



Gert Breed Festschrift Foreword



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Gert Breed, esteemed and beloved colleague, retired December 2020. Although he fulfilled various functions throughout his career, and although he will be remembered for a variety of reasons by different people, what stands out at the end of his academic career is the seemingly perfect harmony he achieved between his quest for in-depth academic research and his active involvement in the church and community.

Before his full-time academic career, Gert served as minister of four Reformed Churches from 1981 to 2010. In 2011 he was called to the Theological School Potchefstroom to serve as Professor of the Reformed Churches, specialising in Practical Theology. Gert used his three decades of experience to great effect by designing innovative new courses in Catechetics and Pastoral Counselling (among others, based on the counselling model he developed), and researching topics related to counselling, child and youth ministry, child evangelisation, small group ministry and congregational ministry plans. The results of his research can be found in the 24 scholarly articles, 8 chapters and 3 books (editor of 2) he wrote, as well as the theses and dissertations of the 13 masters and 12 PhD students he guided as supervisor. During this time, Gert also served in various managerial roles, ending as both the Rector of the Theological School Potchefstroom and the Director of the School of Christian Ministry and Leadership of the Faculty of Theology of the North-West University. Despite all his prolific academic outputs and managerial responsibilities, Gert continued to be actively involved in the ministry of his local congregation and the broader church by preaching, teaching, advising and planning. Reading through his impressive CV, one is amazed by all the projects he was simultaneously involved in for the sake of the church.

In honour of Gert, we invited some of his colleagues, former students, fellow ministers and friends to contribute to this Festschrift. The invitation was short and sweet, and the positive response overwhelming. The way in which contributors responded to the invitation, says a lot about the person this volume is dedicated to.

Contributors were invited to link on to Gert's field of research in some way. In the end 14 articles were accepted and published after peer review. Although these articles cover a wide variety of topics, they can be grouped together under the following five headings.

Gert Breed's pastoral model

Rineé Pretorius reflects on Gert Breed's biblical pastoral model by exploring and describing his understanding of a biblical pastoral model. This she does by describing the departure points of Breed's understanding of a biblical pastoral model, the theoretical framework of the pastorate, the role of prayer and the Bible in the pastoral process, and the pastoral process of Breed's understanding of a biblical model for pastoral counselling. She finds that Breed's understanding of a biblical model for the pastorate is particularly useful in the training of ministers and counsellors for the pastorate in the Reformed tradition.

Douw Breed too investigates the biblical pastoral model developed by his brother Gert Breed. By indicating the fact that elements of Gert Breed's pastoral model are included in the research of other scholars, but that he himself has not yet published a complete description of his model, the table is set for the current investigation, that is to provide the pastoral model with a biblical foundation, specifically from 2 Peter 1:3–11. By exegeting 2 Peter 1:3–11 according to the grammatical-historical model, Douw Breed finds that seven important elements of Gert Breed's model can be Scripturally grounded in 2 Peter 1:3–11, thus increasing the usefulness of the model.

Ministers and ministry

Gerhard Niemann provides an overview of the distribution of personality types among pastors in the Reformed Churches in South Africa (RCSA), aiming to identify the degree to which some pastors in the RCSA's personal tendencies influence their ministerial work, and the likelihood

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of leaving the ministry. His study reveals significant results in a group of pastors posing as possible risk for leaving the ministry, as well as a group of pastors that will function optimally within the RCSA. Interestingly, his study finds that the Phlegmatic personality type has the largest representation among ministers in the RCSA, while the Sanguine and Melancholic personality types have the lowest representations.

In a stimulating article, Jan-Albert van den Berg provides critical-evaluative auto-ethnographic reflections on the recording and conducting of a digital (YouTube) worship service in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic. He sensitively considers, from a practical theology perspective, the possible significance of perspectives for future worship practices of communities of faith.

Forgiveness and reconciliation

Strikingly, three articles were submitted that tackles the ever-important topics of forgiveness and reconciliation.

Contributing to the academic discourse of processing forgiveness, Daniël Louw argues that reconciliation is not an instant event, but a process. Forgiveness starts with self-acknowledgement and should manifest in modes of compassionate being-with and diaconal acts of reaching out, creating spaces of 'mystical encounters'. Louw argues that the notion of 'anagnorisis', as captured by narrating the encounter between Joseph and his brothers, should be read as an exemplification of reconciliation, directed by the *missio Dei*, *promissio Dei* and *passio Dei*.

Indicating that overwhelming feelings of resentment and revenge by individuals in emotionally wounded and traumatised communities inflicted by injustice, violence and oppressive systems, often become a way of life, and people seldom deal with forgiveness in their healing process, Rudy Denton explores a process of spiritual healing and life fulfilment that relates to a forgiveness process. This process includes *koinonia* and *diakonia* as indispensable elements on the road to reconstructing communities and individuals following conflict and violence.

Eugene Baron and Rantsoa Letšosa discuss the role that liturgy could play as an anti-racist praxis. By defining liturgy in a broad sense, not only to refer to the liturgical elements of a worship service but also to the liturgy of life, they argue that liturgy within the church service context, but especially with what happens outside in life, can play a crucial role in helping Christians to become anti-racist. The article provides a discourse analysis on the journey of two reformed denominations, on how they could, through the liturgy of life, establish an anti-racist praxis.

Peace

Two articles address the quest for peace.

Chris van der Walt posits that in theology the general perception exists that peace entails the absence of war and strife. He argues that when such a perception is measured against what the prophets Isaiah and Micah teach about it, a different reality is sketched. He investigates the concept of peace in Isaiah and Micah, by firstly describing the 'loss of peace' in these two books, and proceeds by showing how peace was returned. He observes that Isaiah and Micah do not describe peace in terms of the absence of a modality such as war, but in terms of relationships. Peace emanates from a relationship that begins with God and which is then lived in a relationship with fellow humans.

Francois Viljoen also deals with the pursuit of peace. He postulates that a country such as South Africa, burdened by violence and intolerance where many citizens claim to be Christians, a call to a Christian ethics of peacemaking is appropriate. He explores the instruction of the Matthean Jesus, that his followers should be peacemakers amidst an intolerant society. The point of departure is taken from the seventh beatitude, 'blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called sons of God' (Mt 5:9), and proceeds by following the motif of peacemaking through in the rest of the Sermon on the Mount and then contextualises it within the broader Matthean narrative. Based on this investigation, the article offers pastoral guidelines on how Christians should conduct themselves within a violent and intolerant environment.

Pastoral and apologetical issues and developments

Five articles deal with pastoral and apologetic issues and developments.

Albert Coetsee contributes to the arsenal of studies aimed at addressing the phenomena of the decline in church membership numbers in the Western church and dwindling faith commitment. This he does by presenting the solutions deduced from a single biblical book, namely the book of Hebrews. Coetsee argues that the book of Hebrews is one of the most fitting biblical books to shed light on how the phenomena can be addressed, as Hebrews was written to a church that experienced a decline in faith commitment. The article determines what solutions the writer of Hebrews proposes for addressing his addressees' dwindling in their faith commitment, and then reflects on how the writer's solutions can be applied in the 21st century church.

Amanda du Plessis deals with the changes in pastoral care and counselling and pastoral theology since the middle of the 20th century. She investigates important paradigm shifts during this period by attending to the development of practical (and the subdivision, pastoral) theology; current challenges facing pastoral theology; paradigmatic positions, scientific research markers and approaches, and different layers of meaning unique to pastoral theology; and to 'diakonia' with a religious consciousness of transformative

moral or ethical orientation. The article contributes to the epistemological dialogue of practical theology.

Steve le Roux and George Lotter aim to demonstrate how the utilising of spiritual coping strategies could help Christians to cope with stress from a faith perspective. Effective coping strategies were explored while the 'Believe-Belong-Behave' pastoral model was proposed. The authors suggest that this pastoral model demonstrates how faith in God could be used to cope with stress more effectively.

Fazel Freeks raises the concern that fathers find themselves increasingly in social crises, while being misrepresented in various studies. He argues that fathers were once considered as pillars of their families, but society at large has begun to grapple with father absence. This decline in active fatherhood, has caused numerous social problems. The article provides mentoring guidelines from a biblical perspective to minimise the effects of absent fathers and to restore relationships within broken families. Freeks argues that these guidelines

can be used to mentor fathers to become great assets to families and society.

Jonker Venter and Henk Stoker argue the need for apologetic equipment already in pre-school catechesis. Christian children are exposed not only to a Christian worldview, but also to other dominating worldviews. This exposure can have a negative effect on them. The Bible instructs believing parents to educate their children from an early age with the necessary foundational tools and resources. Venter and Stoker propose that sufficient apologetic and catechetical resources should therefore be provided to parents and educators of these children. These catechetical materials should guide young believers on how to defend themselves among other worldviews.

We wish Gert all the best with his retirement (although we doubt whether the true meaning of the word 'retire' exists in his vocabulary) and pray that the Lord keep on using him in his service for the sake of the church.