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CALVIN AND 500 YEARS REFORMATION

That doctrine, then, justification by faith, was the highest part of the religion …[1]
(Calvin in his letter to Cardinal Sadolete, 1539.)

1. PREFACE

In the normal four-year cycle the official *Tenfth South African Congress on Calvin Research* (SACCR) took place on 1 and 2 September 2016 in Pretoria. Gratitude is hereby expressed towards the Faculty of Theology of the University of Pretoria for being willing and able to be guest host together with the Congress Committee. In the same breath appreciation is expressed towards the Nederduitsch Hervormde Church Pretoria East. They graciously made available their church building and facilities to support the Congress. In a certain sense one could say that a circle has been completed with this jubilee of the tenth SACCR because the first SACCR took place in 1980, hosted by the Faculty of Theology of the University of Pretoria. To give expression to their commitment, the Dean of the Faculty, Prof Johan Buytendag, attended the Congress together with the head of Department of Church History, Prof Jerry Pillay. Prof Buytendag in his word of welcome referred among others to the challenges facing tertiary institutions and theological faculties in the contemporary world. A special word of thanks goes to Dr Wim Dreyer of the Faculty of Theology of the University of Pretoria, both in terms of the involvement of the Faculty and the availability and preparation of the facilities of the NH Church Pretoria East, where he also works as a minister.

At the Congress there was, as in the past, a wide spectrum of papers by speakers from a variety of academic institutions from both South Africa and beyond our borders – some well-known colleagues but also some new faces. Because of unforeseen problems in Malawi Dr Willy Zeze could not arrive in time for the Congress, but for the rest all the speakers, including the four who had travelled especially from overseas could present their papers. Prof Natie van Wyk in his paper on Luther and Calvin made the link with Wittenberg, following which all further papers concentrated on Calvin, with some establishing the link with the present, the twenty-first century, which was once again a confirmation of the topicality of Calvin. The congress was not limited to theological or historical topics, though, but papers were also presented on, among others, communication sciences (Prof Danie du Plessis) and law (Adv Andrew Muttitt) with lines being drawn to other fields such as education (Prof Dolf Britz), etc. The core of the papers paid attention to aspects of Calvin's exegesis – rightly so because Calvin as Reformer was known particularly, always, in his ministry, for putting emphasis on an accurate exegesis of Scripture as the Word of God.

A moving ceremony during the congress tied in with the history of the origins of the SACCR when Prof Adriaan Pont (formerly of the UP) was recognized for his pioneering work in the establishment of the SACCR. This was done by Dr Victor E. d'Assonville (representative of the Council of the *International Congress on Calvin Research* – ICCR). In the same vein Dr Gerard J Meier (chairperson of the *Calvin Jubilee Book Fund* – CJBF) also acknowledged Prof VE d'Assonville, Sr (formerly of the PU for CHE) for his contribution as the erstwhile chairman of the *Calvin Jubilee Book Fund* with the translations of the late Prof WH Simpson of Calvin's works into Afrikaans (among others the 1536 and 1559 Institutes and the Genevan Catechism of 1542/1545). Both of them received the published Conference

1 Cf. CStA (*Calvin-Studienausgabe*) 1.2,374,20-25. Text also in OS (= *Opera Selecta Calvini*. München: Chr. Kaiser) I,469. "Fidei iustificatio[nem] … Dogma ergo istud, quod in religione summum erat, …"

Papers of the Conferences of 2008 and 2012 (published by *Koers*).

In this volume of *Koers* a substantial portion of the papers read at the 2016 Conference can be found. Not all the papers read were included, as some authors chose to publish their papers elsewhere. On the other hand, there are also additional contributions included, which, while not read at the 2016 conference, are still linked in a very real sense to the conference theme and purpose, viz. to promote research emanating from primary sources of the Reformation, more specifically those by Calvin. The division of contributions in the volume gives expression to the relationship in which these papers stand with regards to Calvin and primary Calvin research.

It is in reality something quite special that in the year in which the Reformation is being commemorated – with reference to the publication of Martin Luther's 95 theses 500 years ago, on 31 October 1517 – a Calvin Conference Proceedings can appear. Without those events in Wittenberg, at the time an insignificant little university town, the later role of Calvin and subsequent history of centuries, in South Africa too, can hardly be imagined.

A warm word of thanks to Prof Annette Combrink in her capacity as Editor-in-Chief of *Koers*. Not only was she immediately amenable to considering the conference papers for publication in *Koers* but she was also willing to allocate a special volume of *Koers* in the light of the special nature and history of the journal and the commemoration of 500 years of Reformation, which is a meaningful symbiosis. Her own conscientious involvement in the language editing, and her technical team (scholarly publications) that had to work under great pressure behind the scenes are commended.

TheSACCR link with *Koers* has practically been institutionalized. This is the third Conference Proceedings in a row to have been published in *Koers* and the fourth out of the total of ten so far.[2] Once could therefore already speak of a series of Calvin Conference Proceedings in *KOERS*.

As in the past, it is the sincere hope of the editors that this collection of papers will stimulate

2 Referate wat gelewer is tydens die eerste nege Suid-Afrikaanse Kongresse vir Calvynnavorsing is in die volgende volumes gepubliseer:

B.J. van der Walt, *ed*., 1982. Calvinus Reformator: His contribution to theology, church and society. Potchefstroom: PU vir CHO. [Referate gelewer tydens die Eerste Suid-Afrikaanse Calvynnavorsingskongres in Pretoria / Papers read at the First South African Congress on Calvin Research, 1980.]

B.J. van der Walt, *ed*., 1986. John Calvin's Institutes, his *Opus magnum*. Proceedings of the Second South African Congress for Calvin Research, July 31-August 3, 1984. Potchefstroom: PU vir CHO.

A.D. Pont, *ed*., 1990. Calvin – France – South Africa: Papers read at the Third South African Congress on Calvin Research, Stellenbosch, 26-29 July 1988. Pretoria: Kital.

In die Skriflig, 27(4), Des. 1993. [Referate gelewer tydens die Vierde Suid-Afrikaanse Calvynnavorsingskongres, Bloemfontein, 1992 / Papers read at the Fourth South African Congress on Calvin Research, Bloemfontein, 1992.]

Hervormde Teologiese Studies, 54(1&2), Mrt. en Jun. 1998. [Referate gelewer tydens die Vyfde Suid-Afrikaanse Calvynnavorsingskongres in Pretoria, 1996 / Papers read at the Fifth South African Congress on Calvin Research, Pretoria, 1996.]

Koers, 66(1&2), 2001. [Referate gelewer tydens die Sesde Suid-Afrikaanse Calvynnavorsingskongres, Potchefstroom, 2000./ Papers read at the Sixth South African Congress on Calvin Research, Potchefstroom, 2000.]

Britz, R.M. & D'Assonville, Victor E., *reds.*, 2008. Prompte et Sincere. Bereidwillig en opreg. Willing and Sincere. [Papers read during the Seventh SACRC, Stellenbosch, 2004 / Contributions to the Seventh South African Congress on Calvin Research, Stellenbosch, 2004.] *Acta Theologica*, Supplementum10. Bloemfontein: Universityof the Free State.

D'Assonville, Victor E. & Britz, R.M. 2009. *eds*., Calvin as Catechist/Calvyn as kategeet. Kongresband met bydraes gelewer tydens die Agtste Suid-Afrikaanse Calvynnavorsingskongres/ Contributions to the Eighth South African Congress on Calvin Research, Bloemfontein, 2–4 September 2008. *Koers* (Bulletin vir Christelike Wetenskap / Bulletin for Christian Scholarship). 74(4).

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further Calvin research and also Reformational research in the wider sense in South Africa – with the emphasis always on primary sources (what Calvin himself said, not what was said about him). This is also an effort to make available to South African readers and – with the advantage at worldwide level of the internet – other readers access to new South African research.

Victor E. d'Assonville, Erik (H.H.) van Alten and Eric Kayayan
Guest editors: ***Koers*** *(Conference Proceedings of the* ***Tenth South African Congress on Calvin Research – SACRC2016****)*
December 2017

The authority of God. Kongresband met bydraes gelewer tydens die Negende Suid-Afrikaanse Calvynnavorsingskongres/ Contributions to the Ninth South African Congress on Calvin Research, Pretoria, 15–17 September 2012. *Koers* (Bulletin vir Christelike Wetenskap / Bulletin for Christian Scholarship). 79(4).

A From Wittenberg to Geneva

1. Die onvoltooide Reformasie van Martin Luther (1483-1546) – 'n Verkenning van die filosofiese grondslae van sy denke met spesiale aandag aan sy lewensvisie van twee ryke (Bennie van der Walt)
2. "Sapere audite …" Melanchthon – sestiende-eeuse humanis en belangrike reformator (Victor E. d'Assonville)

B Calvin, Geneva and theology

3. De Geest van Christus (Hans JW Maris)
4. John Calvin on the gifts of the Holy Spirit in his commentary on Acts (Erik HH van Alten)
5. Calvijns uitleg van Romeinen 9-11 tegen de achtergrond van de geschiedenis van de exegese van Origenes tot de Glossa ordinaria (Erik A de Boer)
6. Calvin's reply to Sadolet as an extension of his pastoral ministry (Thapelo Khumalo)

C Calvin, Geneva and the world

7. John Calvin on God's calling: Service in the Church and the World (Willie S.D. Zeze)
8. A life cultivated by righteousness. Calvin's exposition of the eighth Commandment in teaching children (Dolf RM Britz)
9. John Calvin, 2 Samuel 2:8-32 and Resistance to Civil Government: Supreme Equivocation or Mastery of Contextual Exegesis? (Andrew Muttitt)
10. De Calvin à Althusius: l'importance du modèle ecclésiologique réformé pour la pensée fédérale (Eric Kayayan)
11. Re-visiting the relevance of John Calvin's values of self-denial and calling for new Learning Organisations (Danie F du Plessis)