From the Director

As we gradually move toward spring in Michigan, we look forward to a busy summer. Our fifteen participants in the National Endowment for the Humanities summer seminar have been selected, and we are currently working on the practical arrangements to ensure that all participants have a comfortable and fulfilling stay in Grand Rapids. A list of the confirmed participants and their university affiliations can be found on page 4.

We have selected six visiting scholars for 2004. Their countries of origin range from Australia to the Netherlands to the United States. Several of the visiting scholars will be here at the same time as our NEH seminar participants, so we look forward to fruitful interactions. As in previous years, the scholars will present the results of their work toward the end of their stay. All are welcome to attend these presentations. Please see page 3 for more on this year’s visiting scholars.

The Meeter Center notes with sadness the passing of several leading scholars of Calvinism and Reformation studies, including Dr. Edward Dowey (May 5, 2003), Dr. James Kittelson (November 10, 2003), Dr. Fred Klooster (December 27, 2003), and Dr. William Bouwsma (March 2, 2004). Dr. Bouwsma in particular had ties to the Meeter Center through his service on our Governing Board from 1989 to 1991. Paying tribute to him, Calvin emeritus history professor and former Meeter Center Governing Board president Frank Roberts wrote, “He was a wonderful Christian gentleman in addition to being a world-class scholar. It was our blessing to have had him on the Meeter Center board for those three years.”

My sabbatical projects (on Calvin’s second catechism and on his works more generally) have led me to make extensive use of the Meeter Center collection. Once again I am struck by how much we have benefited from the careful collection of books, articles, microfilm, microfiches, and rare books built up over the years. The Center truly is a valuable resource, one we look forward to sharing with our visitors over the coming months.

Karin Y. Maag

A Spring Colloquium

The Meeter Center was pleased to feature Dr. Laura Smit, professor in the Religion Department at Calvin College, at its recent spring colloquium. Dr. Smit, whose areas of expertise include medieval theology and contemporary debates in systematic theology, offered an engaging presentation entitled “Developing a Calvinist Sacramental Theology,” in which she used John Calvin’s doctrine of the Lord’s Supper as an entry point into broader questions of theological aesthetics.

By her own admission, discussions of aesthetics that look to the Lord’s Supper are much more common in Roman Catholic quarters, which build upon the doctrine of transubstantiation. She sought, therefore, to develop a constructive Protestant approach to beauty in the created order by pushing the boundaries of historical Reformed conceptions of spiritual presence in the Supper. During her presentation Dr. Smit first gave an overview of Calvin on the Supper, and then she proposed a model to explain how the goodness and beauty of the world parallels the

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New Acquisitions

Books


Articles


Dissertations


Fellowship Applications for 2005 may be obtained from the Meeter Center upon request and should be returned by January 1, 2005. Application forms are also available on our Web site.

Fellowships Awarded in 2004

Faculty Research Fellowship: Dr. Mirjam van Veen, a research assistant at the Free University, Amsterdam, The Netherlands, will pursue research on Calvin’s treatise against the Anabaptists.

Student Research Fellowship: Mr. Stephen Chavura, a Ph.D. candidate from the University of New England, NSW, Australia, plans to study Calvin and English political thought. Mr. John Exalto, a Ph.D. candidate at the Free University, Amsterdam, The Netherlands, will do research on Calvinism and sanctity.

Emo F. J. Van Halsema Fellowship: Rev. Randall Engle, a pastor at North Hills CRC, Troy, Mich., plans to work on John Calvin’s theology of instrumental music in worship and the Dutch organ controversy.

Friends of the Meeter Center Fellowship: Dr. Brian Lee, adjunct professor at Reformed Bible College, Grand Rapids, Mich., studied Vermigli on marriage and celibacy in his commentary on 1 Corinthians 7. Mr. Young il Joseph Han, a Ph.D. candidate at City University, New York, N.Y., will pursue work on a conceptual study of the history of childhood in the Reformed tradition.

Meeter Center Colloquium Series

November 18, 2004 Dr. Susan Felch, professor of English at Calvin College, will speak at the Meeter Center’s fall colloquium. Her topic will be “Women and the Reformation.”

March 3, 2005 Dr. Karin Maag, director of the H. Henry Meeter Center and Calvin College history professor, will be the Meeter Center’s 2005 spring lecturer. Her topic will be “Hero or Villain? Interpretations of John Calvin and His Legacy.”

Hugh and Eve Meeter Calvinism Awards for High School Seniors

Nine papers were submitted on the topic “John Calvin and Marriage.” Abigail Veldkamp from Grand Rapids, Michigan won the first-place award of $2,500, and second-place winner Kory Plockmeyer of Holland, Michigan, won $1,250. Contact the Meeter Center to receive an informative brochure about next year’s contest. Papers should be received by January 15, 2005.

Van Halsema Family Calviniana Gifts

Within the last year Dr. Dick and Mrs. Thea Van Halsema gave to the Center five prints, several plaques, and a bust of Calvin. Such materials are always welcome since they add to the Center’s collection of Calviniana and are interesting in their own right. Both Dr. and Mrs. Van Halsema have long been active in Reformed circles and in their promotion of Calvin studies. Dr. Van Halsema was President of Reformed Bible College in Grand Rapids, Michigan, from 1966 to 1987, while Mrs. Van Halsema has written several books including This Was John Calvin and Three Men Came to Heidelberg. Also, the Emo Van Halsema Fellowship administered by the Center is a stipendiary award available to pastors from the Reformed tradition. Its purpose is to allow pastors to pursue scholarly research in the field of John Calvin or the Reformation and early Calvinism. This award carries a stipend of $1,250 annually, funded by an endowment provided by the Van Halsema Family.

The fellowship, the picture of St. Pierre in Geneva, plus the bust of Calvin are three examples of the Van Halsemas’ generosity. We are deeply grateful for their ongoing support and interest in the Meeter Center’s work.

A Spring Colloquium (continued from page 1)

symbolism of the Eucharist without resting on either transubstantiation or a “sacramental” character to all of life.

Those students, scholars, and friends who attended the afternoon lecture seemed to enjoy the fresh yet provocative nature of Professor Smit’s presentation. Among its many contributions, Smit’s “Calvinist Sacramental Theology” reflected the mutual interests of historians, theologians, and philosophers on this subject.

David Holmlund, M.Div. Student Calvin Theological Seminary
NEH Summer Seminar

The NEH summer seminar on “John Calvin and the Transformation of Religious Culture in Geneva, France, and Beyond” scheduled for June 28 to July 30, 2004, will be held at the Meeter Center and co-taught by Raymond Mentzer from the University of Iowa and Karin Maag. The confirmed participants and their projects are as follows:

- Martin Batts, professor, chair, English
  Le Tourneau University, Longview, Texas
  Calvin and Calvinists: similarities and differences

- Daniel Eppley, assistant professor, religion
  McMurry University, Abilene, Texas
  The Admonition Controversy and royal supremacy in Tudor England

- Amanda Eurich, professor, history
  Western Washington University, Bellingham, Washington
  The confessionally-mixed communities of Béarn and Orange

- Cassandra Falke, instructor, English
  Lamar State College, Port Arthur, Texas
  The moral and ethical aspects of Reformed higher education

- Jill Fehlison, post-doctoral fellow, history
  George Mason University, Fairfax, Virginia
  Dialogues between Catholics and Calvinists

- Charles Gunnoe, associate professor, history
  Aquinas College, Grand Rapids, Michigan
  The Erastian view of church discipline

- Michael Monheit, associate professor, history
  University of South Alabama, Mobile, Alabama
  Calvin’s formative years, 1528-41

- Jeannine Olson, professor, history
  Rhode Island College, Providence, Rhode Island
  Calvin’s friend Nicholas Des Gallars in Orléans

- Igor Puchkov, instructor, social sciences
  Kirtland Community College, Roscommon, Michigan
  The complexity and historic role of Calvinism

- Linda Smith, department chair, humanities
  Hawkeye Community College, Waterloo, Iowa
  Calvin’s impact on a theology of international development

- Yudha Thianto, assistant professor, theology
  Trinity Christian College, Palos Heights, Illinois
  The practice of private baptism in the Reformation

- Allan Tulchin, post-doctoral fellow, history
  George Mason University, Fairfax, Virginia
  The Reformation in Nîmes

- Mike Vander Weele, professor, English
  Trinity Christian College, Palos Heights, Illinois
  Calvin’s notion of exchange and rhetorical aesthetics

- Michael Vendsel, adjunct professor, social science
  Brookhaven Community College, Farmers Branch, Texas
  Calvin’s analysis of medieval faith and reason

- Darren Walhof, assistant professor, political science
  Grand Valley State University, Grand Rapids, Michigan
  The reconstruction of religion in Calvin’s Geneva

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International Congress

August 25-29, 2004, Zurich, Switzerland

"Heinrich Bullinger (1504–1575) Life-Thought-Influence."

Web site: www.unizh.ch/irg/bullinger2004engl