

ProPsalm (Project Psalms) Seminar

Background

The University of Pretoria maintains a strong exegetical tradition with, *inter alia*, emphasis on the Psalms. Gratitude for this has to be served on the late Willem Prinsloo, for his efforts to promote the study of the Psalms in South Africa.

During 2003 a project was initiated at UP to internationalise and contextualise the study of the Psalms by means of a seminar. In view of various international cooperation relationships between the University of Pretoria and other international theological institutions this project was seen as a means to contribute to the local and international theological debate. Another aim of the seminar is to develop the debate into discussions between Old Testament and various other disciplines of theology and religion. Furthermore, an important vision of the ProPsalm Seminar is to involve international Old Testament specialists in the project.

One of the intentions of the ProPsalm Seminar is not only to involve European and Western oriented theological paradigms, but also to include African voices and paradigms. The theological encounter between Africa and Europe (Western) on the Psalms is an attempt to create understanding amongst the different streams of theological ideologies. Africa needs this and Europe (Western theologies) could benefit from this.

The ProPent and ProPsalms Seminars grew in stature and number during the past few years. These projects of the Department of Old Testament Studies at UP became part of the national Old Testament Society of South Africa (OTSSA) as a project of the subgroup for poetic studies.

During the past few years, in cooperation with the ProPent (Project Pentateuch) Seminar, these seminars have taken place in the second part of August. ProPsalm is a two-day seminar. Three meetings have already taken place, with a stronger international and local (national) presence every year. Students were also allowed to attend as silent participants. To build

this enthusiasm it is imperative that presentations should be published internationally.

A seminar volume, *Psalms and Liturgy*, appeared in 2004 at T & T Clark (JSOT SS). A similar volume of the ProPent Seminar appeared in 2005 at Litverlag (ATM series) with the title *A Critical Study of the Pentateuch. An Encounter between Europe and Africa*. In 2007 a following volume, entitled *Psalms and Mythology* (LHBOTS, 462 – formerly JSOT SS) appeared at T & T Clark. *Psalms and Hebrews: Studies in Reception* (LHBOTS, 527 – formerly JSOT SS at T & T Clark) appeared in 2010, while the next volume is in preparation, namely *Psalmody and Poetry in Old Testament Ethics*. More volumes are envisioned and planned for the project in the next few years.

Psalmody and Suffering (25 - 26 August 2011)

On the 25 and 26 August 2011 the 8th international ProPsalm Seminar will take place in the Faculty of Theology at the University of Pretoria. The theme of the meeting is **Psalmody and Suffering**. This programme will focus primarily on Psalms and psalmody texts of lament.

Twenty national and international scholars will participate in the programme (consult programme). This includes subject specialists from Germany, Austria, Belgium, the United Kingdom, Nigeria, Zimbabwe and South Africa.

Participants include scholars from Old Testament Studies, New Testament Studies, Systematic Theology, Practical Theology and Ancient Languages. Prof Sue Gillingham (Oxford, UK) and Eckart Otto (Münich, Germany) will deliver specialist lectures, while other international scholars such as Prof Simone Paganini (Innsbruck, Austria), Dr Dominik Markl (Univ of London, UK), Dr Raik Heckl and Jan Dietrich (Leipzig, Germany), and Dr Emmanuel Usue (Nigeria) will also contribute to the Seminar's international character.



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Programme

ProPsalm Seminar • Theme: Psalmody and Suffering
Dates: 25 and 26 August 2011 • Venue: Theology Building 2-10, University of Pretoria

Thursday 25 August

Chair: Pieter Venter (UP)

- 08:00 - 08:30 Registration
08:30 - 08:45 Opening and Welcome
08:45 - 09:30 *Suffering and vengeance in the Psalms*
– **Herrie van Rooy** (NWU)
09:30 - 10:10 *Suffering as separation: towards a spatial interpretation of suffering in Psalm 11*
– **Gert Prinsloo** (UP).
10:10 - 10:50 *Pride and the Suffering of the Poor in the Persian Period: Psalm 12 in its Post - Exilic Context*
– **Phil Botha** (UP)
10:50 - 11:15 Tea / Coffee
11:15 - 12:15 *Suffering Moses in the Pentateuch and the Psalms* – **Eckart Otto** (LMU München)
12:15 - 13:00 *The righteous suffering servant in the Psalms*
– **Simone Paganini** (Univ of Innsbruck, Austria)
13:00 - 14:00 Lunch

Chair: Jurie le Roux (UP)

- 14:00 - 15:30 1. *Suffering and Accusation: New Observations on the Structure and Message of the Song of Moses (Deut 32)*
– **Dominik Markl** (Univ of London, UK)
2. *The background of the Song of Heshbon (Num 21:27 - 30) and its place in the ancient Literature of Israel*
– **Raik Heckl** (Univ Leipzig, Germany)
15:30 - 16:00 Tea / Coffee
16:00 - 16:30 *What's it like to be a god? A philosophical clarification of divine suffering in the Psalter*
– **Jaco Gericke** (NWU)
16:30 - 17:00 *When God is to blame – Suffering in Psalm 44*
– **Leonard Mare** (NWU)
17:00 - 17:40 *The suffering of creation within Gods good creation: an unfinished systematic - theological perspective on evolutionary theodicy*
– **Danie Veldsman** (UP)
17:45 Closing

Friday 26 August

Chair: Pieter Venter (UP)

- 08:15 - 09:00 *Biblical Spirituality, the Psalms, and identification with the suffering of the poor: a contribution to the recent discussion on Psalm 109* – **Christo Lombaard** (Unisa).
09:00 - 09:45 *The Problem of Individuality in the Bible and the ANE. With reflections to wisdom texts and Psalm 36*
– **Jan Diedrich** (Univ Leipzig, Germany)
09:45 - 11:00 *From Conflict to Convergence. The Reception of Psalm 137 in Jewish and Christian Tradition*
– **Susan Gillingham** (Univ of Oxford, UK)
11:00 - 11:30 Tea / Coffee
11:30 - 12:10 *Using the Palms of Suffering in teaching and doing Narrative Therapy*
– **Christina Landman** (Unisa).
12:10 - 12:40 *Reading Psalm 13 as a strategy for the cathartic release of negative emotion*
– **Sam Ndogo** (Baptist College, Johannesburg)
12:40 - 13:10 *'Oh, that I had wings of a dove...' Psalm 55 and breaking the silence about sexual abuse* – **Francis Klopper** (Unisa / UFS)
13:10 - 14:00 Lunch
Chair: Dirk Human (UP)
14:00 - 14:30 *Psalms and suffering in the book of Daniel*
– **Hans van Deventer** (NWU)
14:30 - 15:00 *Psalm 73: Coping with intellectual suffering*
– **Sakkie Spangenberg** (Unisa)
15:00 - 15:30 *Peace and hostility dwelling under one canopy in Psalm 120: A Christian experience of 'Boko Haram' in Nigeria* – **Emmanuel Usue** (Benue State Univ, Nigeria)
15:30 - 16:10 *Domesticating Suffering in North Africa: Augustine and the Preaching of the Psalms on the Feast Days of the Martyrs*
– **Chris de Wet** (Unisa)
16:10 - 16:45 *The Lord is my shepherd in suffering*
– **Cas Vos** (UP)
16h45 Closing



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