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Looking back on 2017, we are happy with what we as a faculty - supervisors, teaching staff, board members, administrative office, partner institutions and many many more people involved - have achieved. The Graduate School flourishes as never before thanks to the input of many. In this newsletter we will inform you about last year's rich harvest and many good things to come!

Dr Arie W Zwiep
 Director Graduate School



LAST YEAR'S RICH HARVEST ...

We are thankful for a rich harvest of doctoral dissertations and new Doctors! Last year, the following candidates received their PhD from our Faculty:

- (1) Z.J. King, *The Delay of the Parousia and Gentile Inclusion in the Synoptic Parables* (14-02-17);
- (2) P.L. Rouwendal, *Predestination and Preaching in Genevan Theology from Calvin to Pictet* (09-03-17);
- (3) P. Kromdijk, *Eenheid in Verscheidenheid: Doorbraak in de Nederlandse Hervormde Kerk en de samenleving tijdens het interbellum* (24-03-17);
- (4) S. Rachmadi, *Reformed Spirituality in Java: The Reformed Tradition and the Struggle of the GKJ to Actualize Its Reformed Spirituality in Indonesia* (27-03-17);
- (5) A.W. Balk-van Rossum, *De rol van godsbeelden in de levensverhalen van vrouwen met een*

- incestervaring* (27-03-17);
- [6] F. Celia, *Preaching the Gospel to the Hellenes: the Life and Works of Gregory the Wonder-worker* (29-03-17);
- [7] G.R. Dueck, *A Transformative Moment: Emerging Adult Faith Development in Conversation with the Theology of James E. Loder* (10-05-17);
- [8] B.L.F. Kamphuis, *Against All Authorities: The New Testament Conjectural Criticism of Jan Hendrik Holwerda (1805-1886)* (19-06-17);
- [9] M. Martinez Ortega, *Juan de Valdés (c. 1490-1541) in Light of his Religious Background* (05-09-17);
- [10] A.E. Dyck, *Praying Like the Catholics? Enriching Canadian Mennonite Brethren Spirituality through Spiritual Direction, Lectio Divina, and the Taizé Community* (05-09-17);
- [11] A.D. Barrett, *Interrupting the church's flow: Engaging Graham Ward and Romand Coles in a radically receptive political theology in the urban margins* (13-09-17);
- [12] R.G. Kuhn, *Bekennen und Verwerfen: Westphals Ringen um Luther und Melanchthon* (26-09-17);
- [13] H. van Tonder, *Recollection and Confession: The Heidelberg Catechism as a site of memory in the Dutch Reformed Church, 1862-1963* (04-10-17);
- [14] S.D. Renihan, *From Shadow to Substance: The Federal Theology of the English Particular Baptists (1642-1704)* (26-10-17);
- [15] B. Pfeifer, *School shootings: Existential concerns and implicit religion* (10-11-17);
- [16] R.S. Covolo, *Theology in an Age of Fashion: Reforming the Engagement* (15-11-17);
- [17] D. Furlong, *John the Evangelist: Revision and Reinterpretation in Early Christian Sources* (01-12-17).

NEW STUDENTS, NEW PARTNERS

In 2017, we welcomed 40 new PhD students from all over the world and a number of candidates preparing themselves for a PhD trajectory at our Faculty. We are especially proud of a group of seven PhD students from the [Ethiopian Graduate School of Theology](#) in Addis Abeba. Last October, Joke van Saane and Arie Zwiep visited EGST on the occasion of the official launching of the joined EGST-VU PhD programme. Further partnerships are currently further explored.



GRADUATE OFFICE

All the work we do cannot be done without the invaluable support of our Graduate Office. We are happy to inform you that, from February 1 onwards, *Eva van Urk* will be added to our team as assistant of the Graduate School. She will be charged with the daily affairs of the Graduate School and, for many of you, be the first point of contact. Needless to say we all very pleased to have her on our team. Welcome Eva !



“My name is Eva van Urk, and I’m very happy to support the Graduate School from the 1st of February onwards. In 2016, I obtained my master in Theology & Religious Studies at the Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam. Next to my new job, I have started a PhD study myself. I’m looking forward to get in touch with you and to assist you in all of your questions and practicalities!”

HORA FINITA

Some of you may have already noticed some pressure on our capacity to deal with the increasing number of PhD candidates that find their way to Amsterdam. In addition to the appointment of Eva van Urk, we are currently also exploring a new registration system that will enable us (and all parties involved in the PhD trajectory) to streamline the procedure on all levels, notably so from start to finish, and with many self-services. We will keep you informed!

NEW DOCTORATE REGULATIONS

As of February 1, the *ius promovendi* (the right to supervise PhD candidates) will be extended to associate professors (universitair hoofddocenten). So far, associate professors were *de facto* involved in supervising PhD candidates but under supervision of those with a full professor status. Associate professors given the *ius promovendi* by the faculty board will be able to supervise PhDs on their own. The doctorate regulations will be changed accordingly. Other changes in the doctorate regulations will be communicated later on.

DATES DOCTORATE BOARD (PROMOTION COMMITTEE)

Before a research proposal can be submitted to the Doctorate Board (promotiecommissie) for approval, it must have been presented to one of the faculty’s research groups. It is only then that your supervisor sends it to the Director of the Graduate School to have it discussed by the Doctorate Board. When the proposal is accepted, Form I must be filled in by the supervisor(s) and sent to the the office of the Graduate School (!). Form I secures registration in the beadle’s administration. Please note that we will strictly adhere to the following deadlines:

- Mon 19 Feb 2018 (Research Proposals must be turned in 5 Feb at the latest)
- Mon 19 Mar 2018 (Research Proposals must be turned in 5 Mar at the latest)
- Mon 16 Apr 2018 (Research Proposals must be turned in 2 Apr at the latest)
- Mon 14 May 2018 (Research Proposals must be turned in 30 Apr at the latest)
- Mon 11 Jun 2018 (Research Proposals must be turned in 28 May at the latest)

PHD ONLINE COURSES (LEON VAN DEN BROEKE)

Some PhD-students express their enthusiastic experiences about the new online courses. Of course, we also received other kinds of feedback. That is understandable, because we are in a process of learning when it comes to online modules and the new digital learning system Canvas.

A new system includes hiccups. Nonetheless, many PhD-students share their positive experiences with online modules. They found out that these courses help them to improve the quality of their research proposal, their research and the writing of their theses. Here's what one of the participants wrote: "Thank you so much for the nice and helpful guidance! Working together like this gave me much joy and pleasure. The professional and adequate guidance have helped me tremendously and made me cheerful" (Erik Hoogendoorn, PhD-student Research Design 2017-2018). Also, I (LvdB) see passion among teachers who prepare and/or offer an existing or new module.

- Online Course on Research Design (Leon van den Broeke and Katya Tolstaya)

On 1 February 2018 the course on *Research Design* (Academic Integrity, Methodology and Proposal Writing) will start again. An extra element will be added to the Academic Integrity part: Research Data Management. I am excited about including this in Research Design. It will help you to upgrade your data management.

- Online Course on Contemporary Islamic Theology (Nelly van Doorn)

We are happy to offer you two brand new courses. Professor Nelly van Doorn (USA) offers an interesting *online module on Islam*, starting in March 2018 (Period 4). You are kindly invited to take her course. She is a great example of the fact not only PhD-students live outside the Netherlands. That emphasizes the importance of Online Learning. If I were a PhD-student, I would very much like to take such courses. More information will follow soon.

- Online Course on Religions on the Move: Mindfulness and Global Buddhism (Henk Blezer)

Nowadays there is something truly international about Buddhism. It may in fact be one of the few common denominators within that notoriously vague and somewhat orientalist notion "Asia", which is and always has been of tremendous importance and impact on the global arena. Buddhism has spread beyond Asia, through popular culture (Richard Gere), invading the privacy of our homes (Buddha statues) and even the privacy of our very minds (mindfulness). This course, starting in April 2018 (period 5), addresses the question what happens when a 'religion', such as Buddhism, 'spreads' and becomes an international force; how does it spread and what are the underlying culture dynamics (also in terms of social, economic and political forces); and what local responses are provoked? Are transferred religions faithfully replicated, or do they adapt to the logic of the receiving culture, and if so can we still consider them a religion and what does it tell us about that receiving culture? In this case study of Global Buddhism we explore the latter avenue, by way of working hypothesis, and try to relate this to the theoretical framings needed for other case studies.

While we shall strive to find focus in our seminar by asking what can we learn from the case of 'Global Buddhism', this course is open to inquiry and essays on all pertinent case studies: from Roman Catholicism, Evangelical Christianity, Islam, Wicca, the practice of (pregnancy) yoga, to the global aspirations of militant Mujahidin.

For more information, please contact us. You can register for these and other courses by sending an email to onlinecourses.grad.school.the@vu.nl. In short: I cordially welcome you at the (online modules of) the Graduate School of Theology!

(Leon van den Broeke)

ACRH SEMINARS OPEN TO OUR PHD STUDENTS

Prof. Fred van Lieburg of the *Amsterdam Centre for Religious History* (Faculty of Humanities) invites our PhD students to participate in their seminars. See this [link](https://www.acrh.eu/events/all-events/acrh-seminar-ab-de-jong-towards-general-history-religion) (https://www.acrh.eu/events/all-events/acrh-seminar-ab-de-jong-towards-general-history-religion) for further details on a seminar by Prof Ab de Jong ('Is een algemene godsdienstgeschiedenis mogelijk?') on 6 February 2018. PhD students may earn credits for their training plans. We intend to broaden the cooperation with ACRH in the future. We will keep you informed.

NEWS FROM IBTSC AMSTERDAM

IBTSC is the abbreviation for the International Baptist Theological Study Centre Amsterdam, located at Postjesweg 150 in the Nieuw West area of the city. Formed in 1949 in Switzerland, it relocated to Prague in 1996 as the International Baptist Theological Seminary (IBTS). In 2013, it became a Collaborative Centre within the Faculty of Theology of the Vrije Universiteit, intending to focus on research and PhD studies. In 2014 it was reconstituted as IBTSC and relocated to the Netherlands. IBTSC currently has 26 PhD students registered in the Graduate School with another 11 students at various stages in the IBTSC Pre-Registration Programme. A further 8 students have successfully defended their dissertations at the VU since 2014.

■ IBTSC Annual International Colloquium January 2018

At this moment (from Monday 22 to Wednesday 31 January), the IBTSC colloquium brings together IBTSC research students from around the world with IBTSC and VU supervisors for eight days of student presentations, seminars and meetings. The programme for the colloquium can be found at www.ibts.eu/research/colloquium. Included in the programme are seminars with: Dr Mike Pears on 'Ethnographic research in a theological context'; Helen Pears on 'Academic writing when English is not your first language' and Prof. Paul Fleming (Southampton) on 'Qualitative and quantitative research methods'. Although the colloquium is almost over by now, faculty staff and students are welcome to visit but please email the administrator Marianne van Zwieten (administrator@ibts.eu) and let her know of your intention to visit (either this time or in the future).

■ IBTSC Writing Academic English Course

[a reminder] As part of the IBTSC colloquium, on Wednesday 31 January IBTSC will be running a one day course on Writing Academic English. Completion of the course and assignments is worth 3 ECs towards the 30 EC required for the Graduate School. As well as IBTSC students, a further 12 students from the faculty have signed up for the course. Details of the course are posted at www.ibts.eu/research/colloquium on the IBTSC website.

(VU - HRM) TRAINING PHD SUCCESS AND PERSONAL EFFICACY

We (VU Hrm) would like to bring the training PhD success and personal efficacy to your attention. This training is organized by the division Human Resources, Health, Safety and Environment for VU University PhD candidates with three months to one year experience. The training will be given in English and will take place five times in 2018, three times in the period January-June and twice in the period September-December. The training will take place within a period of approx. 6 weeks and consists of three modules of two days each. Intake interviews will be held with all participants in order to match their issues to the content of the training.

The training covers the following themes: (1) Time and project management, (2) Communicating convincingly with others, and (3) presenting to different types of audiences

This intensive training is largely based on practical exercises. Participants will learn by completing assignments and by applying what they have learned to their own work situation. Attention is paid to personal learning goals and the PhD candidates will receive personal feedback on the exercises.

Small assignments will be given so the participants can apply what they learn. For participation, the PhD candidates will be credited 2 erts. For (employed) PhD candidates at VU University, the training is free of charge (except for travel and parking expenses). External PhD candidates can, for a fee, participate in the training. To give you an indication, in 2017 this fee was € 1.750. In the coming weeks, we will determine the fee for 2018. We will offer a maximum of 2 places to external PhD candidates.

Four weeks before the start of the training, they will be informed of their possible placement in the training. PhD candidates can express their interest in the training by sending an email to HR Training Programmes. They will then receive more information about the training and the method of registration. Should you have further questions about this training, please do not hesitate to contact the organizers.

MEMBERSHIP FEES – A REMINDER

A gentle reminder! Please note that as from 1 September 2018 *all registered PhD students will have to pay the yearly membership fee*, including candidates who started before 1 April 2015. This, to be sure, has been communicated in an email d.d. 14 July 2016 and can be found also on our website. But if - despite all our efforts to reach you - you missed this email-communication for some reason, please let us know.

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