

## Editorial foreword



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I am honoured to act as guest editor of this Festschrift for Professor Fika Janse van Rensburg. With this academic publication we recognise the contribution of Fika Janse van Rensburg to Theology and the University sector in general. Janse van Rensburg's academic career started in 1973 when he is appointed as temporary lecturer in Greek at the then PU for CHE. In 1975 he received a permanent appointment as Junior Lecturer in Greek and in 1978 he was promoted to full Lecturer. After three years in the ministry he is appointed in 1983 as Head of the Department Greek at the PU for CHE. In the same year he was called as Professor in New Testament by the Reformed Churches of South Africa. He occupies this position until 2014. In 1990 he received the special honour to become a Research Fellow at Yale University.

Fika Janse van Rensburg made a valuable contribution to the University management. He was *inter alia* Head of BA, MA and PhD Programmes at the Faculty of Theology (1995–1997), Director of Biblical Sciences and Ancient Languages at the NWU (1998–2009), Chairperson of the Forum for University Theology Education in South Africa (2009–2014), Dean of the NWU Faculty of Theology (2010–2014), Interim Vice-Rector: Research and Planning of the NWU-Potchefstroom Campus (2015) and Interim Rector of the NWU, Potchefstroom Campus (2016).

Janse van Rensburg made a similar important contribution to theological research. He published 63 scientific articles and 40 chapters in books, is sole author of 4 textbooks, and co-author and editor of 23. Janse van Rensburg received various awards for his contribution to theological research. In 1999 he was awarded the ds Pieter van Drimmelen medal for Bible translation and theological publications by the South African Academy for Science, in 2000 the Andrew Murray prize for his role as editor and co-author in the publication, *Die Bybellennium*, and in the same year the CBSA medal for the mentioned publication. In 2004 he was again awarded the Andrew Murray prize as editor and co-author of the publication entitled, *Die Bybel A–Z*.

Besides his publications, Janse van Rensburg also serves as Chairperson of the New Testament Society of South Africa (1995–2000), editor of the journal, *In die Skriflig*, member of the editorial board on *Neotestamentica* (1990–2000), member of the Advisory Board of *Theologia Reformata* (2011–) and the Editorial Board of *Acta Patristica et Byzantina* (2009). From 1997–2005 he serves as the sole representative of the South African Universities on the National Standards Body for Human and Social Sciences (NSB07) of SAKO.

Various contributions in this publication address the research field in which Janse van Rensburg made his most important contribution, namely the letters of Peter. Benno Zuiddam investigates the author of 2 Peter's experience of divine revelation and compares it with the Belgic Confession's articulation of the divine authorship of the Bible. Alistair Wilson reflects on the meaning of *ἐλπίς* in the letters to the Colossians and 1 Peter. He discusses the similarities and differences between the respective writings' understandings of hope and the implications thereof for New Testament theology. Sebastian Fuhrmann focuses on the depiction of Christ's death as a victory over Satan in Hebrews 2:14, and compares it with the metaphor in 1 Peter 5:8 of the Devil as a roaring lion. He concludes that both texts might have the Roman juridical concept of *crimen calumniae* as background. Paul Decock discusses the concept of spiritual maturity in 1 Peter, specifically with regard to the process of maturation as described in 1 Peter.

A second collection of contributions provides research on Pauline literature. Francois Tolmie investigates the manner in which fourth and fifth century exegetes received Paul's claims of authority in the letter of Philemon. Tolmie identifies two features of their reception. Firstly, all of them accepted that Paul exercised authority over Philemon, and secondly, they all regarded the manner in which Paul exercised his authority as commendable. Bruce Button utilises concepts from French and Raven's power and interaction social-scientific model to investigate Paul's method of exercising influence in the letter of 1 Thessalonians. Jeremy Punt focuses on Paul's self-presentation of his masculinity in 1 Corinthians 11–13. He argues that this approach might help to provide an alternative view on the

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Pauline understanding of embodiment. Hermie van Zyl evaluates existing hermeneutical and exegetical arguments in the debate on same-sex relationships, specifically with regard to Romans 1:26–27. He argues that a distinction ought to be made between exegetical and hermeneutical approaches to the text. According to Van Zyl pro-gay theologians use hermeneutical insights in an invalid manner to relativise the pronouncements of Romans 1:26–27 on homosexual behaviour. Pieter de Villiers discusses the concept of divine love in Romans. He states that this neglected theme in Romans is actually of decisive importance in the interpretation of Romans.

Two contributions focus specifically on Johanine literature. Jan van der Watt asks whether the renowned opening to the Gospel of John – John 1:1 – might not be a riddle? To find an answer he investigates the complex grammatical structure of this verse. Jan du Rand discusses the message of 1 John in response to Judith Lieu's recent rhetorical analysis of the text. He proposes that a multi-dimensional approach be employed to identify the first readers of 1 John and to develop a more nuanced perspective on the message of 1 John.

The contributions of Francois Viljoen and Andries van Aarde focus on the Gospel of Matthew. Viljoen argues that the Gospel is undergirded by a conflict between Jesus and the Pharisees on the authoritative interpretation of the Torah. He argues that the author of Matthew presents Jesus, not the Pharisees, as the authoritative interpreter of the Torah. Van Aarde's contribution explains the literary-theoretical concept of *fictional encyclopedia* and applies this intertextual approach to various aspects of studies on the Gospel of Mathew.

Two contributions are historical in nature. John Fitzgerald focuses on the writings of the second century philosopher and doctor Galen, and the importance of his work for New Testament

Studies. Galen's approach to 'grief' from both a philosophical and medical point of view gives, according to Fitzgerald, important context to New Testament pronouncements on lypē. Marius Nel and Fika Janse van Rensburg present an historical perspective on the long and arduous road to the theological training of pastors of the Apostolic Faith Mission in South Africa.

The last three contributions provide more comprehensive theological reflections. Hennie Goede discusses the New Testament view on relations between older and younger generations in the church. He concludes that a healthy relationship between the respective generations exists, according to the New Testament, in reciprocal respect, humility and a willingness to serve each other. Hans van Deventer provides a critical perspective on the term *Scriptural criticism* which is widely used in the Reformed fraternity. He questions the scientific accuracy of the term and proposes that reformed theologians rethink their use of this term. Koos Vorster concludes the collection of essays by providing a theological-ethical perspective on the Roman-Catholic notion of the 'common good'. He indicates how a Reformed understanding of natural law can give new meaning to this concept and how this concept can be utilised by churches to undertake social action in partnership with civil society.

The enthusiasm that the various writers displayed in contributing to this volume indicates their respect for Fika Janse van Rensburg. With this collection we recognise Fika Janse van Rensburg as friend and colleague, as well as his contribution to reformed theology, New Testament research, tertiary theological education, the NWU, and the South African higher education sector. May his legacy endure for a long time!