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John Calvin

Calvin Courier

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From the Director

Since its foundation in 1982, the Meeter Center's operating budget has been funded jointly by Calvin College and Calvin Theological Seminary. At the same time, the much-appreciated financial support provided by the Friends of the Meeter Center has helped fund special projects, including the annual Friends of the Meeter Center fellowship, and the biennial Genevan paleography workshop for graduate students and faculty. With the strong support of the presidents of Calvin College and Calvin Theological Seminary, we are now working to raise a significant endowment to provide the Center with a stronger

foundation to support its ongoing work. The target is **five million dollars**. We are already off to a strong start, having received gifts totaling **one million dollars**. Included in this newsletter is a gift form. If you have benefitted from the Center's work over the years, whether as a research scholar, a fellowship recipient, a participant in any of our programs including summer seminars and institutes, or if you simply want to support the Meeter Center as an outstanding resource, we warmly invite you to join with others in the US and around the world in making a gift. We deeply appreciate any and all contributions.

Karin Y. Maag

From Geneva to South-East Asia

In his public lecture hosted by the Meeter Center in October, Yudha Thianto, professor of theology at Trinity Christian College in Illinois, showed that in the early 17th century the tradition of Psalm-singing, which originated in the Genevan church, had been transmitted by the Dutch via the Dutch East India Company (VOC) to the indigenous people of the Dutch East Indies (modern-day Indonesia). After displacing the Portuguese from the archipelago, and becoming the dominant European power in that region, the Dutch soon focused on bringing the gospel to the indigenous people in their own tongues. They did so by translating the Bible into Malay, the lingua franca of the region, and also by introducing the tradition of Psalm-singing in Malay with the publication of bilingual – Dutch and Malay – psalters.

Preparing metrical Psalms and ecclesiastical songs in Malay was not an easy task. Linguistically, Malay is very different from European languages. Early Dutch translations into Malay sometimes were awkward, and the meaning was sometimes altered in order to maintain the meter. However, as Thianto noted, these Malay psalms still upheld the core teachings of the Reformed faith. Furthermore, singing metrical Psalms also posed cultural challenges for the natives of the land. Long before the coming of the Europeans, the Malay people cultivated various traditional ways of singing. However, singing metrical psalms was totally foreign to them. Yet instead of fitting the traditional Malay ways of singing into Christian worship, the Dutch taught and imposed their own musical tradition. This approach can be assessed from different perspectives. First, the VOC was committed to establishing a Reformed identity in the Dutch East

Indies. Second, political motivations shaped the VOC's approach: by teaching the Malay people to sing and to worship in the Reformed tradition, the VOC hoped to reinforce their position against their Catholic rivals. Finally, these limping translations were probably as much as the Dutch Reformed versifiers could accomplish at the time.

Thianto therefore demonstrated the continuity of the Reformed tradition from Geneva to Indonesia via the Netherlands. Discontinuity, however, also held sway. Right from the beginning of their presence in the archipelago, the VOC insisted on the Reformed way of worship in vernacular. One should not underestimate this effort. It is certainly one significant factor, I believe, that contributes to the acceptance of the Reformed faith and its practice by the natives of the land. In the present day, this practice of singing Psalms and ecclesiastical songs is still maintained by many Indonesian Reformed churches.



Yudha Thianto

Philip Djung, PhD student, Calvin Theological Seminary

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.

Reformed Anthropology From Calvin to Edwards: Research at the Center

"I arrived at the Meeter Center with firm but pretty sketchy ideas about my project, no more than an outline. The four weeks here have carried me forward more than I could have wished. Partly this is due to the ambience of the place. Long periods of quiet, helpful staff, and the presence of other researchers. And partly due to its location. It is on the fourth floor of the Hekman Library, which also houses the Library's theological and philosophical books. So not only are the specialist collections of the Center at arm's length, but more general literature of interest to me, and to most who use the Center, I imagine. All these resources are only a few paces away. What could be better?

The idea that brought me to the Center was to write an account of the development of Reformed anthropology from Calvin and Martyr to Edwards, in the setting of the broader Christian appreciation of mankind. As far as I can discover there is nothing already available that fits this description. But is it a viable project, worth attempting? My time here has helped me to decide that it is. It's not easy to see why there is a gap to fill here, except that the re-awakening of the history of Reformed theology in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries has concentrated on other matters, notably theological prolegomena and the doctrine of God.

I have begun to explore the use of scholastic categories taken from the medieval theologians that were part of the theological culture. (Calvin did not drop fully-formed from the heavens!). It now has to be evaluated in the way it has been absorbed by reformed theologians of the first two centuries or so on.



Paul Helm

Since I am a philosopher first and then a theologian, the influence of Plato, the Stoics and Aristotle, particularly as mediated through Aquinas, are of considerable interest. The tradition has borrowed material in a truly eclectic fashion, with interesting differences of emphasis (I am discovering) from theologian to theologian. So Aristotle's four-fold causation can be seen at work in discussions of

the human theoretical and practical intellect, foundational for understanding the powers of the soul. And those who were living philosophers in the period I have, notably Descartes and Locke, made their presence felt, sometimes in different ways to different theological cultures, and this is also of importance. So there is much to do, but I think I am set fair, or at least I am in a much better place than when I arrived in Grand Rapids four weeks or so ago. Thanks to those who have made by stay a pleasant one, Paul Fields and Ryan Noppen, and particularly Richard Muller!"

Paul Helm

London School of Theology and 2015 Faculty Research Fellow

In Memoriam

The Meeter Center joins many colleagues in Reformation studies and friends around the world in remembering Dr. Francis Higman, director of the Genevan Institute of Reformation History from 1988 to 1998, who died on June 10, 2015 in France, at nearly ninety years old. Francis Higman was a noted scholar of French and Genevan Reformation history, focusing particularly on John Calvin's impact on the French language and style. Among his key publications in English were *Censorship and the Sorbonne* (Geneva, 1979) and *Piety and the People: Religious Printing in French, 1511-1551* (Aldershot, 1996). Dr. Higman was also a long-time friend of the Meeter Center and encourager of our work. He will be deeply missed.

NEH Institute, July 11-29, 2016

The Meeter Center is delighted to announce that it received a major grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities for a teaching-focused summer institute for college and university professors, "Teaching the Reformation after Five Hundred Years". Twenty-five participants (including three graduate students) recruited through a competitive application process will join Meeter Center director Karin Maag, Dr. Katherine Van Liere (History Department, Calvin College) and Dr. David Whitford (Baylor University) for this program focused on fostering excellent undergraduate-level instruction on the Reformation and its impact. The three-week institute will take place at the Meeter Center in Grand Rapids from July 11 to July 29, 2016. The application deadline is March 1, 2016. Each participant will receive a \$2,700 stipend to cover travel, housing, and other associated costs. For more information about the institute and application instructions, go to: <http://www.calvin.edu/meeter/NEH/2016/>

Funded Research Fellowships

Every year, the Meeter Center offers fellowships for graduate students, faculty, and pastors. Fellowship recipients receive a stipend to come to the Center to do research on subjects pertaining to John Calvin and Calvinism. **Previous fellowship recipients may re-apply after a minimum one-year hiatus.** For further details visit:

<http://www.calvin.edu/meeter/new/fellowships-and-scholarships>

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Summer Paleography Workshop

From July 11 to 22, 2016, the Meeter Center will host its ninth biennial Genevan paleography workshop, taught by Dr. Thomas Lambert, who is expert at deciphering sixteenth-century manuscripts and helping others to learn how to do the same. Eight participants will receive bursaries of \$500 each to help defray some of the travel and housing expenses for the two-week program. A solid knowledge of written French is a prerequisite for all applicants. More information on the workshop and application instructions can be found at: <http://www.calvin.edu/meeter/paleography/index.htm>

A Meeter Center Supporter from Scotland

In September, the Center hosted Rebekah Earnshaw, recipient of one of our Meeter Center Student Research fellowships. She is working on her PhD at the University of Saint Andrews in Scotland. While here, she gave a lively presentation on her research on John Calvin's sermons and commentary on Genesis, focusing particularly on Calvin's depiction of God's majesty as Creator. She also gave an enthusiastic assessment of the Meeter Center at our donor event held on October 13. Around thirty friends and well-wishers of the Center were in attendance, along with both presidents of the college and the seminary. In her remarks, Rebekah stressed how valuable the Center was as a resource for scholars around the world, and how fortunate she felt to be able to come spend a month in the Center, making use of the collections in the Center and in Hekman Library, and particularly working with our rare book collection. She stressed how important the Center is in fostering scholarship on Calvin and Calvinism, and she encouraged everyone present to help make the Center better known. In her report on her time at the Meeter Center, she wrote:

"I came from the University of St Andrews to spend 4 weeks at the Meeter Center from 11th September to 13th October 2015. This time has been very productive for my research for my dissertation, 'Creator and creation according to Calvin on Genesis'. There are three main ways that my time at the Meeter Center has been helpful. First, the Meeter Center has an excellent collection of primary texts of Calvin's Genesis material and sixteenth century editions. This includes the 1554 first Latin edition and French translation the same year, as well as the 1563 second edition with the harmony of the books of Moses and the 1564 French translation of the same. Easy access to these primary materials has helped me affirm my earlier research directly rather than rely on the summaries of others.

Second, the completeness and easy access to secondary literature has helped me complete a section of work surveying the literature for my topic. The Meeter Center article files and the Resources Database have been particularly helpful in this regard, not only providing the chance to search electronically but to physically leaf through the files related to particular authors of interest. After

this month I've researched a stage where if someone mentions a relevant secondary source I have encountered it, or at the very least been in the same room as the volume concerned. The chance to scan electronic copies of material so that I can finish my reading later is very valuable in this regard.

Third, the proximity and availability of Calvin specialist scholars is excellent. The Meeter itself has allowed me to interact with Karin Maag, Paul Fields, and Richard Muller. At Calvin Theological Seminary I met with John Bolt. I also had the chance to visit scholars based in Holland, South Bend, and Chicago. These connections and conversations have been immediately fruitful and I hope will continue to have a positive impact on me and my research.

I have had an overwhelming positive experience during my month at the Meeter Center. As I said when I stepped into the previous board meeting, particularly for the first week or so I felt like 'a kid in a candy store' because of the sweetness and abundance of the books on hand. The immediate provision of a desk and office, a library card, and a cheque payment at my arrival all made it easy for me to begin my research straight away. Ryan has been wonderfully helpful and gone above and beyond to handle my obscure questions and help make the practicalities of my visit run smoothly, everything from sharing the chore of morning coffee making, or giving me access to the scanner when needed, through to taking me to the bank. Michael Lynch, Meeter Center Student Assistant, has also been helpful on the days he has been working at the Center.

The accommodation arrangement with Jeanette Henderson, program manager of the ecosystem preserve, has been easy and encouraging. It's been lovely to spend the month with her and make friends with both Jeanette and her cat Abigail. Coming from the UK the fellowship has not covered all my costs for the month but it has taken care of a substantial amount of my finances and my visit would not be possible without the generosity and support of this fellowship program. Besides more time or more money it is hard to say what might have improved my visit to the Meeter Center.

I will continue to advocate for the Center and tell others of the excellent resources available. I pray that God will provide for the Meeter Center and its ministry in Grand Rapids and around the world."



Rebekah Earnshaw speaking with a Friend of the Meeter Center

New Books

Balserak, Jon and Richard Snoddy, eds. *Learning from the Past: Essays on Reception, Catholicity and Dialogue in Honour of Anthony N. S. Lane*. London: Bloomsbury, 2015.

Brink, Gijsbert van den, and Harro M. Höpfl, eds. *Calvinism and the Making of the European Mind*. Leiden: Brill, 2014.

Johnson, Terry L. *Worshipping with Calvin: Recovering the Historic Ministry and Worship of Reformed Protestantism*. Darlington: EP Books, 2014.

Klauber, Martin I., ed. *The Theology of the French Reformed Churches: From Henri IV to the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes*. Grand Rapids: Reformation Heritage Books, 2014.

Molnár, Albert Szenci, et al. eds. *Psalterium Ungaricum*. Budapest: Magyarországi Református Egyház Zsinata, 2003.

Plath, Uwe. *Der Fall Servet und die Kontroverse um die Freiheit des Glaubens und Gewissens: Castellio, Calvin und Basel 1552-1556*. Essen: Alcorde Verlag., 2014.

Treasure, Geoffrey. *The Huguenots*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2013.

Wright, William A. *Calvin's Salvation in Writing: A Confessional Academic Theology*. Leiden: Brill, 2015.

Zuidema, Jason. *William Farel*. Darlington: EP Books, 2014.

Hugh and Eve Meeter Calvinism Awards for High School Seniors

The 2016 research paper topic is:

John Calvin and Pastoral Care

For further details and application instructions visit:

<http://www.calvin.edu/meeter/new/fellowships-and-scholarships/high-school.htm>