



Theologische Universiteit Kampen | Utrecht

Plompetorengracht 3, 3512 CA Utrecht | Broederweg 15, 8261 GS Kampen

Center for Dutch Reformation Studies (CDRS)

Slavery in (Church)Historical Perspective:

Exegesis | Responsibility | Spirituality

International Study Meeting, March 23, 2023

Program

Chair: Prof. Dr. Sabine Hiebsch

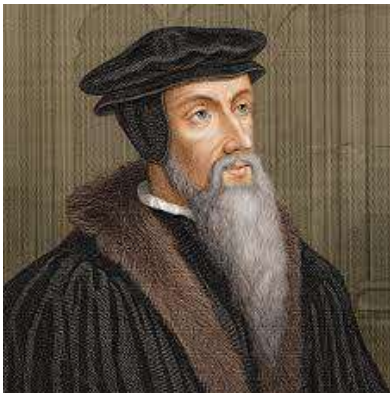
- 13.00-13.30: Doors open, coffee and tea
- 13.30-13.45: Welcome and introduction
- 13.45-14.15: Dr. Kyle Dieleman, Trinity Christian College, Palos Heights (Illinois):
Early Modern Reformed Approaches to Exegetical Comments Regarding Slavery
- 14.15-14.30: Discussion
- 14.30-14.45: Prof. Dr. George Harinck, Theological University Kampen | Utrecht:
Presentation NWO-project: Church and Slavery in the Dutch Empire: History, Theology and Heritage
- 14.45-15.15: Coffee Break
- 15.15-15.45: Dr. Diennek Hondius, VU University Amsterdam:
Church and Slavery in the Dutch Colonial Empire: History of Research and Challenges for the Future
- 15.45-16.00: Discussion
- 16.00-16.30: Prof. Dr. Rose Mary Allen, Extraordinary Professor of Culture, Community and History, University of Curaçao (online):
Spirituality of the Curaçaoan Enslaved Expressed through Traditional Songs
- 16.30-16.45: Discussion
- 16.45-17.00: Closing remarks

Speakers and abstracts

Early Modern Reformed Approaches to Exegetical Comments Regarding Slavery

Dr. Kyle Dieleman, assistant professor of History, Department Chair, Trinity Christian College, (Palos Heights, Illinois)

As the early modern Low Countries expanded into Africa, Asia, and the Americas, Dutch pastors, theologians, and church members were forced to



consider how social responsibility functioned in these new environments. My lecture focuses on early modern Reformed theologians' biblical exegesis of passages related to slavery. In particular, my lecture will focus on a comparative analysis of John Calvin and Andreas (Gerhard) Hyperius and their biblical commentaries on the book of Philemon. While the research for this lecture is on-going, the tentative thesis is that both Calvin and Hyperius

offer little critique of slavery as an institution and, instead, portray Paul as a model Christian while disparaging Onesimus's morality and social standing as a slave. The lecture will also briefly demonstrate that these specific examples are part of a broader approach in early modern Dutch Reformed biblical exegesis that failed to challenge ideas of slavery but, instead, assumed the presence of slavery as a legitimate societal structure. The lecture offers opportunities to reflect on the impact social and historical contexts have on biblical interpretation, the failure of religious traditions to challenge harmful societal structure, and opportunities for contemporary Christians to work against societal injustices.



Church and Slavery in the Dutch Colonial Empire: History of Research and Challenges for the Future

Dr. Dienne Hondius, associate professor of History, VU University Amsterdam; team member of the NWO research project: 'Church and Slavery in the Dutch Empire: History, Theology and Heritage'

In this presentation, I will discuss the historical involvement of Protestant churches and their representatives in the slave trade and slavery in the West and the East. The purpose of the presentation will be a conversation about the contemporary significance of these historical data and the opportunities for continued research on these topics.



Spirituality of the Curaçaoan Enslaved Expressed through Traditional Songs

Prof. Dr. Rose Mary Allen, Extraordinary Professor of Culture, Community and History, University of Curaçao

In my presentation, I will examine the spiritual outlook on life of Curaçaoan enslaved persons by analyzing traditional historical songs that contain a narrative of bondage, resilience, and the assertion of one's humanity. I want to expand in particular upon the concept of pekadó (sinner) which appears in many of these traditional songs.

