



### City Of Divinity: Methodist Church Joins Cluster

Pietermaritzburg is fast emerging as one of the country's leading theological centres in the wake of a decision by the Methodist Church of South Africa to relocate its seminary to the city.

The relocation of the Seth Mokitimi Methodist Seminary from Pretoria to Pietermaritzburg at the beginning of the year translates into a R100 million investment in the city. The move also strengthened a formalised cluster with other denominations that aims to strengthen relations, expand knowledge, build capacity, pool resources and maximise training.

Currently, other members of the cluster are represented by the Lutheran Church, Anglican Church and Catholic Church. "There's no reason not to expect other churches to join the cluster," Ros Olivier said. A key benefit of the cluster is the opportunity to share with and learn from other churches in a congenial environment that has UKZN's school of theology at the hub. "We have an extremely productive and rewarding relationship with the school and of course, our colleagues of the other church groupings," he said.

Speaking of the Methodist Church's confidence in the city, Olivier said already two blocks of flats in Alexandra Road and several residential properties were bought, and that construction has started on a R55 million seminary complex on 15 000 square metres of land bordering Epworth School. The 390-square metre double-storey building will be centred around an open-air amphitheatre that leads into the chapel through outsized doors. "The idea is to create a sense of free-flow connectivity, not only between the chapel and amphitheatre, but also with the other elements, including the lecture rooms, restaurant and office component," he said.



*Left to right: Progress on the new Methodist seminary is on schedule. Pictured at the site are quantity surveyor Chris Venter, seminary president Ros Olivier, structural engineer Alistair Chrystal, and site manager Dereck Karvey.*

The contractor is Armstrong Construction, Vigar and Associates are the structural engineers, and Omahony Peel and Rowney the quantity surveyors. Site manager Dereck Harvey said about 50 people are employed.

The seminary expects to open its doors in time for the new academic year in 2010. The new facility is built to accommodate 92 students, up from the first intake of 36 students who started their three-year course this year in premises earmarked for accommodation.

*Derek Alberts*

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#### Financial Indicators

Dollar	8.06
Pound	13.21
Euro	11.32
Yen	0.08423
Platinum	1178.5
Gold	935
Oil	69.01
All Share	22266

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