more trouble. I thought it would be interesting to explore whether conflict can be prevented. Prior to a conflict, the us-versus-them thinking increases. There are always factions in the church: men and women, the church council and churchwardens, innovators and protectors, and so on. Very often, this goes well. People sit together at the supper table and sing the songs of praise together. But it can also happen that people come to oppose each other. Then polarisation grows. It would be nice if you could respond appropriately at that stage.'

A lot of research focuses on analysis and interpretation. You put out a survey, or conduct interviews. Then you work it out and try to analyse the data. That kind of research does not suit Steef Post. 'You've put a lot of energy into it, but you haven't yet taken a step towards a better future. You're not even sure if the solution lies in analysing the problem. I actually got to work with four pastors from four different denominations

who were dealing with polarisation in their congregations.'

After his research, what does he advise churches facing conflicting interests or views? 'First, don't immediately think it is about truth, but do immediately see it as a theological phenomenon. Conflict is a trial. Spiritual and fleshly thoughts compete for primacy. Look up Bible passages that deal with this, be taught from them and teach the congregation from them. Second, do not be alarmed. There will always be conflicts in this dispensation. So be open about it. Neutrally naming a conflict is already a big step forward. Finally, focus your attention not on the informal leaders, but on the silent middle. What is their desire, what are they hoping for, and from that perspective, what would bring the solution one step closer?' He wants to keep studying because there are still a lot of questions left. Steef Post therefore applied for a PhD under the supervision of Prof. Kater.



Also take a look at our bookshop at www.tua.nl/en

Want to know more about the part-time master's programme in Living Reformed Theology? Then visit www.tua.nl/en under the Education heading.

Theme Days in Leuven: 'quenched, living, praising'

Leuven, Belgium, was the venue for this year's Theme Days, which took place on 20 and 21 April. Students and teachers were gathered for a varied programme around the theme 'Theology and topology - on the theological meaning of place, of the coordinates of our existence'. Three impressions.



Group picture at the ETF in Leuven.

Intellectual challenge, conviviality and humour come together

On Thursday morning, I travelled to Leuven with a senior fellow LRT master's student. I must say that there are numerous advantages to having older fellow students anyway. However, nothing can match the ease with which I could settle myself in the comfortable, sleek, electric bolide and simply let myself be driven to Leuven. It was a convenient advantage

Once we arrived in Leuven, we enjoyed a beautiful city tour. The library and the statue of Fonske are etched in my memory. Fonske, an iconic image, served as an inspiring symbol for the quest for wisdom. During the Theme Days, we also got the chance to tread in Fonske's footsteps.

We immersed ourselves in a variety of engaging lectures covering the theme of 'theology and topology'. Lecturers from various theological disciplines shared their knowledge and insights, challenging us to reflect on interesting theological issues. It was inspiring and spurred me on to further ideas

What struck me was the unique balance between intellectual challenge and a convivial atmosphere steeped in humour. Between the lectures, there was room for informal meetings and conversations. Despite not being a direct study partner of the undergraduate and graduate students, I felt welcome and we had a good time

together. It was unfortunate, though, that the presence of LRT students was relatively limited. For future events, I would definitely encourage all LRT students to attend! All in all, the Leuven city walk and subsequent theme days were a memorable experience. The coming together of intellectual challenge, sociability and humour created a unique atmosphere in which I felt both inspired and at ease. I look back with satisfaction on the knowledge I gained and the contacts I made, and I hope future events will be just as engaging and enriching

Elisabeth Haase, student of the master's program Living Reformed Theology

Valuable and wonderful days after years of patience

It's about time... after four (COVID) years of being enrolled in the Bachelor of Theology, this year it was time for my first real Theme Days abroad. These were four years in which I was constantly told by more senior students how great those Theme Days were. And having now experienced it myself for the first time, I can't say other than that it has been a huge loss to have missed out on this the previous years. All the academic years mixed together, teachers and students sitting side by side listening to the lecturers. All together enjoying the culinary delights of Flemish cuisine at the hostel. And playing football with neat shoes and clothes at the ETF in Leuven.

Besides greatly enhancing solidarity between students from TUA, the Theme Days are also an excellent opportunity to delve a little deeper into a particular theme. This time the topic was 'the theological meaning of place.' Now this did not strike me beforehand as a hugely relevant and seemed a rather abstract theme (possibly this thought also occurred to you as a reader). Yet it turned out once again how many beautiful things can be said about this theme. With the diversity of lectures we had, it became clear how many aspects are attached to the concept of place and of what importance it is for theology. For example, one lecture was

about the sense of sacredness that (secular) people can experience with certain buildings. And another lecture related the importance of thinking about the place of humans within creation when it comes to environmental ethics. Unfortunately, I don't have enough space to share with you in more detail the wonderful insights that were passed along during these days. However, it is appropriate to reiterate what valuable and wonderful days they were!

Jander van Ettehoven, bachelor's student



Eating ice cream in the university's garden.

Leuven - the place matters

As a TUA community, we were guests in Leuven, at the ETF, for the Theme Days on the theme of 'place'. That concept matters in theology, as was evident from the various lectures. It was instructive.

I was not there the whole time, but what I experienced makes me say that Leuven mattered very clearly as a place for us too. First of all, we were quenched there. It was - the well-known Biblical metaphor - grassy meadows in which we lacked nothing. In it we tasted (besides the taste of the delicious barbecue that surprised us) something of the goodness of being together with each other: the community of the ETF connecting with us as TUA people. Leuven mattered.

Also, second, because we experienced something of life there. By that I don't mean just the fact that we stayed there, but that we could breathe in and breathe out. There is

something of the breath of the Spirit in that. We breathed in: we got theologically fresh air that was familiar, inspiring and sometimes really new. For me, it led to inhaling and then - I hope - it will also lead to exhaling: that we process what we learned and take it with us. That's another reason why Leuven mattered.

And then third, there was praise. That's the third thing I mention: we were allowed to praise God. Very special was the Vespers in St. Kwintenskerk on Friday evening. And isn't that ultimately what our life is about, that we come to praise? Isn't that also the goal of all theology?

Leuven: quenched, living, praising. How good it was. Soli Deo Gloria.

Dr J. van 't Spijker, student pastor and lecturer in Missiology and Evangelism

CGK pastor Sjors Bulten: 'What are you called to?'

'The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few' I preached on this verse from Matthew 9:37 recently. This statement by the Lord Jesus is also very relevant today.

No, not everyone needs to become a pastor or an evangelist or a missionary, yet they are needed! And maybe it's you... I made this application during the sermon. And for good reason. Years ago, I heard a similar call during a sermon and it did something to me. For some time I had been thinking about my own vocation. And this sentence from that sermon certainly contributed to that. Because this sentence had been important to me, I used it in the sermon. In the hope - and with prayer - that others too will feel called to work in God's Kingdom.

My path to becoming a pastor was not a standard one. After high school, I completed the pedagogical college and worked in education for a while. But I noticed that I had not yet finished my studies and so I started (part-time at first) to study theology. To be honest: I started off doubtful ('would I be able to do it?') and without a final goal; becoming a pastor hadn't occurred to me yet... But during the course of my studies the thought of becoming a pastor came back more often. And doors appeared to open, so to speak. A wonderful and enriching course of study, conversations with people, inspired teachers and more insight into what being a pastor actually entails. Because it is more than preaching on Sundays.

Being a pastor: you preach on Sundays, but that sermon has to be written first. It is wonderful to be busy treasure hunting

in the Bible. And to make connections between the Bible and people today. That is why pastoral care and catechesis are an important part of being a pastor. This gives a nice mix of work during the week. No two weeks are the same. You have wonderful conversations with young and elderly people, you

get to assist people pastorally, by speaking together, praying, opening God's Word, and you meet with the church council about important matters in the congregation. What a variety! Of course there are difficult moments too. A difficult conversation or a sad event in the congregation, to name a few.

Maybe you are reading this piece and have doubts about whether the study of theology is something for you. Or maybe you are very qualified, but have never thought about it yourself. I would say take a serious look at it! I can heartily recommend spending a day at TUA. You get a taste of the atmosphere, you have a fascinating day and you are really not tied to anything yet.

Finally, in Matthew 9:38, Jesus says something very important: 'pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest.' Do you ever do that? And does it happen in your homes and churches? Pray for people to be called. Especially at a time when pastors, church workers and evangelists are desperately needed. Perhaps if you start praying that, you will also start praying for yourself: what am I myself actually called to?

*Rev. J.R. (Sjors) Bulten,
pastor CRC Nieuwe Pekela,
former TUA student*



Are you considering studying **theology**?

For more information, please visit www.tua.nl/en.
Welcome!

TUA remodelling progresses, but a financial shortfall looms

In the April edition of *TUA Connect*, we reported about the remodeling work that is going on at the TUA. By now, a lot of work has been done and we are nearing completion.

Necessary remodeling

This renovation was badly needed! There were too few working and speaking spaces for lecturers and students, so that conversations sometimes even required walking or people were forced to work from home. There was too little shelving for the books of the TUA library. Another important aspect is the climate control in our beautiful building, and since the Covid-pandemic we all know how important that is! Furthermore, in the room being converted into a senate room (the place where professors and curators meet), a beautiful monumental ceiling was discovered that needed to be restored (or hidden again behind a pragmatic but style-less system ceiling). Finally, we do not want to leave out the installation of a lift: until now, there was no lift in the TUA, which obviously caused problems for people who are not able or less able to walk. We find ourselves lacking in credibility as TUA if we do not ensure that our education is more accessible for everyone.

Once these facilities are back in order, this will emphatically contribute to the progress of education and research at TUA, where students and scholars know how to find us not only from the Netherlands, but from many countries across the globe.

Impending shortage

From the commitment you already have shown by reading *TUA Connect*, we now make a bold appeal to you! Indeed, we are faced with the following task: the required budget for the renovation of the university has not yet been reached. Of course, a reasonable amount was budgeted for the planned refurbishment, but we are facing some setbacks and rising prices. Despite generous donations of €150,000 so far (for which many thanks!), there is still an impending shortfall of €100,000.



Installing the glass facades in the part of the TUA that is being renovated. This made the building glass-tight.

Will you contribute to this necessary renovation?

You can transfer your donation to account number
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(BIC: INGBNL2A)

Or use the QR code below. Our thanks and appreciation are sincere!



We see your contribution as an *appreciation and encouragement of teaching and research in Reformed theology* and the training of pastors in the Christian Reformed Churches. We are grateful for the interconnectedness that exists and is also shown through this!

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Outward and inward

TUA's boardroom overlooks Wilhelmina Park. For that reason alone, I have made a habit of regularly looking outside. To enjoy the view of the park, the squirrels in the oak tree in front of the building and to reflect on work.

Recently, however, at such moments, I don't just look outside. I also look inside. Indeed, when I look straight ahead from my desk, I see a beautiful, colourful painting by Marjan Rozema. At the opening of the academic year, I briefly reflected on Exodus 33:14 and 15: 'And he said, "My presence will go with you, and I will give you rest." And he said to him, "If your presence will not go with me, do not bring us up from here..."'



Arjan Dorst and painter Marjan Rozema at the new painting in the TUA boardroom.

For me personally, these words are a spur and encouragement for the work I get to do at and for TUA. It's telling how Marjan has managed to capture

that in images: Moses in the dark, in earth colours, out of the earth and bound to the earth. Bent over before the Holy One because he knows

he cannot accomplish the task himself. The burning bramble, in which God had appeared to him, falls over him in bright burning colours. God wants to use Moses and go with him. The blue depicts that presence (Ex. 24:10) and accompanies the green sprout from the earth to what is still hidden (faint white).

Through her creativity, Marjan makes it possible for me to look not only outward and inward, but even deep inside....

With an enduring prayer: 'If your presence will not go with me, do not bring us up from here...'

A.J. (Arjan) Dorst MSc,
President of the Executive Board



The master's students who received their degrees on 15 May. From left to right: Willem Kater, Bernd Mussche, Jelis Verschoof and Daniël Schut.

Graduates

- In the previous academic session the **Bachelor of Theology** was obtained by *Joris Harms* and *Debora van den Brink-Theunissen*.
- The **Master of Theology** was completed on 15 May 2023 by *W.L.W. (Willem) Kater*, *B.H.P. (Bernd) Mussche*, *D. (Daniël) Schut* and *J. (Jelis) Verschoof*. *Willem Kater* and *Bernd Mussche* were also made a callable candidate in the Christian Reformed Churches that day.
- During the **admissions exams**, held in June, were admitted to study for the ministry of pastor in the Christian Reformed Churches: *G.M. (Gerard) Bosker*, *H.J. (Harm Jan) Holsappel* and *A.J. (Arjan) Smit*.

STUDENT LIFE

Promoties

- On 12 April 2023, A. van den Os MA received his doctorate. Title of his dissertation is "'Vengeance is Mine". The Meaning and Function of Divine Vengeance in the New Testament'.
- On 16 June 2023, J. Lee MA received his doctorate. Title of his dissertation is 'Der Bund Gottes in Calvins Josuakommentar im Rahmen seiner exegetischen Werke'.
- On 22 June 2023, D.P. Van Brugge MA received his doctorate. Title of his thesis is ' "That Which They Can't See" . A Retrieval of Jonathan Edwards' Homiletical Use of Imagination'.
- On 28 June 2023, drs. ing. H. Koopman. Title of his thesis is 'Het voorbereidend werk. Een onderzoek naar de invloed van een Engels concept op de theologie in Nederland in de zeventiende eeuw'.
- On 29 June 2023, Drs H. Brons received his doctorate. Title of his thesis is 'Abraham Hellenbroek als prediker. Een homiletische analyse'.



Dr. H. Koopman receives the doctorate degree from Prof. Dr. H.J. Selderhuis.

Student union senate change

Dear Reader,

On Thursday, 8 June, student union C.S.A.T.A. P.F.S.A.R. enjoyed a Transmutatio Senatus! Senate Jongbloed-Beens stepped down and Senate Driece-Van der Toorn took its place. The words of Ama. Jongbloed, Praeses Corporis i.t., were as follows: 'The senate must go.' She was right, after all, we don't meet for fun from four o'clock in the afternoon until the night, the Corps needed a new senate, at least that's how Lex XIX puts it to us. The length of the meeting was not to spoil the fun during the meeting.

Among other things, the students entertained themselves with speech waterfalls about gaming by prospective vicars and fossilising at P.F.S.A.R. We also listened to very enjoyable annual reports from the vibrant disputes during the meeting, ate Amikroks and drank champagne during the potatio celebrating the new senate.

The senate change in itself is already a grand moment. There are speeches and gifts given, but most importantly, the old senate is discharged and the



The newly installed Senate Driece-Van der Toorn.

new senate is installed, which is ratified in the act of handing over the ribbons. You feel you missed something while you were in bed. Since you were in bed, I have written to you and

on top of that, may I share with you the senate photo of the present senate.

Sincerely,
Mr. T.D. van der Toorn

PUBLICATIONS



Jaco van der Knijff, 'Sporen van getijden in de Nederlandse gereformeerde traditie tot circa 1625', in: Herman A. Speelman en Daniël Timmerman, *Gereformeerde getijden. Over vroegmoderne vernieuwing van het spirituele levensritme*. Nederlandse Kerkhistorische Reeks 4 (Kampen: Summum Academic Publications, 2023), 189-219.

An increasing attention to tidal prayers can be detected among Protestants; think of the popularity of vespers and the Choral Evensong. These often draw on pre-Reformation traditions. But how did the Reformed in the sixteenth century view these fixed daily moments of prayer? Did they really abolish everything rigorously, as is often the image? In this chapter in the book *Gereformeerde getijden*, Dr Jaco van der Knijff examines how evening prayer in particular was discussed in the first period of the Dutch Reformation (up to around 1625), looking for traces of these liturgical practices.



Prof. dr. H.J. Selderhuis e.a. (ed.), *Totus noster? Augustinus zwischen den Konfessionen* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2023), 9783525573525, 280 p., € 120,00.

In and after the Reformation, both Protestants and Catholics appealed to the church father Augustine. This book examines how they did so and whether there was more similarity than difference in their appeals to Augustine. Professor Selderhuis, organiser of the conference behind this book, himself contributed on the image of Augustine in the Reformed tradition.



J. van 't Spijker (red.), *Gods missie - onze agenda?* Apeldoornse Studie 80 (Apeldoorn: Theologische

Universiteit, 2023), ISBN 9789075847574, 132 p., € 12,50.

This study addresses the question of the church's place in the plan of salvation and in the (further elaboration of) God's salvific action on the way to the final realisation of what God has in mind: the coming of His Kingdom. In that act of salvation (the missio Dei), the church is an instrument in God's hand. God works out salvation in the world and engages the church in the process. That defines its identity and should therefore also characterise the church's agenda. This study zooms in on the Christian Reformed Churches, focusing on how these churches have dealt and are dealing with the identity of the church.



Petra de Jong-Heins, Bert Roor, Jan van 't Spijker & Willem van 't Spijker, *Betrokken in Gods missie. Basisboek missiologie* (Utrecht: KokBoekencentrum Uitgevers, 2023), ISBN 9789043537704, 276 p., € 24,99.

A broad editorial team working together from the CHE, the TUA, and the deputations for evangelisation and for missions of the Christian Reformed Churches, came to bring about the publication of this new basic book of missiology. Around the world, traditional approaches are under discussion in missionary work. All kinds of new visions are emerging. In this book, authors from a wide circle reflect on various questions and developments occurring in the missionary field. In doing so, they start from a Reformed perspective without turning a blind eye to the richness found in other traditions. It not only reflects on theological concepts and developments in (the history of) mission, but also focuses on the various challenges facing the cultural context of today. From the given reflection, it zooms in on the practice of mission at home and abroad. Through everything, the line to God's action in working out his mission is always maintained: He has begun to work out His all-embracing plan of salvation. He engages people in it. He Himself will complete it.

Journalist Bas Meeuse: 'I marvel at God's diversity'

When he came to study at TUA, editor Bas Meeuse was, in his own words, a black-and-white thinker.

'At TUA, I gained an understanding of the great, wonderful diversity in the Christian world.

That is something I take with me in my work.'

Bas Meeuse (25) works as a journalist on the subject of faith at the Nederlands Dagblad. There, he writes on a variety of topics, ranging from theological subjects to articles on, for example, evangelical meetings or virtual church services. 'I did not expect to be a journalist now. After my undergraduate studies at TUA, I first did a master's at the VU in Amsterdam that focused on Bible translation. Exegesis and Bible Science always appealed to me the most, and Greek and Hebrew suited me well. When I wanted to start working after my master's, it turned out to be not so easy. Eventually I ended up at the Nederlands Dagblad, where I have now been working for over a year. I enjoy my work and enjoy talking to a whole range of believers. Sometimes it is about how they came to faith, other times it is about PhD research into faith in the New Testament (Suzan Sierksma-Agteres).

Diversity

Bas tells how he went through personal development at TUA. 'I used to be a stubborn black-and-white thinker when it came to interpreting the Bible. I did not take into account the time and world of the Bible in my Bible reading. Through the knowledge I gained at TUA, about culture, background and hermeneutics, for example, I learned a lot about that world.

With that knowledge, I also gained an understanding of the great, wonderful diversity in the Christian world. That is something I take with me in my work. When I ask people about their faith in a personal interview, I like to listen openly to their experiences with God. As a result, I am no longer a black-and-white thinker. The world is more complicated than "it's literally written in

the Bible, so that's how it is". One can think of many situations where that is not true. Just think of the debate around creation and evolution. You can say: it says the earth was created in six days, but science tells a completely different story. Or how to deal with social media? That

is a world in which we as Christians also engage, but about which the Bible says nothing in a direct sense.

'The breadth of knowledge I gained from theology is very useful to me as a journalist'

Unlike before my studies, I no longer want to pretend I know everything because I am a Christian and read the Bible. I prefer to step back now to listen to people's stories and just marvel at God's diversity. Sometimes a little more than other times.'

Ordinary believer

Because of his theological knowledge, Bas is good at

probing topics that are linked to it. In addition, theology is a broad course, which is useful for a journalist, a profession that requires broad general knowledge. Furthermore, the academic aspect of the course helped him read academic texts more easily, Bas says. In contrast, he had to unlearn academic writing. A newspaper's audience does not need the woolly and difficult language often associated with academic texts. It has to be clear and simple, no matter how complex the subject matter. So he likes to explain complicated things in a simple way. 'I like to bring something like "the vengeance of God in the New Testament" (PhD Arjan van den Os) close to the reader, by focusing on asking: what does this mean in our lives? What do you get out of it as an ordinary believer? In a way, that is a translation that a pastor also has to make every sermon or Bible study. From the academy to the life of the ordinary believer. Serving Knowledge.'



Passport

Name:	Bas Meeuse
Residence:	Apeldoorn
Date of birth:	23 april 1998
Marital status:	Married
Period of study at TUA:	2017-2020
Thesis:	'De draak speelt de sterren van de hemel. Een onderzoek naar het gebruik van het OT in Openbaring 12:1-6'
Profession:	Editor at Nederlands Dagblad