

Theology

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Foreword

With some pride I like to present this report on Theology as one of the first results of the second research quality assessment programme. This programme is carried out during the period 1998-2003.

The Review Committee for Theology has fulfilled its extensive tasks with great dedication. Fifty research programmes from ten universities were evaluated in a thorough and careful manner. I expect research directors, faculty boards, and research policymakers in the field of Theology will take the judgements and recommendations into careful consideration.

I thank the Chairman and Members of the Review Committee for Theology for their willingness to participate in this assessment and for the dedication with which they carried out this task. I thank all deans of faculties and programme directors involved for their carefully prepared documentation and for their co-operation during the assessments.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Rien Meijerink', written in a cursive style.

Rien Meijerink,
President of the Association of Universities in the Netherlands

Preface

On behalf of the International Committee for the Assessment of Theological Research in The Netherlands, I would like to express our heartfelt gratitude and deep appreciation for the honour of having been called upon by the Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences (KNAW) and the Association of Universities in The Netherlands (VSNU) to take up this very rewarding task. This important task, although daunting at first, proved to be an enriching - even exciting - experience as we immersed ourselves over many months in the large amount of materials that have grown out of the undisputably high-energy research going on in theological studies in The Netherlands.

The conclusion of this report now gives this Committee the opportunity to share publicly with our hosts, the VSNU and the KNAW, and especially with our Dutch colleagues and peers, our evaluation of the quality, the status, and the impact of the theological research carried out from 1994 to 1998 in The Netherlands. This Committee consistently endeavoured to set the highest possible standards for itself with regard to fairness and credibility, and for assessing the qualitative and quantitative dimensions of the important body of work that we were asked to read and report on.

I want to thank the Deans of the Faculties and all the programme leaders for their very impressive co-operation in supplying our Committee with material generally so well organized and carefully presented that it greatly enhanced our procedures during the different times that we met to evaluate this material. I would personally also like to thank my Committee: not just for their outstanding work and their shared expertise, but also for creating a vibrant atmosphere of collegiality and co-operation that surely can not be replicated easily. It was a great privilege to work with such a team of undisputable professionals and experts.

Finally, a very special word of thanks must go to the secretary of the Committee, Mr. Harry Lutikholt. In the very best sense of the word he became the organizational and inspirational focus of the ongoing work of the Committee, and we thank him for his professionalism, competence, and the kind of high level expertise without which the completion of this report would not have been possible.

J. Wentzel van Huyssteen

*James I. McCord Professor of Theology and Science, Princeton Theological Seminary, and
Chair of the International Committee for the Assessment of Theological Research in The Netherlands.*

1 Introduction

1.1 The Dutch System for Quality Assessment of Research

The quality assessment of research of Theology is part of the assessment system for all Dutch university research, under the aegis of the Association of Universities in the Netherlands (VSNU). The system started in 1993, with trial-assessments by four international committees in four very different disciplines: biology, historical and archaeological studies, mechanical engineering and psychology. The Dutch universities to enhance the system, whose general principles and procedures were described in the 1994 Protocol for the Quality Assessment of Research, have used the observations of these committees. From 1993 until 1997 all university research, per discipline or scientific area, was assessed by means of peer review (international committees of experts within a certain discipline) according to this protocol. In 1997, when nearly all areas had been assessed, the VSNU Committee on the Future of Quality Assessment evaluated the system. As a result of this Committee's advice the VSNU Board decided to have the first round of VSNU research quality assessment followed by another round. Again the general principles and procedures, with a number of changes in comparison with the first round, were described in a protocol (*Protocol 1998*).

The assessment of research in Theology, which is described in this report, is one of the first assessments carried out according to the new protocol. The most important changes are:

- a greater emphasis on the context-specific aspects of research programmes and faculty or institute missions;
- a more precise application of the criteria academic quality, productivity, relevance, and viability in the light of the mission of a group, faculty or institute;
- the use of nomenclature and definitions according to the VSNU brochure *Definitie-afspraken wetenschappelijk onderzoek* (VSNU, 1994).

As in the first round, the most important functions still are quality assurance (improvement of university research quality as a result of self-regulation within universities, faculties or research institutes), accountability and the collection of information that can be considered relevant to third parties.

The aims of the assessment system are:

- assessment of the quality of research programmes (groups) on the basis of self-evaluations and appraisal of how the work is related to the group's mission, as well as to the mission of the faculty or the institute of which the group's programme is a part;
- evaluation of the mission of faculties or institutes, as well as the group's own mission;
- appraisal of the state-of-the-art in the discipline or academic area concerned.

This means that the assessment takes place at the aggregate level of research programmes. Faculties or research institutes submit a description of the results that have been achieved in each research programme during the previous five years (including quantitative data about staff input, five key publications and a list of publications), a short outline of the 'mission' statement of every programme, and developments anticipated in the context of the research profile of the faculty or institute. The mission statement has to contain elements such as: the scope of the research, the nature of the research in terms of pure versus applied, the general approach of the research in terms of unidisciplinary, multidisciplinary or interdisciplinary, and the principal source of inspiration (curiosity-driven or society-driven). It should also say something about goals

and objectives, give an indication of the local identity (e.g. its place in a research school), and a description of the relevance of the work to the different audiences. Highly valued features of the assessments are the interviews, which the review committee conducts with delegations of the faculty boards, the directors of the research institutes or research schools, and the programme directors. The interviews with the delegation of the faculty boards are especially aiming at a discussion of the faculty's research profile, being the result of a faculty's research policy.

1.2 The Review Committee for Theology

The Review Committee was appointed on 13 April, 1999 and consisted of

- Prof.dr. J. Wentzel van Huyssteen, Princeton Theological Seminary, Princeton, USA, Chairman;
- Prof.dr. Catharine Cornille, Faculty of Theology, Catholic University of Leuven, Belgium;
- Prof.dr. Hans G. Kippenberg, Department of Theology, University of Bremen, FR of Germany;
- Prof.dr. Mathijs Lamberigts, Faculty of Theology, Catholic University of Leuven, Belgium;
- Prof.dr. George Newlands, Centre for the Study of Literature, Theology and the Arts, University of Glasgow, Scotland;
- Prof.dr. Hennie J.C. Pieterse, Faculty of Theology, University of South Africa, Pretoria;
- Prof.dr. J. Alberto Soggin, Emeritus professor Waldensian Theological Seminary and University of Rome (La Sapienza), Rome, Italy.
- Drs. Harry W. Luttikholt, VSNU, has been appointed as Secretary of the Review Committee.

A short curriculum vitae of the members is included in Appendix 4.

1.3 Scope of the Assessment

The Committee was asked to operate according to the earlier mentioned *Protocol 1998*. For the assessment of Theology, this protocol was elaborated in the *Discipline Protocol Theology*, prepared by the Discipline Committee Theology. In this discipline protocol (see Appendix 1) it is mentioned that the assessment covers the whole field of Theology and especially the following areas:

- Biblical Studies (Old Testament/Hebrew Bible, New Testament and Jewish Studies);
- History of Christianity;
- History of Religion and Comparative Studies of Religion;
- Systematic Theology (Philosophy of Religion, Ethics, Dogmatics, Missiology and Ecumenics);
- Sociology and Psychology of Religion, Religious Education and Practical Theology.

The Committee had in addition to pay special attention to the development in the interdisciplinary area and Feminist Studies in Theology.

The participating universities in the assessment were:

- Faculty of Theology, Leiden University (LEI);
- Faculty of Theology, Utrecht University (UU);
- Catholic Theological University Utrecht (KTU);
- Faculty of Theology and Religious Studies, University of Groningen (RUG);
- Department of Theology and Religious Studies, Faculty of Humanities, University of Amsterdam (UvA);
- Faculty of Theology, Free University, Amsterdam (VU);
- Faculty of Theology, Nijmegen University (KUN);
- Theological Faculty Tilburg (TFT);
- Theological University Kampen (THUK);
- Theological University Apeldoorn (TUA);
- Reformed Theological Academic Institute (HTWI).

The period of the assessment was taken from 1994-1998 .

1.4 Data provided to the Committee

The Review Committee has received the following documentation:

- a self-evaluation report of the participating faculties/universities, containing a research profile and the key-data of the faculty or institute concerned and documentation per programme, including 5 key publications per programme;
- additional information upon request.

1.5 Procedures followed by the Committee

The limitations and agreements in the discipline protocol restricted the review of the Committee to the research programmes of the participants mentioned before. These participants submitted a total of 50 programmes (see Appendix 3).

The Committee started its review by reading the self-evaluation reports of the faculties. For each research programme a first and second reviewer were selected. They were asked to read all information in detail and to assess the programmes with the help of a preliminary assessment form (see Appendix 2). The assessment forms were collected as input for a thorough discussion in the full Committee, in its first meeting on 1-3 September, 1999. During this first meeting consensus was reached on a first approximation of the scores and of the subjects that were relevant for each programme to be discussed during the interviews. On 4-7 October 1999 the Committee held a whole series of interviews with the Deans of Faculty and the programme directors of the 50 research programmes in addition to a meeting with the Board of the national Research School NOSTER. On 8 October 1999 the Committee formulated its final judgements. A draft report has been sent in November 1999 to the Committee members for their final observations. As foreseen in the Protocol a final draft has been sent in December 1999 to the faculties concerned for their final comments. Chairman and Secretary then finalized the report, which has been presented to the Chairman of the VSNU on 7 February 2000.

1.6 Aspects and Assessment Scale

The Review Committee was required to give judgements on four aspects: quality, productivity, relevance and viability. A five-point scale was used to give scores on the four criteria and an additional commentary was added for each

research programme. These commentaries are an integral part of the assessments. *Protocol 1998* allows the Review Committee considerable freedom to interpret the four aspects and the assessment scale in such a way that the assessments reflect what they see as important. Hereby the Committee has been taking into account the variety in the nature of the research programmes under scrutiny. In the case of this assessment, the criteria were interpreted in the manner as indicated below.

Scientific Quality

The scientific quality of a research group is based on:

- the contributions made to international scientific developments and the standing of scientific publications;
- innovation: the originality of approaches and ideas in tackling scientific problems;
- prominence: indicators of international recognition other than publications, like positions in international scientific networks and advisory appointments based on scientific reputation;
- the number of PhD's.

The ratings on the five-point scale for quality are defined as follows:

- Excellent (5):** The research group belongs to the international elite within its field of research. It works at the frontiers of international progress in its field and contributes effectively to that progress by means of substantial publications in highly rated scientific journals.
- Good (4):** The group meets the international standards in its field of research and it makes worthwhile and recognised contributions to the international research community.
- Satisfactory (3):** The group meets the international standards in its field of research at an acceptable level and its contributions to knowledge are of satisfactory quality.
- Unsatisfactory (2):** The group does not meet the international standards in its field; it needs some improvement to contribute significantly.
- Poor (1):** The group is far from meeting international standards of its field and has no influence upon its development. A reorientation is needed before the group can be expected to contribute.

Scientific Productivity

The scientific productivity of a research group is based on the following elements:

- its contribution to the international scientific literature by means of publications in international refereed journals and scientific books and chapters in books;
- its contribution to the national scientific literature by means of publication in national journals and books and chapters in books.

The Committee's assessments are based on a general impression of the production of each research group with reference to its size. The result therefore is a peer review about productivity, which reflects the Committee's perception of the productivity over the past five-year period. Taking into account the size of the group, the categories of the rating scale of scientific productivity are:

- Excellent (5)
- Good (4)

-
- Satisfactory (3)
 - Unsatisfactory (2)
 - Poor (1)

Relevance

The Review Committee has considered the following aspects as part of its integrated assessment of relevance:

- academic relevance;
- professional publications and applied relevance;
- societal relevance.

Taking into account the programme's mission, the categories of the rating scale of relevance are:

- Excellent (5)
- Good (4)
- Satisfactory (3)
- Unsatisfactory (2)
- Poor (1)

Viability

The following aspects are taken into account:

- past achievements of the group as an indication of likely future achievements;
- the group's ideas and plans for the future (scientific prospects);
- prospects of future funding of personnel and facilities;
- leadership of the group;
- the likely stability of the group;
- university, faculty, and departmental support for the group.

The categories of the rating scale of viability are:

- Excellent (5)
- Good (4)
- Satisfactory (3)
- Unsatisfactory (2)
- Poor (1)

1.7 Theology, General Introduction

To enable this Committee to arrive at a well-balanced, plausible and conscientious report of its activities, we had to take very seriously the general nature and recommendations of the previous report. *Vis-à-vis* this earlier report, then, we are encouraged to see a definite increase in the quality of research across the board. We trust this fact reflects the undisputable value of this remarkable evaluating process in generating and stimulating creative, new research.

It is clear that the highly developed programmatic structure of theological research in The Netherlands has fostered a context for interdisciplinary research that is quite remarkable. Many theologians also seem to be *au courant* with the very special challenges imposed by the rigid modernist demarcation of disciplinary boundaries, on the one hand, and the pluralist disintegration of disciplinary boundaries encouraged by extreme forms of postmodern thought, on the other. Such interdisciplinary awareness has to be applauded as theologians everywhere have to learn to cope with cross-contextual, trans-disciplinary and multi-cultural dialogue. That the challenge of inter-disciplinarity is already such a clear and well-stated focus of quite a number of faculties bodes well for a theology that wants to take its cultural and social context seriously.

At the same time, however, we have to caution against umbrella-like programmes, which are often created *a posteriori* and are clearly designed artificially for this evaluation process. We encourage integrated, multi-dimensional research programmes with clear academic foci, carefully formulated mission statements and epistemic goals. We also want to stress, however, that at the same time we think that the value of individual research – precisely within the context of these comprehensive research programmes – should be seriously protected and fostered. Some of the outstanding programmes that we evaluated this year have shown how successful creative, individual research can be fused with carefully planned interdisciplinary research programmes.

The Committee greatly appreciates the fact that so much theological research in the Netherlands shows undisputable progress towards genuine internationalization. Not only many prominent scholars, but also many research programmes have clear and well established international academic links. Wherever this was the case, the quality of research was clearly enhanced by creative, international feed-back, and many Dutch theologians gained increasing international prominence. The Committee welcomes this very significant step towards the enhancement of the quality of research through the internationalization of research and wants to encourage programme leaders and members to accelerate this process both in their research programmes and publications.

The Committee also welcomes the fact that most participating institutions are constructively engaged with the Research School NOSTER and we strongly urge the fostering of closer ties and meaningful links with this important research institution. The Research School NOSTER could also play an important role in facilitating more careful distinctions between academic and professional publications, possibly by developing a list of accredited journals that would not only guide researchers in planning their publications, but also greatly facilitate the work of future evaluating committees. We have indeed noticed a significant increase in the number of academic publications. However, since the Committee supports both the relevance of academic and professional publications, it was less than pleased with the fact that more

careful distinctions between academic and professional publications were not made, especially since professional publications are important for evaluating the theoretical and social relevance of research programmes. Therefore the Committee has taken the liberty to check the lists of publications on this point.

We are convinced that, in spite of much evidence of good intentions, there is still a great need to foster concrete theological and critical engagement with the specific social, political and interreligious issues of an increasingly pluralist Dutch society. Given the growing importance of the study of world religions, the Committee wants to express its concern with the disparate and *ad hoc* way in which research in religious studies is conducted at Dutch universities. Even if every faculty or university cannot cover every specialization within the area of religious studies, a stronger collaboration and more systematic division of labour might be fostered so as to develop a comprehensive research facility in the area of religious studies. This could be one of the specific tasks of the Research School NOSTER. The same is true for the area of Women's Studies, which under NOSTER could become a true inter-university research programme. In more general terms NOSTER could foster closer research co-operation between the research institutes of the participating faculties, especially to safeguard future PhD training and, even more important, the recruitment of qualified young researchers.

It is also rather significant that the current tensions in relations between universities, theological faculties, the churches, and the government, are nowhere really the subject of systematic research, and the Committee especially encourages greater attention to be paid to this specific issue in the contemporary Dutch context. The Committee also wants to caution against an overly introspective Eurocentrism, that certainly applies to all of us doing theology today. The Committee hopes, therefore, that theological research in the Netherlands might in the future also reflect more of an involvement with extra-European issues, and that faculties will also reflect this pluralization in their key appointments.

At the same time the Committee urges theologians in The Netherlands not to give up on mainstream theology, precisely as its radical embeddedness in pluralist contexts is creatively rediscovered. Of special concern here is the history of theology, and the Committee cautions institutions and researchers not to give up on a rich and strong tradition especially in the field of patristics, patrology, and medieval theology. Some Protestant programmes revealed an especially perceptible gap in these crucially important fields.

The Committee was especially impressed and encouraged by the continuingly strong tradition of research in Dutch philosophical theology, biblical studies and practical theology at several centres and institutions. It is regarded as highly desirable that the distinguished tradition of Dutch systematic theology should be maintained at a correspondingly high level.

2 Assessment per Faculty or Institute and per Programme

2.1 Leiden University, Faculty of Theology (LEI)

The Committee notes with appreciation the clear and well-established research profile of the Faculty of Theology at Leiden University. This research profile is based on a tradition of research in philological and historical study of texts and religious traditions – both Christian and non-Christian – and also on contemporary history and philosophy of religion, social sciences of religion, and theological issues.

There is much appreciation for the interdisciplinary research fostered by the Leiden Institute for the Study of Religions (LISOR), and for the international co-operation it opened up with research institutes and universities in other countries.

The Committee notes with appreciation that the participation by both senior and junior researchers of the Faculty in the activities of the Research School NOSTER, is already well-established.

The Committee assessed the following research programmes:

- LEI 01: Method and Theory in the Study of Religions
- LEI 02: The Hebrew Bible and its Ancient Versions
- LEI 03: Jewish and Christian Religious Traditions
- LEI 04: Formulation and Reformulation of Christian Traditions
- LEI 05: Religious Pluralism and Identity
- LEI 06: Ideas, Change and Truth
- LEI 07: Religion and Morals in Modern Society

University	LEI
Programme	Method and Theory in the Study of Religions
Programme director	Dr. J. Platvoet
Fte 1996	0.6
Assessment	Quality --
	Productivity --
	Relevance --
	Viability --

Programme description/key words:
Definition of religion

The research programme is in fact a project of limited time and scope. For that reason the Committee did not give any scores. The group addressed a crucial and pressing issue in comparative religion: competing definitions of religion. The common endeavor resulted in a publication of high relevance and quality in the comparative study of religions. The programme was discontinued in 1996. That decision should be reconsidered. It would be regrettable, if not seriously problematic if the methodological aspects of the study of religions would be neglected in a department focussing on world religions.

University	LEI
Programme	The Hebrew Bible and its Ancient Version
Programme director	Prof.dr. A. van der Kooij
Fte 1998	3.1
Assessment	Quality 4
	Productivity 4-5
	Relevance 5
	Viability 4

Programme description/key words:

Peshitta-edition, Concordance Peshitta, Septuagint, Hebrew Bible edition, exegesis, textual criticism, canonization, lectionary systems

A well reflected programme focussing on text tradition and formation of literature. The programme is ambitious and well-reflected. It attempts at covering the entire range of textual history of the bible: critical editions of the original text, translations and canonization. The idea to regard textual history as a particular branch of the history of theology appears particularly intriguing. The critical editions of ancient texts will have a lasting impact on scholarship.

The number of PhD-students is surprisingly low.

University	LEI
Programme	Jewish and Christian Religious Traditions
Programme director	Prof.dr. H.J. de Jonge
Fte 1998	2.3
Assessment	Quality 4
	Productivity 3
	Relevance 4-5
	Viability 4

Programme description/key words:

Antichrist; atonement; eschatological resurrection; Jesus Christ; Jewish writings; John's Gospel and Community; 'law' in Paul; Pauline letters; Philo of Alexandria; history of biblical interpretation

The Committee considers the quality of the academic publications of this programme as good. The group publishes in very good international series and journals, and several of them are also published in Leiden. It might be wise to offer academic publications to other internationally renowned journals. The fact that the members of the group regularly discuss each other's work seems to be very fruitful. However, given the broad fields of interest, the research staff of the programme is rather small. In order to strengthen the unity of the programme, it might be wise to reduce the fields of research a bit and to stimulate more reflection about a common approach. The Committee is of the opinion that such stronger focusing would better ensure the viability of the programme. On the other hand, the Committee appreciates that the group concentrates on themes which are extremely relevant for research in the field. Although the studies in the field of the history of humanism and renaissance are not fully integrated in the programme, they still are considered as of high value. In this regard, the Committee suggests collaboration with other programmes in the faculty (e.g. LEI 04) and abroad. Although several of the tenured programme members only recently joined the programme, the productivity is still evaluated as satisfactory.

University	LEI
Programme	Formulation and Reformulation of Christian Traditions
Programme director	Prof.dr. E.G.E. van der Wall
Fte 1998	2.7
Assessment	Quality 4
	Productivity 3-4
	Relevance 4
	Viability 4

Programme description/key words:

History of reception; edition of sources; confessionalization; protestantism; religious polemics; Enlightenment; religious pluralism; Remonstrantism; secularization; history of missions; ecumenics

The Committee appreciates the carefully articulated programme design, as well as the fact that the six sub-programmes are defined by the history of ideas in Christian doctrine formation, as well as by religious polemics. Although the Committee agrees that a research programme should never function as a strait jacket, the group should undertake more specific efforts to realize the goals of the mission statement by developing it around the specific theme of the research project. An even stronger focus on Christian unity and diversity in history, or in religious polemics in the context of pluralism in a multid denominational world, could further strengthen the overall goal of the programme.

University	LEI
Programme	Religious Pluralism and Identity
Programme director	Prof.dr. P.S. van Koningsveld
Fte 1998	3.1
Assessment	Quality 4-5
	Productivity 4
	Relevance 4
	Viability 3-4

Programme description/key words:

Islam; comparative religion; pluralism; polemics; interreligious relations

The programme consists of two previously independent research areas: one descriptive and historical, addressing Muslim-Christian interactions; the other theoretical and comparative. The Committee advises the board of the Faculty in continuing the twofold structure also after the retirement of one of the senior staff members.

Attention should be paid to the threat that the group is losing competence in theoretical and comparative issues. The topic of this programme is a crucial one in the contemporary pluralistic world. The research of the members of the programme reflects a very high productivity and quality and also a high social relevance. In the light of this, it is surprising that the number of PhD's is relatively low.

While the historical research of the programme is very strong, the theoretical questions raised within the programme description have hardly been developed in publications. Since these questions require a thorough interdisciplinary and comparative approach, contributions from specialists in religions other than Ancient, Christian and Muslim religions would be crucial.

University	LEI	
Programme	Ideas, Change and Truth	
Programme director	Prof.dr. H.J. Adriaanse	
Fte 1998	3.8	
Assessment	Quality	4
	Productivity	3
	Relevance	4
	Viability	3-4

Programme description/key words:

Barth; Habermas; Kierkegaard; religion and modernity; Schleiermacher; theory of religion; theory of theology; Troeltsch

This is a well designed programme, based on real co-operation in spite of a rather formal separation between the faculty staff itself and the church-related staff. This co-operation is realized very well by the former concentrating on philosophy of religion, and the latter on dogmatics and systematic theology.

Overall this is a highly relevant programme, both nationally and internationally, and it is clearly shaped by its original intention to bring philosophy of religion into some form of meaningful contact with systematic theology. The programme's mission, coherently developed around the crucial idea that religious ideas are not timeless entities but have their existence and identity in processes of emergence, decay, transformation and cross-contextual dialogue, results in a careful and well-articulated programme design, including both the fields of philosophy of religion and systematic theology. There is scope for programme enhancement in the area of Christian doctrine. The Committee welcomes the increasing emphasis on feminist theology.

University	LEI	
Programme	Religion and Morals in Modern Society	
Programme director	Dr. M.B. ter Borg	
Fte 1998	2.0	
Assessment	Quality	3
	Productivity	4
	Relevance	4
	Viability	3

Programme description/key words:

Religion; ultimate meaning; existential problems; charisma; power

This seems to be a promising programme but at the moment a lack of focus emerges that certainly needs to be remedied for future development. The original programme design is confusing in so far as the third part of the programme ('practical theology') is never developed and also not integrated with the rest of the programme. In addition the programme development seems to point to a future/new (and better integrated) programme that certainly seems to depart from the original programme design. As a result there is a lack of coherence which seems to be reflected in the fact that only two of the project members are actually represented in the key publications. The number of dissertations is low.

In the future the group will be concentrating more on the social science-aspects of religion and less on moral and practical theology. In this regard the programme might need a stronger theoretical framework along the lines of psychological, sociological, psycho-analysis and/or object-related analysis. The Committee strongly encourages a stronger international publication policy.

2.2 Utrecht University, Faculty of Theology (UU)/Catholic Theological University Utrecht (KTU)

The Committee appreciates the good presentation and overview of materials and is of the opinion that the marked integration, within the context of INTEGON, of research by both the Faculties of Theology of Utrecht University and the Catholic University of Theology in Utrecht, reflects a clear improvement of the quality of research. The Committee also appreciates the distinct awareness of the complex methodological ramifications of interdisciplinary research. Exactly this focus on coherence and interdisciplinarity could, however, be advanced further by INTEGON, especially in the biblical sciences and in church history, in addition to paying attention to the development of criteria for the evaluation of the quantitative output.

The number of AIO's and OIO's is satisfactory and the Committee appreciates their recruitment and adequate training and supervision (cfr. Kwaliteitsplan AIO's). Nevertheless the Committee has noted with some concern that the number of PhD's has decreased considerably over the period we assessed theological research. On the other hand, the Committee is positive about the consistent and constructive participation of both institutions in the Research School NOSTER. The Committee is pleased with the fact that the two Utrecht institutions remained internationally oriented in their publication strategy.

Finally, the Committee hopes that women's and gender studies, now so much a valid and crucial part of the structure of contemporary theological reflection, will become a recognizable unit within INTEGON, instead of remaining limited to only individual researchers interested in these issues.

The Committee assessed the following research programmes:

UU 08:	The Old Testament
UU 09:	The Cultural Milieu
KTU 10:	Tradition and Transformation
UU 11:	Identity in the Making
KTU 12:	Identity in the Making
UU 13:	Philosophy of Religion
KTU 14:	God's Hidden Presence
KTU/UU 15:	Religion and Modernity
KTU 16:	Discussing Modernity
KTU 17:	Women's and Gender Studies
KTU 18:	Relation Judaism Christianity
UU 19:	Missionary and Ecumenical Theology

University	UU/KTU	
Programme	The Old Testament	
Programme director	Prof.dr. B.E.J.H. Becking	
Fte 1998	1.2	
Assessment	Quality	4
	Productivity	4-5
	Relevance	3-4
	Viability	3+

Programme description/key words:

Israelite religion; prophetic literature; scripture in context; structural analysis; text division; West-Semitic epigraphy

The group is writing and working in a very broad setting and is aiming at serving both its academic and its societal audience. Although professional publications are important in the latter context, the Committee was puzzled by the type and criteria of publications put under academic publications in stead of under professional publications. The Committee considers the quality of the key publications of this programme as very good. The group publishes in very good international journals. The unity of the programme seems to exist more on the level of the method (historical approach) than on the level of the content. This makes the scope of the research rather limited. The group should also be careful not to overlook the gender issues. Although the output is quite respectable the Committee is concerned about the recruitment of junior researchers. The number of PhD's is very low.

The Committee was pleased to hear that both the UU Faculty and KTU have recently started a joint venture in the Old Testament and in the New Testament studies.

University	UU/KTU
Programme	The Cultural Milieu of Early Christianity
Programme director	Prof.dr. P.W. van der Horst
Fte 1998	3.0
Assessment	Quality 4+
	Productivity 4-5
	Relevance 4
	Viability 3+

Programme description/key words:

Ancient Judaism; Hellenism; early Christianity; cultural interactions; religions in late antiquity

The quality and especially the productivity of the group are very good. The programme is ambitious and aims at breaking new grounds. Members of the group have published very innovative and strong monographs, especially in the various fields of early Christianity, ancient Judaism and their environment. Compared with that strength the internal structure and coherence of the programme as well as the internal co-operation are weak. The crucial and complex notion of 'cultural milieu' and 'interaction' are used without an awareness of the epistemological status of these notions. They seem to function more as labels of facts than as models of scholars describing them. PhD-students would benefit from more common activities. The number of PhD's within the programme is too small. More common activities are advisable in addition to a clear publication strategy.

University	UU/KTU	
Programme	Tradition and Transformation	
Programme director	Prof.dr. M.J.J. Menken	
Fte 1998	2.2	
Assessment	Quality	3
	Productivity	4
	Relevance	3
	Viability	3-4

Programme description/key words:

Bible, OT; Bible, NT; Jewish studies; tradition, transformation of interpretation of scripture

The programme has 9 projects which does not add to the quality and the coherence of the programme, in spite of a regular internal discussion of papers and other forms of research output. The Committee was pleased to hear that a restructuring of the programme is on the way, which should include overcoming the rather traditional approach of the group.

The number of PhD's, one in the period under assessment, is too low. The group was not very successful in recruiting young researchers in the same period.

Further integration of the programme within INTEGON, closer collaboration with UU 09 and the recent more successful recruitment of junior researchers will be of great help for the future development and viability of the programme. The group has a good international publication record.

University	UU/KTU	
Programme	Identity in the Making	
Programme director	Prof.dr. W. Otten	
Fte 1998	4.2	
Assessment	Quality	3-4
	Productivity	3
	Relevance	4
	Viability	4

Programme description/key words:

Christian traditions; religious identity; Dutch protestantism; historical transformation

While the church history programme of the UU has been part of the inter-institutional programme "Origin and Transformation of Christian Traditions" since 1995, due to its increased collaboration with KTU its membership status of "Origin and Transformation" was changed in 1999 to one of joint membership with KTU (Identity in the Making). This certainly enhances the quality and the much needed coherence for the future. The key publications are of good quality, but not all members of the programme are equally productive. Most publications are in Dutch; a more international publication policy, already present in patristics and Middle Ages, is advocated by the Committee and would also overcome the rather local orientation of the group. Continued co-operation with other research groups on church history, e.g. at KUN and TFT, is advocated. Together with two new AIO-projects the future viability is not at stake and the Committee trusts that more work will be done on gender issues.

University	UU/KTU	
Programme	Identity in the Making	
Programme director	Prof.dr. G.A.M. Rouwhorst	
Fte 1998	4.0	
Assessment	Quality	4
	Productivity	3
	Relevance	4
	Viability	4

Programme description/key words:
Traditions, processes of continuity and change

The previous programme "Origin and Transformation of Christian Traditions" is now part of the joint UU/KTU programme "Identity in the Making" (See also programme UU 11), which will strengthen the viability and coherence of the programme. An explication of the central concern is lacking, the same holds true for a common methodology. The sub-programmes of both groups reflect an organizational pattern of church history (ancient – medieval – modern). The core issue 'Identity in the Making' should also guide the structuring of sub-programmes. The overall quality of the publications is good. The output as such is satisfactory, but the number of PhD's in the period assessed is low. The publications on liturgy are very important in this field.

The Committee appreciates the fact that many scholars from different denominational backgrounds are working together in the new programme. Further co-operation with other research groups on church history at UvA, KUN and TFT, is advocated. The studies in African Myth show an involvement in social problems that are relevant in the modern context of Africa's position in an age of globalization.

University	UU/KTU	
Programme	Philosophy of Religion	
Programme director	Dr. M. Sarot	
Fte 1998	4.0	
Assessment	Quality	3-4
	Productivity	3-4
	Relevance	4
	Viability	4

Programme description/key words:

Philosophical theology; doctrine of God; nature and functions of religion; meaning of life; continuity and discontinuity; religious traditions; rationality; criteria for systematic theology; hermeneutics

This is a strong programme with a good programme design. The mission and goals of the programme clearly reflect how a department is now consciously realigning itself around a new and broader research theme with less emphasis on the philosophical doctrine of God and more emphasis on the theory of religion as it changes through time. The key publications reflect the older and the newer situation. In the new approach more attention will be paid to feminist theology and African theology.

The Committee was concerned about the low number of young researchers in the period under assessment, but presently the programme has a total of five AIO's and OIO's, which makes the Committee confident for the future of this programme.

University	UU/KTU	
Programme	God's Hidden Presence	
Programme director	Prof.dr. H.W.M. Rikhof	
Fte 1998	5.7	
Assessment	Quality	4
	Productivity	3
	Relevance	4
	Viability	3

Programme description/key words:

Sub-programme 1: historical theology; systematic theology; Aquinas; sources; reception

Sub-programme 2: systematic theology; historical theology; interdisciplinarity

This programme has a clear, well-formulated mission statement. The theological themes are carefully linked to pastoral work and pastoral care, and contextualized through the sacraments. Modern and postmodern cultural themes are carefully worked out, but the overall coherence of the programme suffered because of the vagueness of what is tentatively offered as 'sub-programme 3'. It is a rather solid programme in terms of research, but the coherence of the three sub-programmes needs to be made much more explicit and the co-operation between the programme members could be strengthened. The key publications could possibly also have been chosen more carefully so as to represent better the overall integrated aims of the programme. With careful attendance to these issues this could become a stronger, more coherent programme. The special focus on feminist issues was much appreciated. The Committee urges more international publications.

University	UU/KTU
Programme	Religion and Modernity
Programme director	Prof.dr. G.A.F. Hellemans
Fte 1998	5.6
Assessment	Quality 4
	Productivity 4
	Relevance 4
	Viability 3-4

Programme description/key words:

Modernity; religious change; ecclesiology; religious education; non-Christian world religions

The Committee appreciates that previous programmes are now incorporated in the present programme and are now combined with church development, religious traditions and religion and modernity. The idea and approach of the new programme are good; still a stronger research focus on the redefinition of religious fields may be needed. Progressive ideas regarding the position of religion in modern society as well as the aim of the programme may enhance its long term viability. The overall quality and productivity is good, with a noticeable number of international publications. Still co-operation with similar research groups in the Netherlands is advocated, since the group aims at covering history of religions, psychology, sociology and pastoral theology.

University	UU/KTU	
Programme	Discussing Modernity	
Programme director	Prof.dr. P.H.A.I. Jonkers	
Fte 1998	1.95	
Assessment	Quality	4
	Productivity	3
	Relevance	4
	Viability	3

Programme description/key words:

Philosophy of culture; metaphysics; philosophy of religion; hermeneutics; social and political philosophy; history of philosophy

This rather recent programme has a wide range and, for the time being, a strong local orientation. Most publications are in Dutch and, although a number of international publications are reported, the programme needs a redirection of its publication policy. The pre- and postmodernity discussion is still rather fragmented and the programme could focus more on specific topics. Co-operation with other research programmes could be fostered, especially regarding the long term viability of the programme.

University	UU/KTU	
Programme	Women's and Gender Studies	
Programme director	Dr. A.-M. Korte	
Fte 1998	0.0	
Assessment	Quality	4
	Productivity	NA
	Relevance	5
	Viability	4

Programme description/key words:

Gender in religious discourse; women's studies in religion; feminist theology, philosophy and ethics; critical hermeneutics; theological anthropology; miracle-stories; corporeality; women in Judaism; women's history and spirituality; women's authority and leadership in religion; women in religious communities and practices

This is an atypical programme in that the members belong to different faculties and departments. The formal research input is 0.0 fte and the publications come from other research programmes and projects. In spite of this, the programme has been able to generate very interesting and productive interdisciplinary research in the field of women's studies. The programme, although rather an informal working group, allows for collaboration also beyond the local level and is directly related to the new NOSTER programme in women's studies. All this is commendable. It is hoped that the recent establishment of the "Chair in Feminist Theology" will ensure the continuation of this work and will lead to a recognizable research core-group.

University	UU/KTU	
Programme	Relation Judaism Christianity	
Programme director	Dr. M.J.H.M. Poorthuis	
Fte 1998	0.0	
Assessment	Quality	4
	Productivity	NA
	Relevance	4
	Viability	4

Programme description/key words:

Judaism, Christianity; rabbinics; patristics; philosophy; body; enlightenment; antisemitism; dialogue; holiness

Like programme KTU 17 this is an a-typical programme in that the members belong to different faculties and departments. The formal staff input is 0.0 fte. The publications emerged from other research programmes and projects. In spite of this the group has developed interesting interdisciplinary work of high quality and of high societal relevance and focuses on the important theme of relationship between Judaism and Christianity along the theme of 'purity and holiness'. Still the coherence of the programme is somewhat problematic. With the permanent appointment in 1998 of the programme director and with some broadening of the field and of the international contacts, the Committee is optimistic about the future activities of the group.

University	UU/KTU
Programme	Missionary and Ecumenical Theology
Programme director	Prof.dr. A.W.J. Houtepen
Fte 1998	3.7
Assessment	Quality 4
	Productivity 4-5
	Relevance 4
	Viability 4

Programme description/key words:

Missiology; ecumenics; systematic theology; church history; history of missions; history of the ecumenical movement; interreligious dialogue; bibliography

This is an interesting and important programme. The publications are of a descriptive/historical nature on the one hand and of a systematic nature on the other. It is important to maintain the critical and systematic analysis, however difficult, on a comparative, pluralist and interreligious level. The dialogue between Christianity and Islam is, as part of the theology in the non-western world, equally important for the present day multi-religious setting in the Netherlands and Europe. The IIMO Institute is as an interuniversity (national) institute an important service point for other universities.

2.3 University of Groningen, Faculty of Theology and Religious Studies (RUG)

The Committee greatly appreciates the crystal clear overview of the Faculty at Groningen's research profile. Research in this Faculty is very well structured in terms of three excellent research programmes which now cover virtually all the research in the Faculty. The Faculty not only wisely restructured its research as a direct result of evaluation by the 1994 International Committee for Theological Evaluation, but it has very successfully combined cutting-edge, topical research in direct relation to the local Dutch context, the pluralist international academic context, and the research of church professors and other professors with special chairs on the permanent academic staff.

All three research programmes are excellent examples of how inter-and multidisciplinary research should be integrated in vibrant, creative academic research. At the same time the Committee also applauds the fact that all three programmes have managed to evolve with high respect for the legitimate place of individual researchers and individual research projects within the broader context of their integrated research programmes. This kind of stimulating research climate certainly contributed to the important fact that the number of dissertations defended in Groningen's Faculty of Theology has indeed doubled since the previous evaluation period.

It was significant and important to learn that the Faculty carefully monitors the quality and quantity of the research done by its own staff. This fact, in conjunction with the Faculty's significant international relations and publications, contributes to the general aura of competence. In addition the training of PhD-students takes place within the Research School AGRICOLA of the University of Groningen. The Committee was pleased to hear that the Faculty of Theology at Groningen has started talks with the national Research School NOSTER. Further steps in that direction could be made to mutual advantage of all parties concerned.

The Committee assessed the following research programmes:

RUG 20:	Jewish and Christian Traditions
RUG 21:	Religious Symbols: Religion, Representation and Power
RUG 22:	Meaning, Tradition and Change

University	RUG	
Programme	Jewish and Christian Traditions	
Programme director	Prof. dr. F. García Martínez	
Fte 1998	4.0	
Assessment	Quality	4-5
	Productivity	5
	Relevance	4-5
	Viability	4-5

Programme description/key words:

Old Testament; material culture of Palestine; Old Testament Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha, Dead Sea Scrolls; New Testament; New Testament Apocrypha, Nag Hammadi; Gnosticism; early Christian writings

This is an outstanding programme with a clear mission statement and an excellent publication record of which the Hebrew-English edition of the Dead Sea Scrolls is just one example. There is a strict and meaningful distinction between academic and professional publications. The group plays an important role in the international scientific discussion in the field, while, on the other hand, it makes great efforts in order to present the research results to a broader audience, e.g. the translation of the Qumran text into Dutch.

The only concern of the Committee is the relatively low number of young researchers, but this concern is obliterated by the creation of two extra research posts in 1999. The number of PhD's could be increased.

University	RUG	
Programme	Religious Symbols: Religion, Representation and Power	
Programme director	Prof.dr. J.N. Bremmer	
Fte 1998	3.9	
Assessment	Quality	4-5
	Productivity	4
	Relevance	4-5
	Viability	4-5

Programme description/key words:

History of the scholarly tradition; historical representations of western and non-western religions; visual representation; ritual praxis; mythology; liturgy; sacred architecture and iconography; elites; intellectuals; symbolic power; mentalities; gender

This is a programme in which very interesting individual research is generated of a very high international level. The topics which are researched are specialized but also creative and there is serious attention for subjects in the area of women's studies. The future of the programme also seems to be assured through new appointments.

In spite of all this, the interrelationship between the themes of the programme could be made more explicit. The programme has much in common with a Department of Religious Studies in which members may have certain common methodological concerns, but every individual pursues his or her individual research. In light of the original and qualitatively high level of research which is produced, however, this might not be a point of criticism.

University	RUG	
Programme	Meaning, Tradition and Change	
Programme director	Prof.dr. L.J. van den Brom	
Fte 1998	4.5	
Assessment	Quality	4
	Productivity	3
	Relevance	4
	Viability	3+

Programme description/key words:

Systematic theology; pluralism; life-view traditions; philosophy of religion; religious epistemology; ethics; health care ethics; psychology of religion; mental health care; psychoanalysis

This is a rather new, restructured programme, but with a clear problem statement and a good and well-integrated mission statement. The programme includes four sub-disciplines which, although they may still need some more streamlining, already exhibit a well-articulated scope and good coherence. The research programme is philosophically sophisticated and displays impressive multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary forms of reflection. The Committee especially appreciates the status and focus of women's studies in this programme, and the fact that it is so explicitly incorporated into the programme design. The Committee encourages an even clearer and more explicit inclusion of feminist and gender issues into the overall scope of the four different sub-disciplines.

The Committee notes with appreciation the regular workshop and seminar meetings of the members of this research programme, and of its very successful attempts to internationalize the scope of its research. The Committee was rather concerned, however, that the viability of this research programme was not enhanced by a more careful and detailed articulation of plans for its future development. The Committee would have like to hear more about the planned launching of two new interdisciplinary projects and how that is seen to promise a strengthening and enriching of the current structure of the programme. The Committee hopes that the means, needed for such approach, will remain at the group's disposal.

Although not all publications of the research programme are of an equally high level, the Committee did note an important increasing number of publications – also international publications - in recent years.

2.4 University of Amsterdam, Faculty of Humanities, Department of Theology and Religious Studies (UvA)

The Committee noted how successfully the former Faculty of Theology has recently been integrated in the newly established Faculty of Humanities as Department of Theology and Religious Studies. This should certainly create new possibilities for extending teaching and research into the wider area of the Humanities.

Compared to the previous assessment the Department of Theology and Religious Studies has improved greatly in both its research organization and research output. The Committee is impressed by the overall quality of research, although Religious Studies is not yet equally well integrated into the overall research programmes.

Stronger co-operation with the Faculty of Social Sciences is still to be encouraged. The newly established chair in Hermetic Philosophy may strengthen research in Religious Studies. This leaves the Committee with an overall optimistic feeling for the future research activities of the newly structured Department of Theology and Religious Studies, leaving aside the present uncertainties concerning the restructuring of the church-related graduate training for the ministry.

The Committee expressed concerns about the relatively low number of PhD's at the Department and is concerned about the difficulty in attracting qualified young researchers. The future of research should not be endangered. Furthermore the Committee encourages further good co-operation within the already well-established co-operation with the Research School NOSTER.

The Committee assessed the following research programmes:

- UvA 23: Biblical and Religious Studies
- UvA 24: The Origin and Transformation of Christian Traditions
- UvA 25: Modernity, Otherness and Religion
- UvA 26: Theology in Ecclesiastical Perspective

University	UvA
Programme	Biblical and Religious Studies
Programme director	Prof.dr. J.W. van Henten
Fte 1998	4.3
Assessment	Quality 4-
	Productivity 4
	Relevance 4
	Viability 4

Programme description/key words:

Theism; monotheism; Old Testament; New Testament; Judaism; Egyptian religion; Islam; funerary literature; martyrdom; feminist exegesis

This is a good programme design with emphasis on the transmission of biblical texts. Women do play a visible role in the programme as such and in the publications. In the presentation of the publications a clear distinction has been made between academic and professional publications. Although several of the members of the group are still junior researchers, the productivity is good.

The Committee appreciates the participation of the group at local level in the Amsterdam Research School ASCA, at national level in the Research School NOSTER and at international level.

The Committee is less impressed by the extent Religious Studies is incorporated in the programme. The Committee hopes that the new MA-programme Religious Studies within the Faculty of the Humanities, together with a stronger co-operation with the research group Religion and Society of the Faculty of Social Sciences will enhance a stronger positioning of Religious Studies in the Department in general.

The Committee is concerned about the low number of PhD's. The lack of qualified young researchers may be one of the reasons. Perhaps stronger international recruitment should be endeavoured.

University	UvA	
Programme	The Origin and Transformation of Christian Traditions	
Programme director	Prof.dr. M.B. Pranger	
Fte 1998	2.5	
Assessment	Quality	4-
	Productivity	4-5
	Relevance	3-4
	Viability	4

Programme description/key words:

History of monasticism; social history of Christianity; history of ideas and apocryphal literature

The scientific interest of this small research group is rather broad, but with a high publication output with fascinating books. The Committee is puzzled with the coherence of the programme with divergent research interests. The group does work closely together and continues to broaden its research co-operation with other groups at their own university and at KUN, UU/KTU and TFT on church history, especially with those who intend to develop similar research interests.

The Committee is concerned about the very low number of young researchers and of PhD's. Perhaps that the lack of qualified young researchers is one of the reasons.

University	UvA	
Programme	Modernity, Otherness and Religion	
Programme director	Prof.dr. J.Th. Witvliet	
Fte 1998	4.4	
Assessment	Quality	4
	Productivity	3-4
	Relevance	4
	Viability	4

Programme description/key words:

Modernity; secularization; tradition; fundamentalism; syncretism; family values; ecumenics; contextuality; reason and revelation; alterity; plurality; identity

This is a strong and interesting programme and exhibits interdisciplinary research being done on the cutting edge of religion and modernity. The research group particularly aims at creating a new way of dealing with tradition on the basis of particular versus universal models of rationality. At times the rather large and very diverse membership of the programme might suggest a rather disparate image, somewhat reflected in the choices that ultimately represent the key publications. The overall coherence of the programme is, however, quite impressive.

The group could benefit from co-operation with other European and with some American universities. Contextuality and cultural analysis remain equally important and are encouraged as the members of this group take on modernist and postmodern challenges to rationality. The Committee appreciates the specific way that the programme reaches beyond Eurocentric concerns.

University	UvA	
Programme	Theology in Ecclesiastical Perspective	
Programme director	Prof.dr. K. Zwanepol	
Fte 1998	4.9	
Assessment	Quality	3-4
	Productivity	3
	Relevance	3
	Viability	NA

Programme description/key words:

Biblical theology; dogmatics; history and theology of the Reformation; practical theology; history and theology of mission

The programme is on average at a satisfactory level with strong elements in practical theology and in the research on Luther and Calvin. The programme aims at contributing to a successful functioning of theologians and ministers by helping them to understand the tension between scripture and tradition, and the church in the context of modern society. It would be a pity if these types of research would disappear due to decisions made by the churches concerning disconnecting the church-related section within the department. Most publications are in Dutch, which is -given the focus of the research- not surprising, but the Committee would welcome a higher number of international publications.

The good number of outside PhD-students makes to some extent up for the fact that it is difficult to get qualified young researchers, leaving aside the problem of proper funding of AIO's.

2.5 Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam, Faculty of Theology (VU)

The Faculty embarked on a new research plan in 1997 and managed to successfully reduce the number of research programmes in the Faculty from six to four. A clear goal was formulated which very consciously strives for a healthy balance in its research programmes: a balance between scientific research, which contributes to theological disciplines in a more specialist or professional sense, and scientific research which is guided by social, cultural and the more confessional or ecclesiastical functions of Christian theology. The Faculty obviously is very successful in doing specialized theological research on a scientific basis but within clear interpretative frames of reference. The mission of theological research at this Faculty is therefore clear and praiseworthy: developing the kind of public theology that is fully embedded and engaged both culturally and interreligiously, while at the same time protecting and respecting the integrity and identity of Christian theology within a specific confessional tradition.

There are obviously more than adequate infrastructural resources for research at the university. A substantial part of the Faculty's research staff participates in the Research School NOSTER. The Faculty has a healthy and vibrant research policy and conducts a clear policy of internationalization, especially also with Third World and Eastern European countries.

Although different disciplines work together in some programmes, which has some benefits, programme directors should consider the possibility of co-operating with similar programmes in other institutions. The Committee appreciates the way that the Faculty is managing to serve church communities, and greatly appreciates the way the Faculty has cultivated relationships with its junior researchers and with the intensive supervision and training of AIO's and OIO's.

The Committee assessed the following research programmes:

- VU 27: Description and Interpretation
- VU 28: History of the Reformation
- VU 29: Encounter of Religions
- VU 30: Plurality and Identity

University	VU
Programme	Description and Interpretation
Programme director	Prof.dr. E. Talstra
Fte 1998	3.6
Assessment	Quality 4
	Productivity 4
	Relevance 4-5
	Viability 3-4

Programme description/key words:

Computer-aided analysis of Old Testament texts; method of exegesis; synchronic and diachronic analysis; New Testament textual criticism; bible and theology

The computer-based BHS-method is a very promising one, but for the time being and basically for lack of funding limited to the Old Testament. In general the co-operation between Old Testament and New Testament should be closely looked at, also in combination with the hermeneutical interest. Long term funding is required in order to maintain the leading position of the group in the field of computer-aided analysis of Old Testament texts.

The publication record is both in qualitative and in quantitative terms good, but this is mainly due to a limited number of senior staff members. In addition the group shows a keen concern for relevance given its high number of good professional publications. The number of PhD's within the programme is rather low.

The research line of textual criticism should be continued. In that light the recruitment of junior researchers needs the attention of the Faculty.

University	VU
Programme	History of the Reformation
Programme director	Prof.dr. C.P.M. Burger
Fte 1998	3.0
Assessment	Quality 4
	Productivity 4-5
	Relevance 4
	Viability 4

Programme description/key words:

Late medieval doctrine of grace, sermons, catechisms; harmonies of the gospels; 16th century: Luther; the correspondence of Calvin; bible translations; 19th century: Groninger richting; Réveil, Afscheiding, Doleantie, A. Kuyper, Reformed Churches

The critical edition of the letters of Calvin is an extremely important project of international relevance and the quality of this highly relevant enterprise is considered to be very good. The Committee is of the opinion, however, that such a project goes beyond the financial and staff possibilities of the Faculty. The Committee advises that the KNAW considers the possibility, e.g. via a 'Calvin Institute' at the VU, of funding the edition as part of its own activities. A research programme of this type requires long term funding and long term staff recruitment in order to maintain a high frequency of Calvin-editions.

The quality and quantity of the publications are good. However, the number of PhD's is rather low. The coherence of the three sub-programmes should be encouraged and more international publications, especially on the history of Dutch Protestantism in the 19th century, would be welcomed. Perhaps the research should be stronger focused on the late Middle Ages, on Luther and on Calvin. In addition co-operation could be extended with similar research undertakings at other universities.

University	VU
Programme	Encounter of Religions
Programme director	Prof.dr. H.M. Vroom
Fte 1998	4.85
Assessment	Quality 4
	Productivity 4+
	Relevance 4-5
	Viability 4

Programme description/key words:

Christology; ideas of God; sanctification; theology of religions; dialogue with secular and religious world views; religiously plural culture; comparative religious anthropology; (religious) hermeneutics; theology as a discipline

The programme resulted from a merger of two distinct research groups 'Reformed Dogmatics' and 'Encounter of Religions'. The latter one has a long history and focussed on interaction between different religions. Also the combination of descriptive and normatitive elements proves to be very useful. This methodology is effecting the way of doing theology and successfully blurs the traditional boundaries, indeed leading to a fruitful tension and going beyond one's own tradition of Reformed theology. The three sub-programmes are: The role of religion in the pluralistic culture; theory of religion, and justification of contents of faith in a pluralistic culture.

Recently the group received new grants for continuing comparative studies of religious/ideological anthropology. Stronger co-operation could be sought with similar groups in Leiden, Utrecht and Tilburg, specifically concerning religious pluralism, which would also enhance the viability of the programme in the long run.

University	VU
Programme	Plurality and Identity
Programme director	Prof.dr. G. Heitink
Fte 1998	3.5
Assessment	Quality 4
	Productivity 3
	Relevance 4
	Viability 4

Programme description/key words:

Formation of theory, differentiation, individualization; ecclesiology, church development, bonds with the church, koinonia, pastoral care; construction of meaning, psychology of religion; learning of faith, doctrines of faith, preaching religion; society, social cohesion, interaction, communication, sects, sociology of religion

Though the programme encompasses a variety of individuals in different areas of specialization within the social sciences and practical theology, a high level of coherence is achieved. The development of a cohesive theory regarding various forms of participation in the church and Christian faith in a differentiated society integrates the research into a well structured whole. The members of the group clearly build upon each other's work. Some members of the group produce publications of very high quality, but they should be encouraged to publish more for an international audience. The research in general manages to find a middle ground between the demands of scholarly relevance and importance from the more pastoral point of view in the broad area of church, society and Christian faith.

2.6 Nijmegen University, Faculty of Theology (KUN)

The research at the Faculty of Theology reflects a process of increasing centralization and co-ordination, not only within the different well-structured research programmes but also in the Faculty as a whole. The Faculty has clearly benefitted enormously from its embeddedness in a comprehensive university offering a broad spectrum of academic disciplines. While most programmes were already focussed on questions of interreligious dialogue, religious pluralism, and the problem of interdisciplinarity, this tendency has now become consolidated in the new "matrix" of the "Reli-PLUSS"-programme in which all programmes collaborate. Such a matrix will certainly be of great service to interdisciplinary work, and to a strong profile of the Faculty on an international level.

The programmes as a whole reflect a sharp awareness of contemporary challenges, both in society and in the academy. The important role of women's studies within the programme is to be commended.

The Faculty's research programmes have gone through an impressive process of internationalization and the interdisciplinarity, provided by the creation of the Heyendaal-Institute, is significant and promising. Furthermore the programmes are firmly integrated within the Research School NOSTER.

One area which is surprisingly underdeveloped in the programmes as a whole is that of Religious Studies. If the focus of all research will be on religious pluralism and interreligious dialogue, a historical and phemenological understanding of other religions seems to be indispensable.

The Committee assessed the following research programmes:

- KUN 31: The Biblical Text and Its Readers
- KUN 32: Prayer in the Christian Tradition
- KUN 33: Symbolization and Interreligious Interaction
- KUN 34: Religious and Moral Identity in Various Settings
- KUN 35: Pluralism, Truth and Intercultural Religious Dialogue

University	KUN	
Programme	The Biblical Text and Its Readers	
Programme director	Prof.dr. J.H.A. van Tilborg	
Fte 1998	3.3	
Assessment	Quality	3-4
	Productivity	4-5
	Relevance	4
	Viability	4

Programme description/key words:

Biblical theology; Old Testament exegesis; New Testament exegesis

The programme reflects the emphasis on methodology in the Faculty. It addresses new approaches to texts as literature, produced to be read by others (text – translators – readers). The group meets regularly and made itself acquainted with the basic sources in the field.

In the future some projects will explore the question whether it is possible to reintegrate cognitive linguistics into classical narratology. By doing so the coherence of the programme could be enhanced. The group should aim at producing more international publications.

Care has to be taken that the Reli-PLUS programme does not impose an artificial focus on a programme like this one. The programme - at this point - lacks a clear methodological elaboration for its participation in the Reli-PLUS-programme.

University	KUN	
Programme	Prayer in the Christian Tradition	
Programme director	Prof.dr. P. Nissen	
Fte 1998	3.55	
Assessment	Quality	3+
	Productivity	4-5
	Relevance	3
	Viability	3

Programme description/key words:

History of western and eastern Christianity; patristics and patrology; theology and history of spirituality

This programme started in 1997 and concentrates on patristics, history and theology of spirituality and modern and contemporary church history. It will run until 2001. At this point in time it is unclear what will happen after that year. The group's coherence was strengthened by the establishment of a workshop on church history focusing on the contextuality of spirituality. A two-volume book is also being planned. Although the research focuses not only on denominational and domestic prayers in the Netherlands, the scope could still be broadened towards spirituality. In addition the ecumenical aspects and the history of doctrine should not be overlooked. The programme could have been more explicit concerning the long-term viability.

Publications in foreign languages and productivity are very good. The group is advised to develop a stricter policy concerning the distinction between academic and professional publications. The recruitment of young researchers should get more attention.

University	KUN	
Programme	Symbolization and Interreligious Interaction	
Programme director	Prof.dr. H.J. Häring	
Fte 1998	3.9	
Assessment	Quality	4
	Productivity	3-4
	Relevance	4-5
	Viability	4

Programme description/key words:

Systematic theology; dogmatic theology; feminist theology; foundational theology; hermeneutics; theology of religions; moral theology and Christian ethics; symbol, symbolization; theological anthropology

This is a programme of very high quality and with a clear mission statement, a focused academic structure, and very sophisticated programme design. The programme is shaped by a strong awareness of the role of inter- and multidisciplinary reflection in the reshaping of theology in a multicultural and interreligious society.

The programme is highly coherent and the Committee appreciates the normal and natural way in which feminist issues are integrated with dogmatics and ethical themes in developing an interdisciplinary theology of religions. The coherence of the programme is significantly strengthened by its solid and integrated (hermeneutical and epistemological) methodological awareness. The programme, as well as the publications it generates, also clearly benefits from being organized into four separate and ongoing working seminars.

University	KUN	
Programme	Religious and Moral Identity in Various Settings	
Programme director	Prof.dr. J.A. van der Ven	
Fte 1998	8.2	
Assessment	Quality	5
	Productivity	4
	Relevance	4-5
	Viability	4

Programme description/key words:

Practical theology; pastoral theology; pastoral care; religious education; church development; liturgical studies; Canon law; empirical theology

Although this programme, based on five lines of research, covers a large number of areas within pastoral theology (education, liturgy, care for the sick and dying and more theoretical reflections on practical theology), it very successfully reflects a very high level of coherence and collaboration between the various members. This coherence is the result of a centralized and planned form of organization and direction of the research, based on a good methodological approach of a hermeneutical and empirical nature. While the average productivity is not exceptionally high, that of the main researchers in the programme by far exceeds the average. The key publications reveal clear evidence of excellent theory building activity by the group. The group must be commended for its ability to attract young researchers and external research funding.

University	KUN	
Programme	Pluralism, Truth and Intercultural Religious Dialogue	
Programme director	Prof.dr. W. Dupré	
Fte 1998	1.6	
Assessment	Quality	3-4
	Productivity	3-4
	Relevance	4
	Viability	3+

Programme description/key words:

Philosophy of culture and religion; modern and contemporary philosophy; comparative religion; theory of pluralism and dialogue; missiology

The programme combines research of missiologists, philosophers and an Indologist. Regular group meetings and an explication of the approach by the programme director have increased the common ground. Issues and methods are well explicated and the idea of a philosophical reconstruction of religious dialogues are intriguing. The future plans to address cultural ontology and religion are convincing. The quality and productivity are fairly good. The publications could have benefitted from more international collaboration. It seems that a Faculty which is so deliberately oriented towards interreligious dialogue should increase the part of religious studies in the programme. The Research School NOSTER could be instrumental in this area as well.

2.7 Theological Faculty Tilburg (TFT)

The Committee appreciates that this is a Faculty in transition, moving from a fairly traditional Catholic programme to a more contemporary Catholic reaffirmation of basic issues facing theology, church and society. In a quite impressive effort to cluster, structure, and harmonize its eight research programmes around one overarching research theme, the Faculty is making a successful effort to employ the best features of the tradition in the quest for a contemporary interpretation of themes at the cutting edge of fundamental theology, biblical studies and practical theology. The role of the Liturgical Institute with its international links, as well as the new Tilburg Research Institute for Theology, were particularly noted.

The Committee recognizes this attempt at improvement and contextualization and commends the direction in which the Faculty is moving. It is hoped that in the new research institute there will be more room for internationalization both in terms of the research agenda and the publication lists.

In particular the Committee welcomes the strong presence of women's studies, both as an autonomous subject and in integration with the broader work of the Faculty. The programme will profit from increased multidisciplinary and a focused engagement with its dialogue partners. Enhanced co-operation with the Research School NOSTER may also assist in achieving these goals.

The Committee would welcome an increase in the output of PhD's.

The Committee assessed the following research programmes:

- TFT 36: Theological Ethics in the Context of Religious and Cultural Pluralism
- TFT 37: The Secret of God in Articulations
- TFT 38: Religious Communication/Religious Leadership
- TFT 39: Transcendence and Finiteness
- TFT 40: Text-Semantic Study of the Bible
- TFT 41: Church Identity in a Historical Perspective
- TFT 42: Liturgical Movements and Festival Culture
- TFT 43: Religious Pluralism in South and South-East Asia

University	TFT	
Programme	Theological Ethics in the Context of Religious and Cultural Pluralism	
Programme director	Prof.dr. K.-W. Merks	
Fte 1998	1.2	
Assessment	Quality	3-4
	Productivity	4-5
	Relevance	4
	Viability	4

Programme description/key words:

Religious pluralism; multi-cultural society; fundamental ethics; ethics of care; political ethics; medical ethics; law and morality; tolerance; human rights; moral education

This programme has theological ethics as its framework for studying cultural and religious pluralism, but also focuses on the status of theological ethics versus secular ethics. The presentation of these important issues could be sharpened and the subjects made more specific, especially as far as the theoretical framework of unity and diversity in ethics is concerned. The new programme on human rights is to be welcomed.

A visiting professorship enables a researcher from outside Europe to participate in the work of the group on an annual basis, which broadens the scope on pluralism.

The Committee shares the research group's concern in attracting PhD-students.

University	TFT	
Programme	The Secret of God in Articulations	
Programme director	Prof.dr. W. Logister	
Fte 1998	2.4	
Assessment	Quality	3
	Productivity	3-4
	Relevance	4
	Viability	3

Programme description/key words:

Dogmatics; christology; soteriology; doctrine of God; ecclesiology; ecumenism; theological anthropology; eschatology; aesthetics; hermeneutics; feminist theology

A satisfactory, respectable research programme, although a clear and focused mission statement was lacking. Individually the key publications were of good quality, some even exceptionally good, although it was not always clear how well they represented the overall programme design and the general aim of the project.

The programme does express its Catholic context and embeddedness very well. However, the overall coherence of the programme suffered because of its inability to integrate often too widely divergent topics. The general productivity of the research programme is appreciated. It is recommended, though, that a careful distinction be made between academic and professional publications.

The group should strive to produce more international publications.

University	TFT	
Programme	Rel. Communication/Rel. Leadership	
Programme director	Prof.dr. M. van Knippenberg	
Fte 1998	2.5	
Assessment	Quality	3
	Productivity	4
	Relevance	4
	Viability	3-4

Programme description/key words:

Religious leadership; spiritual guidance; pastoral motivation; professional ministry;

Institutional context; church development; rational choice

This programme deals with an important research topic which offers possibilities for contributions on both a theoretical and a practical level. In spite of the combination of two pre-existing programmes, it has managed to develop a certain degree of coherence.

While the research of some members clearly focusses on the topic of the programme, that of others seems to be only marginally related to it.

The Committee applauds the integration of a historical dimension in the future programme development. Two aspects of the question of religious leadership which seem to be less developed are: the interreligious dimension and the dimension of women in leadership. Both of these dimensions would give the programme a more innovative character.

University	TFT
Programme	Transcendence and Finiteness
Programme director	Prof.dr. B. Vedder
Fte 1998	2.0
Assessment	Quality 3-4
	Productivity 4
	Relevance 4
	Viability 3-4

Programme description/key words:

Metaphysics; philosophy of God; philosophy of theology; theology and ethics; hermeneutics; transcendence; historicity, finiteness, ontology

This is a coherent and consistent programme with emphasis on classical Western philosophy within the catholic context. The publications are solid, but rather traditional. The scope could be extended towards a more cosmological outlook. The societal relevance is high, especially in relation to science and technology, where a metaphysical impetus is needed in addition to ethics and morals.

University	TFT
Programme	Text-Semantic Study of the Bible
Programme director	Prof.dr. E.J. van Wolde
Fte 1998	3.0
Assessment	Quality 4
	Productivity 3-4
	Relevance 4
	Viability 3-4

Programme description/key words:

Meaning; context; text-semantics; linguistics; literary theory; literary-historical aspects; Genesis; Micah; Matthew; Didache

This is an interesting programme which takes the text as a unity with both synchronic and diachronic approaches around the question how meaning is related to the literary context as well as to the historical context. The key publications carry the results of very specialized academic research. In the near future the programme will concentrate on meaning in context and will focus on the plurality of meaning with a stronger method- and text-orientation.

The Committee noted a high number of foreign publications. The viability has been enhanced by the appointment of young researchers.

University	TFT	
Programme	Church Identity in a Historical Perspective	
Programme director	Prof.dr. J.Y.H.A. Jacobs	
Fte 1998	1.0	
Assessment	Quality	3
	Productivity	4
	Relevance	3
	Viability	3

Programme description/key words:

Church identity; development of tradition; transformation of tradition; interaction; historical context

This programme might be called Church Identity in the Netherlands in a historical perspective. While this topic might seem rather specific, the research conducted manifests little coherence, both on the level of method and of choice of research subjects. Some of the research is of a very high quality and would deserve to be translated, while other research is only of local interest.

The programme would benefit from a more systematic division of labour in which different periods and different subjects would be studied with a more clear focus on the possible contributions to international scholarship in the field. The integration of the programme within that of religious leadership might offer such a focus.

The Committee is concerned about the absence of young researchers and about the low number of PhD's.

University	TFT	
Programme	Liturgical Movements and Festival Culture	
Programme director	Prof.dr. P. Post	
Fte 1998	6.5	
Assessment	Quality	4
	Productivity	3
	Relevance	3
	Viability	4

Programme description/key words:

Liturgical-ritual dynamics; interaction of cult and culture; plurality of methods; liturgical inculturation; identity of Christian rituals; festival culture; liturgy and religious popular culture; liturgy and the arts

This programme concentrates on multidisciplinary pilgrimage research of a high professional level. Although most publications reflect this orientation, a stricter policy should be followed concerning the distinction between academic and professional publications. The group should also aim at producing more international publications as an element of the inter-university liturgical institute. Together with Groningen the institute produces an annual yearbook on liturgical research. This research is of great importance for the scientific international platform for ritual and liturgical studies. Subsequently this research is of importance for the liturgical life of faith communities. Still the group could do more in profiling liturgical studies and research in the Netherlands and abroad.

The Committee is concerned about the low number of PhD's.

University	TFT	
Programme	Religious Pluralism in South and South-East Asia	
Programme director	Prof.dr. H.L. Beck	
Fte 1998	2.2	
Assessment	Quality	3-4
	Productivity	2
	Relevance	4-5
	Viability	3

Programme description/key words:

Religious pluralism; religious identity; inter- and intra-religious relations and contacts; rituals; Buddhism; Hinduism; Islam

This programme represents the research done in the area of religious studies at TFT. Since only two researchers have been appointed in this general area, it would be unreasonable to expect a very high level of consistency with one researcher concentrating on Islam and Indonesia, the other researcher concentrating on Hinduism. The Committee appreciates the close co-operation of this group with the research programme LEI 05 "Religious Pluralism and Identity". Further co-operation is to be fostered.

2.8 Theological University Kampen (THUK)

The THUK is clearly committed to its Reformed identity, which was well explained in terms of its own historical background. The Faculty also claims a growing interest in the direct interaction of theological reflection with its social and cultural context. The Committee appreciates this move towards intercultural and interdisciplinary reflection and urges the Faculty to continue along this road.

The research is well organized into four clearly defined areas. The Committee appreciates the active policy pursued with regard to the appointment AIO's and post-docs, and appreciates what clearly seems to be very effective internal quality assessment procedures.

The Committee recommends a stronger focus on internationalization, both in terms of international co-operation and through international publications.

The Committee assessed the following research programmes:

- THUK 44: Interpretation of Scripture
- THUK 45: The Encounter of Dutch Protestantism
- THUK 46: Christian Tradition
- THUK 47: Praxis of the Christian Faith

University	THUK
Programme	Interpretation of Scripture
Programme director	Prof.dr. C. Houtman
Fte 1998	8.6
Assessment	Quality 4+
	Productivity 4-5
	Relevance 4
	Viability 4

Programme description/key words:

Exegesis; religion of Israel; biblical theology; hermeneutics; history of interpretation; Targum

This is a very strong programme with some prominent single scholars within the programme concentrating on biblical studies on the one hand and on the ancient Near East and targumic studies on the other. The group does a lot of editorial, detailed and specialized work on an international level. The programme is strongly involved in the Research School NOSTER.

University	THUK	
Programme	The Encounter of Dutch Protestantism	
Programme director	Prof.dr. P.N. Holtrop	
Fte 1998	4.5	
Assessment	Quality	3
	Productivity	4-5
	Relevance	3+
	Viability	3-4

Programme description/key words:

Source publications; spirituality of Reformation; refugee churches; colonial churches; Dutch protestant missions; Christianity in Indonesia, Moluccas, St. Petersburg; protestantism and modern culture; Judaism

The productivity of this programme is very high and the editing of sources is much appreciated. Many of the publications are (only) meant for those, who are interested in the history of Dutch Protestantism. The Committee suggests that the research should become more oriented towards an international and more ecumenical academic audience. This would imply not only publishing in other languages, but also arguing for the importance of the research and a theoretical reflection on methods, relating it to a broader historical context.

University	THUK	
Programme	Christian Tradition	
Programme director	Prof.dr. G.W. Neven	
Fte 1998	6.3	
Assessment	Quality	3-4
	Productivity	3
	Relevance	3-4
	Viability	3

Programme description/key words:

Dogmatic grammar; dialectical theology; moral identity; ethics of care; linguistic turn; meaning and transcendence

This programme links dogmatics with ethics and philosophy in an attempt to combine the reconstruction of the life and thought of important Reformed thinkers with modern philosophical and ethical thought. While this has resulted in strong publications, especially in the area of philosophy, the link between the more historical dogmatics and the more speculative ethics and philosophy is not clear. The interest in gender issues is to be applauded. Members of the programme should be encouraged to publish in other than their own excellent journal. The appeal of the programme is evident from the high number of dissertations which are being prepared.

University	THUK	
Programme	Praxis of the Christian Faith	
Programme director	Prof.dr. J.H. van der Laan	
Fte 1998	2.9	
Assessment	Quality	3-4
	Productivity	3
	Relevance	3-4
	Viability	3

Programme description/key words:

Religious communication; empirical research; narrative; gender; pastoral competence; spirituality

The programme combines research in the areas of the social sciences and practical theology, including feminist theology, with a focus on the local church and on the faith praxis of the so-called laity. Extensive sociological research was executed which led to the further theoretical reflection within the programme, but also beyond it, among members of other programmes. This is to be commended. However, the coherence of the programme as a whole might be questioned. A systematic methodological or topical focus seems to be lacking. The method and scope of the programme might be widened through collaboration with other programmes in practical theology in the Netherlands and through a more international orientation. It should also be developed and intensified as planned. In addition the low number of PhD's causes some concern.

2.9 Theological University Apeldoorn (TUA)

The TUA participated for the first time, and on a voluntary basis, in the VSNU research assessment. The Committee expressed its appreciation for this important and courageous step. The Committee understands the important limitations imposed on this school by the fact that the period of 1994-1998 was a period of transition as almost the whole Faculty retired and new younger professors had to be appointed. Furthermore there are severe limitations on the financial level. There are no funds for the appointment of AIO's and OIO's. In addition there are severe limitations in the research time of each professor.

The Committee appreciates the standard of most of the research publications and encourages the TUA to internationalize its publication policy more. It should also be flexible and strengthen its own Reformed tradition by reaching out (on a research level at least) to other Reformed institutions in especially the Netherlands but also abroad, and also to national and international research being done on topics related to its research programme.

The Committee understands the shaping role of being embedded so consciously in the Reformed tradition, but is concerned about the rather narrow view of what Reformed theology could accomplish in a pluralistic culture. The Committee urges a specific focus on prominent and contemporary hermeneutical and epistemological themes as they are currently being discussed in contemporary theology. The research programme of the TUA, in spite of finding its identity in being Reformed in all its sub-programmes, still lacks coherence in its research as such. As a result the research being carried out is often more a reflection of what is being done in teaching at the TUA, instead of aiming at cutting edge research.

The Committee recommends a restructuring of the research, possibly developed around two or three specific research topics in stead of one umbrella programme, for the next evaluation period. These topics could be developed within the framework of existing programmes, e.g. reflection on creation and society, the place of women in the Reformed missionary enterprise, the contribution of Reformed philosophers and theologians to contemporary issues in hermeneutics.

The Committee assessed the following research programme:

TUA 48: Reformed Theology: Sources, History and Practice

University	TUA	
Programme	Reformed Theology: Sources, History and Practice	
Programme director	Prof.dr. H.G.L. Peels	
Fte 1998	1.5	
Assessment	Quality	3-
	Productivity	3-4
	Relevance	2-3
	Viability	2-3

Programme description/key words:

Reformed theology; divine revelation; exegesis; historiography; reformation; trinity; Calvin; scholastic theology; spirituality; prolegomena; trinitarian pastorate

The programme works with a very broad notion of Reformed theology. The research is very solid, rather descriptive, but without surprises. The quality is stronger on the Old Testament and church history than on the New Testament.

The small group should be encouraged to expand logically the things they are doing already, while remaining faithful to the own traditions. The programme has a relatively high number of outside PhD's, but no own AIO's/OIO's. If the latter situation were to continue the Committee is doubtful about the long term viability. Although closer co-operation with Kampen II is envisaged, the Committee strongly encourages contact with other Reformed Faculties in The Netherlands and also abroad. This might help the group in broadening its research.

See also the introduction to Chapter 2.9.

2.10 Reformed Theological Academic Institute (HTWI)

The report gives a clear and helpful overview of the history of this five year old institute for Reformed theology. Especially helpful was the explanation of its structural coherence with the universities of Leiden, Groningen, Amsterdam and Utrecht, all within the so-called duplex ordo-context. The HTWI offers a two year curriculum, in addition to the four year masters' programme in theology of the public faculties, with as its special focus practical theology and systematic theology.

The HTWI has a strong focus on theological education and scientific research, while at the same time addressing the broader public through professional publications.

The HTWI participates closely with the Research School NOSTER on a national level and has a strong focus on internal quality control and is developing international relations.

The Committee would have appreciated that in the listing of the PhD's and the academic and professional publications of the research programmes below a more strict separation could have been carried out between the listings of subsequent research programmes of the universities mentioned above.

The Committee assessed the following research programmes:

HTWI 49: Revelation and Reality

HTWI 50: Identity and Renewal

University	HTWI	
Programme	Revelation and Reality	
Programme director	Prof.dr. L.J. van den Brom and prof.dr. G.G. de Kruijf	
Fte 1998	6.8	
Assessment	Quality	4
	Productivity	3
	Relevance	4
	Viability	4

Programme description/key words:

Systematic theology; biblical theology; theology as a scholarly discipline; creation; religious epistemology; anthropology; divine agency; experience; history; meaning of life; secularization; faith and politics; gender issues; God-talk

This is a good and solid programme with a very clear programme design and a central, focal mission statement which clearly shapes the way the programme is developing. Especially clear signs of interdisciplinary dialogue is appreciated as well as an increase in the coherence of the programme, mostly due to an active programme of inter-university seminars and co-operation. The presence of hermeneutical and especially feminist issues are welcomed, but there is still more room for innovative developments in systematic theology. The good number of PhD's has been appreciated by the Committee.

University	HTWI	
Programme	Identity and Renewal	
Programme director	Prof.dr. F.G. Immink	
Fte 1998	8.1	
Assessment	Quality	4
	Productivity	2-3
	Relevance	4
	Viability	3-4

Programme description/key words:

Practical theology; Christian identity; communication of faith; renewal; tradition; competent leadership; changing society

The programme aims at a common approach to methodology in the areas of theory and praxis, the theological approach to practical theology and in the empirical methods of research. Although this is appreciated very much, more integration is needed for the future of the programme. Related to the latter is the difficulty in attracting young researchers to the programme and in having young researchers involved in the Research School NOSTER. In general the group should extend its international network, including publishing in international journals. This would enhance further the relevance of the programme for church and society.

Appendix 1 Discipline Protocol Theology

1. Introduction

This research assessment covers research in theology and religious studies (in part) at universities in the Netherlands. The main aims of the assessment are, in concordance with the Protocol 1998; the improvement of the quality of the individual research programmes of the various theological institutions and the provision of information for the accountability of the research carried out. The assessment will be placed in the context of the activities of the university, faculty or the institute in which it is embedded and it also will give an appraisal of the general features of the research area covered in this assessment.

The following institutions will participate in the assessment: the theological faculties of LEI, RUG, UU, KUN, VU, and the department of theology and religious studies of the Faculty of Humanities of the UvA (all members of the VSNU), as well as the Theologische Faculteit Tilburg, the Katholieke Theologische Universiteit Utrecht, the Theologische Universiteit van de Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland, the Hervormd Theologisch Wetenschappelijk Instituut and the Theologische Universiteit van de Christelijke Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland. There are obvious reasons to co-ordinate the second dimension of the assessment indicated above with the evaluation of the national research school in the field of theology and religious studies, since the procedure of the re-application for accreditation of the Netherlands School for Advanced Studies in Theology and Religion (NOSTER) by the Royal Academy of Sciences will also take place in 1999.

2. Delineation

This research assessment covers the whole field of theology as well as that part of the study of religion, which is situated at institutions for theology and religious studies, as well as at the Universiteit voor Humanistiek. The following distinction into sub-disciplines will be made:

- Biblical Studies (Old Testament/Hebrew Bible, New Testament and Jewish Studies)
- History of Christianity
- History of Religion and Comparative Studies of Religion
- Systematic Theology (Philosophy of Religion, Ethics, Dogmatics, Missiology and Ecumenics)
- Sociology and Psychology of Religion, Religious Education and Practical Theology

The Committee will pay special attention to the developments in the interdisciplinary area of feminist studies in theology.

3. Units of assessment; mission statement

The local research programme is the level on which the assessment takes place. The programme should be concisely described, should be thematically interrelated and ideally be the result of the work of a group of people that closely co-operate. A programme can be the work of (a part of) a department within a faculty, an institute or a research school. A programme can also be defined on the basis of the group's mission in context of the research policy of the department of a faculty or research institute or school. More specific arrangements for programme definitions will be made on the basis of a

preliminary list of programmes (see the VSNU letter to the University Boards of 14 July 1998).

A guideline for the formulation of a mission statement can be found in the following description:

a: descriptive elements

- the scope of the research: a factual description of the area covered;
- the nature of the work in terms of fundamental, strategic or applied research;

b: goals and objectives

- the objectives and ambition of the group, the institute or the faculty: the aims, the focus on specific targets; a statement of what is envisaged as the achievements after completion of projects or sub-programmes; the type of products envisaged (scientific or professional articles, advisory reports, etc.);
- the audience (or clients) of the research: the academic community, professional audiences, society, (under) graduate students, etc."

Ideally, a mission statement should be less than 300 words.

4. Specific aims and elements of this assessment

This assessment considers the scholarly output of the programmes as well as their relevance for churches, other religious institutions and society. This implies that professional and popular publications should also be taken into account. It should be emphasised that the research in- and output submitted should be identified to the researchers directly associated with the department concerned. An assessment of the future perspectives of theological research in the Netherlands will be most welcome. Since a large part of the relevant research is incorporated in the Netherlands School for Advanced Studies in Theology and Religion, an element of the assessment should be to evaluate the added value of this school. Finally, the Board of a University, a Faculty or a Research Institute may invite the Committee to write a management letter for an individual institution in the field (see VSNU Protocol 1998, p. 9). The emphasis of the assessment will be upon the quality of the research output, in addition the quantity of research output as well as the relevance and viability will also be taken into consideration.

5. Information for the Committee

The assessment will be performed on the basis of a self-evaluation report provided by the research programme directors and the faculty/research institute or school. Furthermore, the Committee will have meetings with the responsible boards for research management and policy within the university and with programme directors, and if desired by the Committee, other participants in the research programmes (e.g. PhD students). These meetings will take place at one central location. The assessment will cover the research carried out in the period 1994-1998. Bibliometrical analysis of research output is not possible in this field, although the importance of quantitative analysis of research output is being acknowledged. A distinction will be made between scholarly publications on the one hand, and professional and popular publications on the other. Only the numbers of book reviews should be given in the self-evaluation reports. The elements of the self-evaluation report are mentioned in appendix 3 of VSNU Protocol 1998. The basic elements are the following.

Per programme:

- a. A list of participants names, a table (see VSNU format) of research input in terms of personnel (fte) and money.
- b. A short programme description (see VSNU format), its place in the structure of the university, the faculty or the research institute(s) or school(s).
- c. The research mission of the programme, future in the light of the recent evaluations and the development of the new structure for the university
- d. For each programme: five key publications (selected by the research group), in triplicate.
- e. A list of the scholarly output over the five-year period of assessment, listing the PhD-theses, scholarly and professional publications.
- f. A list of other proofs of scientific productivity (organisation of congresses, editorships, etc.)

For the faculty, research institute or school:

- a. The research profile of the managerial structure; focal points; present professorial chairs and the future developments for this; investment plans, the future developments.
- b. A short description of the research plans (the mission of the faculty, institute or school; its research policy).
- c. Any further material needed for the Committee to answer specific questions with regard to the faculty management and research policy.

Further relevant information for this assessment:

- a. Material needed to allow the committee to answer specific questions, e.g. in relation to a re-accreditation of a research school.

6. Responsibilities

Discipline Committee Theology:

- preparation of the discipline protocol
- proposals for Committee chairperson and members

University/faculty/research institute/school:

- preparation of the information on the managerial unit.

KNAW:

- agree upon Committee chairperson and members

VSNU:

- approval of discipline protocol
- appointment of Committee chairperson and members
- determination of the terms of reference for the Committee
- appointment of the Committee secretariat
- publication of the final report

7. Finances

According to VSNU rules the standard costs of the assessment will be charged to the universities. An estimate of the costs can be made as soon as the preliminary list of programmes as well as the composition of the Committee is known.

8.Procedures and time schedule

Time	action	Responsibility
Sept 1998	Respond to VSNU letter of 14 July 1998	Universities
October 1998	Proposals for Committee chairperson and members; Preparation of discipline protocol	DGO, VSNU, universities
November 1998	Approval of discipline protocol Detailed arrangements for information to be provided Procedure for chairperson appointment Procedure for Committee members appointment	VSNU VSNU and DGO VSNU and KNAW VSNU, KNAW, chairman
April 1999	Preparation of written information Planning of Committee work	universities VSNU, universities
May 1999	Submission of information to VSNU	universities
Autumn 1999	Committee meetings	Committee, VSNU, universities
Autumn 1999	Preparation of report	Committee
Autumn 1999	Draft report to universities	Committee
	Finalising report	Committee
Winter 1999/2000	Publication of final report	VSNU

Appendix 2 Preliminary Assessment Form

REVIEW COMMITTEE THEOLOGY: PRELIMINARY ASSESSMENT FORM

(Please return to the Secretary of the Review Committee before 15 August 1999)

Title programme:

Code:

First Reviewer:

Filled in by:

Second Reviewer:

1. Preliminary assessment of the programme

Please give your ratings on a 5-point scale, in which:

5 = excellent; 4 = good; 3 = satisfactory; 2 = unsatisfactory; 1 = poor

Note: Start from the assumption that all university research should normally conform to a certain standard. Consider whether each aspect of this programme is above/on/below this standard. The Committee report must specify why deviation of the standard is perceived. Your preliminary assessment is only for use in the Committee meetings and will not be published in the Committee report.

	1	2	3	4	5
A. QUALITATIVE LEVEL					
How do you evaluate the quality of the programme with respect to the:					
1. originality of the ideas and the approach					
2. quality of the published output in a foreign language					
3. quality of the published output in the Dutch language; for Dutch understanding reviewers only					
4. prominence of the programme director (including the ability to attract research assistants)					
5. prominence of other members of the research group					
6. coherence of the programme					
Overall assessment of quality level					
B. PRODUCTIVITY/OUTPUT					
Considering number of staff, how do you evaluate the productivity of the programme with respect to the:					
1. total number of publications					
2. number of publications in a foreign language					
3. number of Ph.D. theses					
4. number of publications in the Dutch language					
Overall assessment of productivity:					

	1	2	3	4	5	
C. RELEVANCE						
Considering the stated mission of this programme, how do you evaluate the relevance of the research with respect to the:						
1. relevance for the theoretical advancement of the science concerned						
2. relevance for the understanding of major developments in society						
3. relevance for policy						
Overall assessment of relevance						
D. LONG-TERM VIABILITY						
Considering its personnel and facilities, how do you evaluate the long-term viability of the programme						
1. with regard what has been achieved so far						
2. with regard to plans and ideas for the future						
3. in terms of research policy of the programme unit						
Overall assessment of long-term viability:						

2. Points of attention/remarks

3. Questions (to the Programme Director, Board of Faculty)

Code:
Filled in by:

Appendix 3 List of overview of scores per programme

Legenda: 5 = excellent; 4 = good; 3 = satisfactory; 2 = unsatisfactory; 1 = poor
NA: Not applicable

Code	Research Programme	Q	P	R	V
LEI 01	Method and Theory in the Study of Religions	--	--	--	--
LEI 02	The Hebrew Bible and its Ancient Versions	4	4-5	5	4
LEI 03	Jewish and Christian Religious Traditions	4	3	4-5	4
LEI 04	Formulation and Reformulation of Christian Traditions	4	3-4	4	4
LEI 05	Religious Pluralism and Identity	4-5	4	4	3-4
LEI 06	Ideas, Change and Truth	4	3	4	3-4
LEI 07	Religion and Morals in Modern Society	3	4	4	3
UU 08	The Old Testament	4	4-5	3-4	3+
UU 09	The Cultural Milieu	4+	4-5	4	3+
KTU 10	Tradition and Transformation	3	4	3	3-4
UU 11	Identity in the Making	3-4	3	4	4
KTU 12	Identity in the Making	4	3	4	4
UU 13	Philosophy of Religion	3-4	3-4	4	4
KTU 14	God's Hidden Presence	4	3	4	3
KTU/UU 15	Religion and Modernity	4	4	4	3-4
KTU 16	Discussing Modernity	4	3	4	3
KTU 17	Women's and Gender Studies	4	NA	5	4
KTU 18	Relation Judaism Christianity	4	NA	4	4
UU 19	Missionary and Ecumenical Theology	4	4-5	4	4
RUG 20	Jewish and Christian Traditions	4-5	5	4-5	4-5
RUG 21	Religious Symbols: Religion, Representation and Power	4-5	4	4-5	4-5
RUG 22	Meaning, Tradition and Change	4	3	4	3+
UvA 23	Biblical and Religious Studies	4-	4	4	4
UvA 24	The Origin and Transformation of Christian Traditions	4-	4-5	3-4	4
UvA 25	Modernity, Otherness and Religion	4	3-4	4	4
UvA 26	Theology in Ecclesiastical Perspective	3-4	3	3	NA
VU 27	Description and Interpretation	4	4	4-5	3-4
VU 28	History of the Reformation	4	4-5	4	4
VU 29	Encounter of Religions	4	4+	4-5	4
VU 30	Plurality and Identity	4	3	4	4

Code	Research Programme	Q	P	R	V
KUN 31	The Biblical Text and Its Readers	3-4	4-5	4	4
KUN 32	Prayer in the Christian Tradition	3+	4-5	3	3
KUN 33	Symbolization and Interreligious Interaction	4	3-4	4-5	4
KUN 34	Religious and Moral Identity in Various Settings	5	4	4-5	4
KUN 35	Pluralism, Truth and Intercultural Religious Dialogue	3-4	3-4	4	3+
TFT 36	Theological Ethics in the Context of Religious and Cultural Pluralism	3-4	4-5	4	4
TFT 37	The Secret of God in Articulations	3	3-4	4	3
TFT 38	Rel. Communication/Rel. Leadership	3	4	4	3-4
TFT 39	Transcendence and Finiteness	3-4	4	4	3-4
TFT 40	Text-Semantic Study of the Bible	4	3-4	4	3-4
TFT 41	Church Identity in a Historical Perspective	3	4	3	3
TFT 42	Liturgical Movements and Festival Culture	4	3	3	4
TFT 43	Religious Pluralism in South and South-East Asia	3-4	2	4-5	3
THUK 44	Interpretation of Scripture	4+	4-5	4	4
THUK 45	The Encounter of Dutch Protestantism	3	4-5	3+	3-4
THUK 46	Christian Tradition	3-4	3	3-4	3
THUK 47	Praxis of the Christian Faith	3-4	3	3-4	3
TUA 48	Reformed Theology: Sources, History and Practice	3-	3-4	2-3	2-3
HTWI 49	Revelation and Reality	4	3	4	4
HTWI 50	Identity and Renewal	4	2-3	4	3-4

Appendix 4 Curricula Vitae

Prof.dr. J. Wentzel van Huyssteen, Chairman

Originally from South Africa, he moved to the United States in 1992 to become Princeton Theological Seminary's first James I. McCord Professor of Theology and Science. He has research degrees in philosophy (University of Stellenbosch) and in philosophical theology (Free University of Amsterdam). He has read numerous papers and lectured widely. He was awarded the Andrew Murray Prize and also the Venter Prize for Academic Excellence. Three of his most recent books were all nominated for the Templeton Awards for Outstanding Books in Theology and the Natural Sciences.

Prof.dr. Catharine Cornille

She completed a MA in religious studies at the University of Hawaii in 1986 and a PhD in religious studies at the Catholic University of Leuven in 1989. Presently she is professor in the history of religions and Asian religions at the Faculty of Theology of the Catholic University Leuven. Her research focusses on questions of inculturation and interreligious dialogue, on women in religions and on new religious movements (in Japan and India).

Prof.dr. Hans G. Kippenberg

After his studies in Mediterranean religions at the universities of Marburg, Tübingen, Göttingen, Leeds and Berlin, he took his PhD at the University of Göttingen and his Habilitation at the Free University of Berlin, where he was appointed assistant professor in 1969. In 1977 he was appointed at the Chair for Comparative Religion and History of Religions at the University of Groningen, the Netherlands. In 1989 he was appointed to the new Chair for Theory and History of Religions at the University of Bremen. Over the years he was Fellow of the Institute of Advanced Studies at Wassenaar, the Netherlands, Berlin, Princeton and Erfurt. He was visiting professor on the Max Weber-Chair at the University of Heidelberg. He published various books in the area of history of religions.

Prof.dr. Mathijs Lamberigts

He took a MA in philology and a PhD in theology. At present he is professor in church history at the Faculty of Theology of the Catholic University of Leuven. His fields of specialization are Augustine, Jansenism and Vatican II. Since 1994 he is the academic responsible of the library of the Faculty of Theology of the Catholic University of Leuven. He has been a member of the Leuven University Research Board and of the Commission Religious Studies and Theology of the Flemish Research Council. He is member of the editorial board of various journals in his area of specialization.

Prof.dr. George M. Newlands

He studied Theology in Edinburgh, Heidelberg and Cambridge and was University Lecturer in Divinity in Glasgow and Cambridge. Since 1986 he is Professor of Divinity at the University of Glasgow, where he was Dean of Faculty from 1988-1990 and Principal of Trinity College (Church of Scotland) from 1991-1997. He lectured in Oxford, Princeton and Mainz. His research interests are in systematic theology and intercultural theology.

Prof.dr. Hennie Pieterse

He obtained his first degrees in theology from the University of Pretoria and became then a minister of the Dutch Reformed Church from 1962 until 1976. He studied at the Free University of Amsterdam and obtained a PhD from the University of Stellenbosch in 1978. He taught practical theology at the University of Pretoria from 1976 until 1979. Since 1982 he is full professor of practical theology at the University of South Africa (UNISA) in Pretoria. Over the years he attended many international congresses and at the moment he serves on the editorial boards of two international and two national journals. He is the author of seven academic books on different themes in practical theology.

Prof.dr. J. Alberto Soggin

He took his first degrees in law at the University of Rome (La Sapienza) and in theology at the Waldensian Theological Seminary in Rome. He became professor for Old Testament, Hebrew and Greek at the University of Buenos Aires, the Hebrew University in Jerusalem and then until his retirement at the Waldensian Theological Seminary and at the Sapienza both in Rome. Among other things he was a fellow at Princeton Theological Seminary, at St. John's College, Cambridge and at the Hebrew University. He lectured widely and published various articles and books. He was a member of the editorial board of *Henoch*, *Vetus Testamentum* and of *Zeitschrift für die alttestamentische Wissenschaft*.

Drs. Harry W. Luttikholt, Secretary

He studied political science/international relations at the University of Amsterdam (1969-1976) and at the Bologna Center of the Johns Hopkins University (1975-1976). He was a researcher at the European University Institute in Florence from 1976-1979. From 1979-1985 he was staff member at the then Netherlands Universities' Council (Academische Raad) and is since 1985 staff member of the Association of Universities in the Netherlands (VSNU).

Appendix 5 List of Abbreviations

AIO	PhD-student (Assistent in Opleiding)
ASCA	Amsterdam Research School for Cultural Analysis, Theory and Interpretation
BHS	Computer-aided analysis of texts
fte	Full time equivalent
HTWI	Reformed Theological Academic Institute
IIMO	Inter-University Institute for Missiology and Ecumenics
INTEGON	The Joint Research Institute of UU and KTU in Theology
KNAW	Royal Netherlands Academy of Sciences and the Arts
KTU	Catholic Theological University, Utrecht
KUN	University of Nijmegen
LEI	University of Leiden
NOSTER	National Research School in Theology and Religious Studies
NWO	Netherlands Research Council
OIO	NWO research assistant (Onderzoeker in Opleiding)
RUG	University of Groningen
TFT	Theological Faculty Tilburg
THUK	Theological University Kampen
TUA	Theological University Apeldoorn
UU	Utrecht University
UvA	University of Amsterdam
VSNU	Association of Universities in the Netherlands
VU	Free University, Amsterdam

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