

## Vita / Biography – Dr. Nico Patrick Swartz

Dr Nico Patrick Swartz is busy establishing a Centre for Islamic Law, within the Faculty of Law at the University of the Free State. The mission of the centre will be the advancement of legal research and study in the area of Islamic law guided by precepts of scholarly pursuit. The Centre will seek to compare existing law (whether South African or otherwise) and establish a knowledge base for Islamic law and thereafter seek to disseminate such knowledge to legal jurisprudence and in the field of legal education. The Centre will establish itself initially in the field of Islamic Financial and Banking law and aims to publish widely in the field in order to attract both fellow academics and outside funders in order to allow rapid expansion. The Centre aims to eventually establish itself in all areas of Islamic law such as family law and ethical practice. The fundamental building blocks on which the Centre will operate are: i. Respect for existing legal philosophy and open-mindedness to different philosophies; ii. Respect for diversity and beliefs of fellow academics and students; iii. Ethical responsibility towards business and the market place. Initially the Centre aims to concentrate on establishing itself as a knowledge base in the Banking industry regarding the business and banking parameters of Islamic law and thereafter intends to incorporate students into the diverse field of Islamic law by instructing them in the values and ethical principles inherent in the Islamic system. The aim here lies in sensitizing students to the diversity of both the South African population and the business demands of a global market. The Centre will initially be manned by a director and administrative manager, namely Nico Swartz, who has been involved in the study of Islamic law for a period of time.

Dr Swartz is an accomplished researcher which is evident in the fact that he holds the following degrees: B. Proc.; LL. B.; LL. M.; LL. D.; B.A. Honores (Latin); M.A. (Latin) all from the University of the Free State, and will soon be awarded a Ph. D. from Rhodes University. The Ph. D. referred to pertains to Islamic Banking Law and Financial Practices.

He is currently a lecturer in the department Roman Law, Legal History and Comparative Law as well as a director for the Unit for Legal Historical Research.

Dr Swartz published a book in 2009 entitled *Historia Persecutionis: The Martyr Accounts of Victor of Vita*. He has been awaiting the peer review outcome of a second book entitled *Antonio Rosmini's Contribution to Theology and Fundamental Rights in Civil Society* for couple months and has now received favourable response from both the local and foreign reviewer. The book is to be published soon. He further contributed a chapter to the book *Muamalat as Prescription to Global Economic Crisis*, which pertains directly to Islamic banking practices.

Dr Swartz has presented numerous papers both at national and international conferences between 2005 and 2010 and has published 15 articles at national level and 5 at international level on various aspects relating to Theology, Philosophy of Law, Roman Law, Islamic Finance and Banking Law and Comparative Law.