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H. Henry Meeter Center for Calvin Studies

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Calvin Courier

The newsletter of the H. Henry Meeter Center for Calvin Studies

Spring 2012, Number 49

Special 30th Anniversary Edition

From the Director

Welcome to our special edition marking the 30th anniversary of the Meeter Center for Calvin Studies! We celebrated in late March with a dinner for the local Friends of the Meeter Center and administrators and faculty who have supported the work of the Center over the years, followed by a public lecture on Reformation Geneva by Dr. Karen Spierling (Denison University) - see the report of the lecture on p. 5. The following day, we held an open house, a special chapel service (complete with Genevan Psalm singing!) and our first invitational regional symposium on Reformation studies for colleagues at colleges, universities, and seminaries in Michigan and Illinois. We were very pleased with the turn-out and success of this gathering, and we're already planning our second one, to be held on November 2, 2012, featuring Dr. Emidio Campi, emeritus professor at the University of Zurich. Look for more information in our fall 2012 newsletter.

We have selected eight participants for our Latin Paleography course in June 2012 (see the list on p. 5), and have chosen six recipients of Meeter Center fellowships for 2012-13

(see p. 5). At its spring meeting, the Meeter Center governing board also voted to reappoint me for another five years as the Center's director. See p. 4 for photos from the Board meeting and Friends' dinner.

Finally, we have a very special guest with us until June 2012 - to help mark our anniversary, the trustees of the Van Kampen collection kindly agreed to lend us their 1536 *Institutes* by John Calvin, a book that is both significant and rare, as it was the first edition of the *Institutes* that Calvin prepared. The book is a handsome small-size work, and can be viewed at the Meeter Center during our regular opening hours until June 1.

This issue features updates and notes from visiting scholars at the Meeter Center over the years. We appreciate their support, and yours, as we look forward to many more years in service of Calvin studies and Reformation studies. Thank you!

Karin Y. Maag

Visiting Scholars Through the Years



"It is with gratitude that I offer my congratulations to the patrons and staff of the Meeter Center at the occasion of the institution's thirtieth anniversary. My three months at the Meeter Center in 2003 helped me greatly in furthering my understanding of covenant theology. The value of the selection of works

available and the helpful attitude of the staff were much appreciated. My studies have both enriched my lectures at the Reformed Theological College (Geelong, Australia) and encouraged the publication of the article, "Christ's Active Obedience in Federal Theology" (*Vox Reformata*, # 69, 2004). I have just completed another study leave, and in time I hope to publish a book on Creation and Culture, where the covenantal aspect of our life under God will again be a prominent feature.

In a time when financial restrictions often lead the curtailment of programs it is my prayer that the Lord will enable the continuation of the Meeter Center's ministry without impairments. I believe it to be of significant value to the Church and Kingdom of Christ. May God continue to bless the program and all its participants."

Willem (Bill) Berends
Faculty Research Fellow, 2003

"Researching at the Meeter Center as a Visiting Research Fellow in July 2004 was the single best experience of my Ph.D candidature, and gave me some of my life's most treasured memories. It was the first time I had ever left Australia and was not merely an opportunity to research at a world-class library but was also a sort of pilgrimage, for so many of my most treasured books were published in Grand Rapids and I had to see this city for myself. My experience in Grand Rapids and the surrounding cities was exciting and uplifting. My roommate Dariusz Bricko (now Dr.) was a wonderful guide around the area. Karin Maag and Paul Fields were also really helpful in terms of suggesting resources for my study into sixteenth-century political thought, and often helped me track the books and articles down. I was awarded my Ph.D in 2007 and my first book *Tudor Protestant Political Thought, 1547-1603* (Brill, 2011) was largely based on it. I now teach full-time in the School of Politics and International Relations at Macquarie University Sydney and I know that the help I received at the Meeter Center was absolutely central to me being able to submit a well-received Ph.D thesis and turn it into a scholarly monograph. I cannot commend the Center highly enough and find it impossible to think of the scholarly experience without slipping into nostalgia, for it was one of the happiest times of my life."



Stephen Chavura
Student Research Fellow, 2004



“Working at the Meeter Center is a pleasure. Having first been introduced to the Center and its rich collection back in 2004 during a NEH summer seminar, the faculty fellowship for 2010-11 was a welcomed opportunity to return to Calvin College and delve into a new project. Karin, Ryan, and Paul were all so helpful

during my fellowship. The combination of the comprehensive collection and the expertise of the staff made for a productive stay. I appreciated that they secured housing so I could bring my family, and I still think about the great pie available in Grand Rapids. My project “Hearsay or Truth? Catholic/Protestant Polemics and the Maintenance of Religious Difference, 1580-1665” explores the relationship between pastors in Geneva and members of the Jesuits from 1580 until 1630 using their published polemics. I have two chapters forthcoming this summer that include research done at the Meeter Center. Thank you for all your support. Congratulations on your 30th anniversary!”

*Jill Fehleison
Faculty Research Fellow, 2010*



“During the period of my research fellowship at the Meeter Center, I remember most fondly the unlimited access I had to the IDC microfiche collection which aided me greatly in a chapter I was researching for my dissertation. My work at the Center, made possible by the Emo F. J. Van Halsema Fellowship,

firmly established the trajectory which the remainder of my research took. My time at the Center was made especially pleasant by the friendly assistance extended to me by Karin Maag, Paul Fields, Ryan Noppen and Chelsey Harmon.

Presently, I am serving as Professor of Historical and Systematic Theology at Northland Graduate School (Northland International University) in Dunbar, Wisconsin. My current scholarly activity concerns the preparation of my dissertation, in the research of which the Meeter Center played such an integral part, for publication. I wish to congratulate the Meeter Center as it celebrates its thirtieth anniversary, and express my gratitude for the unique and invaluable way in which it has advanced Calvin and Reformation studies. May you continue your outstanding service to the scholarly community. Happy Anniversary!”

*André Gazal
Van Halsema Fellow, 2008*



“There are many reasons we thank God there's the Meeter Center! But why? The importance of John Calvin is often underestimated. Johann Sebastian Bach fared in the same way. In 1720 he applied for employment as an organist in Hamburg, but was declined by the responsible electoral committee. Today

Bach's legacy is profound. Unfortunately there is still a lack of knowledge in the case of Calvin and due to this the existence of the Meeter Center in Grand Rapids is so important. Precious treasures of Calvin's path of life, work, and impact are collected there. Who within the society knows the significance of Calvin's theology, which supported democratic movement and reliable constitutional legality? Where is the value of *de ecclesiae disciplina* for social development considered? Who remembers the power of Calvin's words in a sermon: "The houses of the rich are the slaughterhouses of the poor?"

During my studies at the Meeter Center I worked on a script for a film of Calvin's life. I received a lot of loving support and I like thinking back. At this time fifteen possible scenes have been developed. The life of John Calvin and movements triggered by him are thrilling. As the responsibilities of my pastorate draw upon me, my work on the film project is on hold at the moment.”

*Bernhard Glück
Van Halsema Fellow, 2011*

"I am an associate professor of history at Louisiana Tech University, with a specialization in the Tudor/Stuart period of England. In the summer of 2008, I was fortunate to receive a Faculty Research Fellowship from the H. Henry Meeter Center. I started out researching the lives of Huguenots in 17th-century London, but I found that the Meeter Center had a rich and broad range of sources. I viewed microfilm of 16th-century sermons and treatises by Reformed Protestants, and the responses to these. In my six weeks of research, I expanded my inquiries to include French and Dutch Protestants in urban and rural England. My monograph project was greatly enhanced through my experience with the sources and incredible staff at the H. Henry Meeter Center. I feel lucky to have been there.”

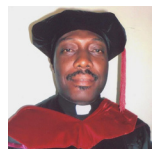


*Jeffery Hankins
Faculty Research Fellow, 2008*

“One of the several literary gems I discovered during my fellowship at the Meeter Center in the summer of 2010 was Andre Bieler's *Calvin's Economic and Social Thought*, a work that has since given the concept of diaconal a new dimension in the Global Evangelical Church in Ghana. According to Bieler: “...

for Calvin there was no doubt that the Word of God was directed at human beings as wholes, in their present and future lives, in their souls and also in their bodies, in their material and personal selves and likewise in their lives in society. When God speaks he meets the individual in his or her total existence, present and future... the entire secular world becomes sacred, nothing escapes the plan, the judgment or the love of God.” (P.156) As a result, the diaconates in Geneva and Strasbourg did not only provide aid to the needy, but also assisted in the training of the population in general for a calling—the underlying principle of the expanded micro-finance project and the vocational/agricultural training institute of the Global Impact Foundation which I lead.

May the Meeter Center remain a beacon of Reformation through the years ahead. Happy 30th Anniversary.”



*Komi Hiagbe
Freinds Research Fellow, 2010*



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“Congratulations on the 30th Anniversary! I wish the best for many, many years to come for the Center. The Meeter Center was the place I always wanted to visit during the time when I wrote my Ph.D dissertation at Princeton Theological Seminary. The wish came true in the summer of 2002. I enjoyed every moment

of my six great weeks there. Karin Maag's efficient leadership, Paul Fields's gentle and timely help, and Susan's heartfelt care enriched my time there. The wonderful experience at the Meeter Center led me to persuade my daughter, Aileen Choi, to study at Calvin College and she is graduating from Calvin College this May! Since 2010, I am serving as a praesidium representing Asia for International Congress on Calvin Research.”

*Jung-Sook Lee
Friends Research Fellow, 2002*



“I remember with great pleasure my visit to the H. Henry Meeter Center for Calvin Studies as a Faculty Research Fellow during Summer 2007, to pursue research on penance and public apology. As I anticipated, the Center's archival collection was full of treasures, including microfilms of Geneva's consistory records and classic works of Calvin scholarship in French and English.

The Hekman Library offered other riches, including books and journals that my home institution's library does not possess and cannot afford to purchase. Yet the best resource of all was the Center's director and staff members: Karin Maag, Ryan Noppen, and Paul Fields. They provided a warm welcome, as well as practical assistance and financial support for my research. Since becoming chair of the History Department at Colorado State in July 2009, most of my time is devoted to administrative responsibilities. I reflect on the experience of working at the Meeter Center, and of being part of its community of scholars, whenever I seek a break from budgets, meetings, and course scheduling. Congratulations to the Center on its thirtieth anniversary!”

*Diane Margolf
Faculty Research Fellow, 2007*



“I received a graduate student research fellowship in 2003 from the Meeter Center to work that summer on my dissertation. My focus was writing a chapter on Dutch Calvinist refugees in the German town of Wesel in the sixteenth century. I was received warmly by Karin Maag and the staff of the center, the faculty of

Calvin College, and members of the center's French paleography course. I wrote some of the best material from my dissertation, while taking breaks for well needed coffee, conversation, and inspiration. Much of the thinking and writing I did in Grand Rapids that summer became chapter 2 of my book, *The Tactics of Toleration*. I hope that the Meeter Center will continue to support this kind of research well into the future! Thank you.”

Lecture Recordings

For our friends who cannot attend, Meeter Center Lectures and Colloquia are recorded, with speakers' permission, and are accessible on the Center's website via podcasts.

Jesse Spohnholz is the author of *The Tactics of Toleration: A Refugee Community in the Age of Religious Wars* (2011), as well as several articles on Calvinist refugees, Reformed deaconesses, and religious pluralism. He is currently writing a history of the so-called 'Convent of Wesel', famed as an early meeting of Dutch Calvinist leaders in Germany, and a history of Reformed refugees during the Reformation.

*Jesse Spohnholz
Student Research Fellow, 2003*



“Congratulations to the Meeter Center for reaching this milestone, and to Karin, Paul, and the rest of the staff for their leadership and vision. I am grateful for the time I have spent in the Meeter Center, both as a graduate student and as a recipient of a generous Faculty Fellowship in 2010. The staff has always been most helpful in the acquisition of resources and helping me find items they knew would interest me. Because of the vast library and rare book collection, along with the accommodations provided, my summer in the Meeter Center provided a great start to my most recent book project. *Jacob Arminius, Theologian of Grace* will be published this year by Oxford University Press.”

*Keith Stanglin
Research Fellowship, 2010*



“I was a visiting scholar at the Meeter Center in the summer of 2007. What impacted me most was professionalism of the staff, the abundance of resources in the library, and the hospitality of our hosts. This last thing is remarkable because my country of Poland is renowned for its hospitality, and so it's not easy to impress us on that field. During my study at the Meeter Center I understood better the dilemmas of John Calvin, who had to protect the fragile order in Geneva. I have found a man, who was basically tolerant, if tolerance means patient forbearance of someone else's stubbornness. Inspired by this discovery, I wrote an article about Calvin published in the journal *Politeja*, published by Jagiellonian University. For my wife Agnes, our daughters Ania and Sarah, and myself the scholarship offered by the Meeter Center was a chance to experience America for the first time. Long after coming back to Poland our daughters kept asking: 'Dad, when will we return home?' (i.e. to Grand Rapids). It tells a lot. I would like to express my special gratitude towards my friend Bill Stevenson from Calvin College, Karin Maag, Paul Fields, and Ryan Noppen. Thank you!”

*Tomasz Szczech
Faculty Research Fellowship, 2007*



“Studying at the Meeter Center for four weeks in the summer of 2010 was all about meeting people. Of course it was about meeting John Calvin in a special way. For a beginning doctoral student it was a wonderful experience to have all the resources available in one location, in order to come as close to the reformer of Geneva as is humanly possible. Furthermore it was also about meeting fellow *amici Calvini*. In this regard I have the greatest appreciation for the competent staff of the center who were always willing

to help. And finally it was about meeting fellow believers, people who share the same love for the convictions and thoughts of John Calvin. These three meetings often coincided with each other. I am currently busy with my doctorate on Calvin's view on Pentecost and the church in his commentary on the book of Acts. My time at the Meeter Center was a great impulse to this work. I want to wish the Center and its staff all the best for their future endeavours. May Calvin's motto be their motto: 'My heart I offer to you, O Lord, promptly and sincerely.'"

*Eric van Alten
Van Halsema Fellow, 2011*



"I am Zhibin Xie, associate professor in Christian Studies in the Department of Philosophy, Shanghai Normal University. I was a fellow at the Meeter Center from October to November in 2009, conducting a project on the doctrine of common grace in Calvin and Calvinism as a theological root of public theology.

One achievement from my research at the Center is my paper entitled "Understand the Teachings of Common Grace in the Chinese Context: Its Possibilities and Difficulties", which was presented at the conference on "Common Grace and 'A Common Word'" by the Abraham Kuyper Center for Public Theology at Princeton Theological Seminary in April 2010. Presently I am assisting with the publication project for the Chinese version of *Abraham Kuyper: A Centennial Reader*.

When I was at the Center, I was deeply impressed by series of activities such as lectures and special exhibitions celebrating Calvin 500 with his far-reaching impact to human history and Christian thought. As quite a few Chinese scholars have benefited much from the Center as research fellows, I hope the Center, with its rich resources, will foster its contributions to Calvinist studies in China in the future, for Chinese academia and church today have increasingly shown their interest in Calvin and Calvinist thought.

With warm congratulations to the Meeter Center's 30th Anniversary!"

*Zhibin Xie
Friends Research Fellowship, 2009*

30th Anniversary Photos

Below: The Governing Board of the H. Henry Meeter Center at its 30th Anniversary: from left to right: Raymond Mentzer, Richard Muller, John Bolt, Karin Maag, Richard Baker, Suzanne McDonald, Wayne Muller, Gaylen Byker, Randy Engle, Doris Rikkers, Julius Medenblik, and Paul Harper



John Calvin's 1536 *Institutes*

As part of the H. Henry Meeter Center's 30th anniversary, John Calvin's first edition of the *Institutes* is on display in the Meeter Center through June 1st. This rare volume was published in 1536 in Basle and



was Calvin's first major theological work. Its long Latin title – *Christianae religionis institutio, totam fere pietatis summam, et quid est indoctrina salutis cognitum necessarium, complectens; omnibus pietatis studiosis lectu dignissimum opus, ac recens editum* makes clear that its purpose is to present the whole sum of piety and what is necessary for understanding the doctrine of salvation. It consists of six chapters in addition to the letter to King Francis I of France in which Calvin defended the "evangelicals" who questioned the authority of the Roman Catholic Church yet wished to promote the purity of the one holy catholic Church. Calvin reworked the text both in Latin and French throughout his lifetime. The 1559 Latin edition, owned by the Meeter Center, was the final and complete work based upon the seedling first printed in 1536, and is also on display in the Center.

We appreciate the Van Kampen Collection and the Van Kampen family's willingness to loan this important work to the Center during the first part of our anniversary year. The Van Kampen Collection was founded in 1986 by Robert and Judith Van Kampen, who established a privately-funded research library in 1994, known as the Scriptorium: Center for Christian Antiquities. It was located in Grand Haven, MI, and provided a unique setting for research, cataloguing, and the presentation of the holdings. In 2002, the Collection relocated to Orlando, Florida.

Below: On the evening of March 29, the Center hosted a special anniversary dinner in the College's faculty/staff dining room for Friends of the Center, current and former Governing Board members, and other individuals who played a role in the development and growth of the Center: from left to right: Roger Brummel, Paul Fields, Kim Fields, Richard Baker, Fran Baker, Gaylen Byker, and Connie Brummel.



“In Pursuit of Godliness”



Dr. Karen Spierling

On the evening of March 29 the H. Henry Meeter Center for Calvin Studies welcomed Dr. Karen Spierling of Denison University. Her lecture was entitled “The Pursuit of Godliness: The Challenges of Reform in 16th-century Geneva.” During the mid-sixteenth century, John Calvin and his reforming colleagues worked to transform Geneva into a morally disciplined, “godly” society. Despite Geneva’s contemporary reputation as a strict and successful theocracy, Calvin and the Genevan Consistory confronted many challenges

in trying to make Calvin’s vision of godliness a reality. Spierling’s lecture focused on the necessity of truthfulness among the Genevan population to attain Calvin’s goal of a godly Geneva. The Consistory, the church’s body regulating moral behavior, continually pursued the right living of its citizens, but in doing so, noted Spierling, they relied heavily on the truthfulness of the people. Calvin’s ideal for a godly Geneva was never fully achieved, largely because of the Consistory’s inability to guarantee the truthfulness of Genevan citizens. Dr. Spierling described several interesting examples from the Consistory records that demonstrated the variety of obstacles that constrained the Consistory’s pursuit of a more truthful, godly society. Issues such as continued connections to Catholics and Catholicism, resistance to the Consistory’s claim of authority over familial and personal relationships, and conflicting loyalties to employers, families and the Genevan authorities all illustrate the struggle and paradoxes involved in the official effort to fulfill Calvin’s vision of a godly, reformed, truthful community within a society where that vision was still far from reality.

Kyle Dieleman, Student at Calvin Theological Seminary

Fellowships Awarded in 2012

Faculty Fellowship

Dr. Chang Uk Byun, Assistant Professor of Mission History at Presbyterian College and Theological Seminary in Seoul, South Korea, will research “Calvin’s Mission Theology: His Missionary Thinking and Mission Praxis.”

Emo F.J. Van Halsema Fellowship

Rev. Mark Garcia, Minister at Immanuel Orthodox Presbyterian Church in West Allegheny/Moon Township, PA, will study Calvin’s view on *descensus ad inferos* (Christ’s descent into Hell).

Student Research Fellowship

Mr. Timothy Gwin, D.Min. Student at the Institute for Reformed Worship at Erskine Theological Seminary, will research Calvin’s *pietas*.

Emo F.J. Van Halsema Fellowship

Dr. Craig Wansink, Senior Pastor at Second Presbyterian Church of Norfolk, VA, and Coordinator and Professor in the Department of Religious Studies at Virginia Wesleyan College, will examine “Why Calvin Matters Every Day: Daily Devotions for Reforming Lives.”

Student Research Fellowship

Mr. Ki “Paul” Yu, Ph.D. Student at Kosin University in South Korea, will study Calvin’s influence on education.

Student Research Fellowship

Mr. Federico Zuliani, Ph.D. Student at the The Warburg Institute at the University of London, United Kingdom, will research “The Reception of the Books of the Maccabees in Reformation Europe: The Case of John Calvin.”

Summer Latin Paleography Course

This summer the Center will host a 16th century Latin paleography course intended for upper-level undergraduate and graduate students and scholars interested in reading manuscript sources in Latin. The two-week workshop is co-sponsored by the Sixteenth Century Society and Conference. The Meeter Center is home to a substantial collection of original 16th century Latin manuscripts and texts focused on the Reformation. The course will draw on a variety of documents, including correspondence, minutes, commentaries, official documents, etc. Beginning paleographers will develop a basic tool set to help them read, interpret, and present the texts that they encounter in their research. The instructor of the course is Todd Rester, a Ph.D student at Calvin Theological Seminary working with Dr. Richard Muller. Eight participants were selected from applications that came from across the country:

Amy Alexander, M.Th. student at Westminster Seminary, Escondido, CA
Mark Bilby, professor at Point Loma Nazarene University, San Diego, CA

Jennifer Binczewski, Ph.D student at Washington State University, Pullman, WA

Adam Brink, M.Div. student at North American Reformed Seminary

Todd Hains, Ph.D student at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, Chicago, IL

Jason Holstege, middle school Latin teacher at Heritage Christian School, Hudsonville, MI

Keith Stanglin, associate professor of historical theology at Harding University, Searcy, AR

Paul Strauss, Ph.D student at University of Nebraska-Lincoln

Recent Acquisitions

Burnett, Amy Nelson. *Karlstadt and the Origins of the Eucharistic Controversy: A Study in the Circulation of Ideas*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2011.

Chön, Kwang-Sik, ed. *Kalbin kwa 21-segi*. Seoul: Buhŭng kwa Gaehyöksa, 2009.

Cottret, Bernard. *Calvin et la France*. Geneva: Droz, 2009.

De Lange, Albert. *Calvino, i Valdesi e l'Italia*. Torino: Claudiana, 2009.

Grell, Ole Peter. *Brethren in Christ: A Calvinist Network in Reformation Europe*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011.

McGrath, Alister E. *A vida de João Calvino*. São Paulo: Editora Cultura Cristã, 2004.

Monnoyeur, Pierre. *Le collègue Calvin: histoire d'une architecture: XVIe-XXe siècle*. Geneva: Slatkine, 2009.

Schlüter, Roland. *Calvinismus am Mittelrhein: reformierte Kirchenzucht in der Grafschaft Wied-Neuwied 1648-1806*. Köln: Böhlau Verlag Köln Weimar Wien, 2010.

Schutte, G. J. *Het Calvinistisch Nederland: mythe en werkelijkheid*.

Hilversum: Verloren, 2000.

Sewell, Alida Leni. *Calvin and the Body: An Inquiry Into His Anthropology*. Amsterdam: VU University Press, 2011.

Spohnholz, Jesse. *The Tactics of Toleration: A Refugee Community in the Age of Religious Wars*. Newark: University of Delaware Press, 2011.

Wipf, Thomas. *Rediscovering Calvin: The Churches on the 500th Anniversary of the Birth of the Reformer John Calvin*. Bern: Federation of Swiss Protestant Churches FSPC, 2009.

Hugh and Eve Meeter Calvinism Awards for High School Seniors

The 2012 winners are:

1st Place: **Eryn Westerveld** of Ingersoll, ON

2nd Place: **Matthew Poolman** of Kentwood, MI

Both winners have been admitted to Calvin College