



UNIVERSITEIT VAN PRETORIA
UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA
YUNIBESITHI YA PRETORIA

08 December 2023

NEWS RELEASE

Celebrations as UP Theology and Religion graduates head for careers in theological education and Christian ministry



Dean of the Faculty of Theology and Religion, Prof Rantsoa Letšosa, surrounded by Divinity graduates

PRETORIA - In a remarkable testament to the calibre of graduates from the University of Pretoria (UP) Faculty of Theology and Religion, at least 16 people are set to take up esteemed roles as pastors, theologians, chaplains, counsellors and community activists after receiving their degrees during a festive graduation ceremony held recently at the Aula Theatre on UP's Hatfield Campus.

Dr André Ungerer, Head of the Reformed Theology College (RTC) in the Faculty, responsible for church-specific education of students of the Nederduitsch Hervormde Kerk van Afrika (NHKA), and Dr Kobus Myburgh, head of training for the Dutch Reformed Church, said the graduates will make a profound impact as they begin their season of service.

What sets the UP Bachelor and Master of Divinity students at UP apart is their study of Greek and Hebrew for the first two years of the Bachelor programme. Many of them are also affiliated with one of the church partner

traditions, namely the Dutch Reformed Church and the Netherdutch Reformed Church. The recent graduates' formation and training experiences were led by Dr Ungerer and Dr Myburgh.

"It is always heart-warming to see our students completing their studies," Dr Ungerer said. "We met them as first-year students, each still a bit uncertain about what lies ahead, and as the years passed, they all developed into mature and knowledgeable students. For them, this degree is a pathway, a necessary milestone to the career they dreamt about – more so because God planted the dream in their hearts.

"To the new crop of students coming to enrol for this degree in 2024: we look forward to meeting all of you. You are here at the Faculty of Theology because each of you received a calling from God. Honour that calling by working hard to prepare yourself in the best way possible. This country needs well-prepared pastors to fulfil their duty as spiritual leaders in every sphere of life."

The Faculty's academic programmes provide theological training and formation aimed at the needs of churches. It is comprised of a general theological aspect and a specific denominational aspect, and its structure is determined by a balance between the critical reading of texts that are part of the Christian canon as well as related literature, historical and systematic theology, and the applied dimensions of theology.

"To my mind, studying Theology is one of the most psychologically and spiritually challenging things an individual can do," Dr Myburgh said. "You have made it thus far, and this degree sets you on a way to serving God and society in a very unique way. There are not many people that choose this path, and even less that finish it successfully. You are one of the few. Congratulations. This degree makes you one of the few people that are able to study the Old and New Testaments in the original languages. You have also learnt how to approach the plight of individuals that are in need of spiritual guidance. You have been equipped to initiate and be part of positive change in society."

Professor Themba Mosia, Interim Vice-Chancellor and Principal of UP, said he was proud that the University celebrates academic achievements across various disciplines and that a spotlight has been cast on the exceptional graduates who have chosen a spiritual vocation and successfully navigated their academic pursuits at UP.

"We are immensely proud of these graduates who have chosen this path, because it speaks of the diverse aspirations and callings that our University nurtures," Prof Mosia said. "These individuals are not only equipped with academic excellence but also bring a profound sense of purpose to their chosen vocation. Their decisions reflect a deep commitment to spiritual and community service. This is truly what we mean when we say we strive to nurture well-rounded individuals who not only excel in their academic pursuits but are also committed to making meaningful contributions to society."

--- End ---

Media enquiries can be directed to Mr Sashlin Girraj - Public Relations & Events Manager

Email: sashlin.girraj@up.ac.za | Cell: +27(0)72 447 3784

ABOUT THE UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA

The University of Pretoria (UP) is one of the largest contact and residential universities in South Africa, with its administration offices located on its Hatfield Campus in Pretoria. This 115-year-old institution is also one of the largest producers of research in South Africa.

Spread over seven campuses, it has nine faculties and a business school, the Gordon Institute of Business Science (GIBS). It is the only university in the country with a Faculty of Veterinary Science, which is ranked the best in Africa. UP has 120 academic departments and 92 centres and institutes, accommodating more than 56 000 students and offering about 1 100 study programmes. It has the most academic staff with PhDs (70%), NRF-rated researchers (613).

The 2023 QS World University Rankings by Subject ranked UP first in South Africa in Accounting and Finance, Law, Economics and Econometrics, Mechanical Engineering, Electrical and Electronic Engineering, Chemical Engineering, Mathematics, and Veterinary Science.

For more information, please go to www.up.ac.za
