

Tuesday, 5 May 2015

University of Pretoria honours two prominent South African clerics

Two of South Africa's prominent clerics, Archbishop Dr Thabo Cecil Makgoba and Reverend Frederik (Freek) Swanepoel, were awarded the Chancellor's Medal at the University of Pretoria's Autumn Graduations in recognition of their contribution towards peace and reconciliation in South Africa.

The Dean of the Faculty of Theology, Prof Johan Buitendag, said the award of the Chancellor's Medal by his faculty is the start of a build-up to the centenary celebrations by the Faculty of Theology to be held in 2017. The Faculty of Theology, founded in 1917, was the first theology faculty in the country.

Prof Buitendag said the centenary celebrations will not focus on the faculty's history, but rather on its future and the challenges it will face the next hundred years. He also emphasised the role that the Faculty of Theology has played as regards inclusivity and diversity in the country. "We see a wonderful opportunity to re-affirm our current orientation [towards] ... inclusivity and diversity, undergirded by proven academic excellence, in the conferment of honorary degrees to very carefully selected people over the next three years," he said.

The Most Reverend Dr Thabo Cecil Makgoba has served as Archbishop of Cape Town since 2008. He is the youngest bishop in Southern Africa ever to be elected to this office and has contributed immensely to South African society as the leader of the Anglican Church, but also as an academic.

He holds a BSc, a BA in Applied Psychology (Honours) and an MEd (Educational Psychology) from the University of the Witwatersrand. He lectured at this university and was Dean of Knockando Residence at Wits College of Education (formerly Johannesburg College of Education – JCE), and a senior lecturer.

In February 2012 he was inaugurated as Chancellor of the University of the Western Cape.

Dr Makgoba was awarded honorary degrees by the General Theological Seminary (of the Episcopal Church) in New York City in 2009 and by the Huron University College, London, Ontario in 2013.

Reverend Frederik (Freek) Swanepoel completed his theological studies at the University of Pretoria and served in several synodical commissions, often as chairman, and was chairman of the Board of Curators for the theological training of the Dutch Reformed Church at the University of Pretoria.

The General Synod of 1994, known as the "Synod of Reconciliation", took great strides forward under his chairmanship. It was the first (and, to date, the only) synod of the Dutch Reformed Church that was addressed by a serving state and government executive, former president Nelson Mandela.

Rev Swanepoel appeared before the Truth and Reconciliation Commission to convey the confession of the Dutch Reformed Church regarding apartheid. During his term of office, the Dutch Reformed Church also took the first steps towards again becoming a member of the South African Council of Churches.

- *Department of University Relations (University of Pretoria)*

Posted by [Thabo Makgoba](#) at 19:37

