Conferences and Consultations

Princeton is a great place for conferences. The town’s location between the major metropolitan centers of New York and Philadelphia makes getting to Princeton Seminary convenient. Once here, conference-goers enjoy the Seminary’s green lawns, historic buildings, and excellent facilities. Best of all (from our perspective!) they make good use of our libraries. The staff of Special Collections and the Seminary Libraries welcomes visitors to browse our growing collection of more than half a million books and to consult our collections of personal papers, antiquarian books, and historic photographs.

Special Collections supports an active program of conferences and consultations in collaboration with its affiliated research centers, the Abraham Kuyper Center for Public Theology, the Center for Barth Studies, and the Center for the Study of Scottish Philosophy (see page 3). This newsletter provides details about some recent conferences and upcoming events; you will also find up-to-date event information at our web site, http://library.ptsem.edu/collections.

One of the best perks of working in Special Collections is meeting all the alumni/ae, pastors, and scholars who pass through our doors for one event or another. The next time you are visiting campus for any reason, please drop by and introduce yourself. We look forward to greeting you!

On another note, I would like to relate news of two key departures from the staff of Special Collections. In July, Robert Benedetto, our former director, accepted the position of director of the Graduate Theological Union library in Berkeley and San Anselmo, California. During his four-year tenure as director at PTS, Mr. Benedetto made many significant improvements to the program of Special Collections, including developing our online digital collections, expanding archival storage space, and inaugurating the Moffett Collection of Korean Presbyterianism. Also in July, Michael Paulus, our former technical services librarian, became the archivist and special collections librarian at the Penrose Library of Whitman College in Walla Walla, Washington. Mr. Paulus was not only our technical services specialist; he was our resident expert on the institutional history of Princeton Seminary. Robert and Michael will be missed by the patrons and staff of Special Collections, and we wish each of them all the best in their new positions!
New Acquisitions

Dr. Jose C. Nieto (M.Div. 1962; Ph.D. 1967) has presented to the Seminary’s art collection a folio-sized sixteenth-century print of Jerome, the fourth-century hermit and Bible translator to whom is attributed the Vulgate edition of the Bible. The donation was made in honor of Nieto’s former teacher, Dr. Edward A. Dowey Jr., Archibald Alexander Professor of the History of Christian Doctrine at Princeton Seminary who died at the age of eighty-five in 2003. Nieto is a noted scholar of the Spanish literary and religious traditions, with publications on Cervantes, Juan de Valdes, John of the Cross, the Spanish Franciscan Alumbrados movement, and other subjects, and has had a distinguished teaching career at Juniata College in Huntingdon, Pennsylvania, from which he is now retiring. The print has been framed and was presented to the Special Collections Department of the library at a gathering of the History Department faculty and graduate students in December, during which Dr. Dowey was remembered and honored for his life and work.

Dr. Abigail Rian Evans, Charlotte W. Newcombe Professor of Practical Theology and academic coordinator of field education at Princeton Seminary, has recently donated to Special Collections an additional set of materials relating to her father, Dr. Edwin Harold Rian. Dr. Edwin Rian was intimately involved in the struggles within the Presbyterian Church during the fundamentalist/modernist controversy in the 1920s, serving as both field secretary and president of the board of trustees of Westminster Theological Seminary. He was assistant to the president at Princeton Theological Seminary for more than ten years before his retirement. The Rian Lectures given each year at alumni/reunion are named in his honor.

Dr. Stephen T. Kerr has donated a number of items connected with his grandfather, Hugh Thomson Kerr, longtime pastor at Shadyside Presbyterian Church in Pittsburgh, and his father, Dr. Hugh Thomson Kerr Jr., Benjamin B. Warfield Professor of Systematic Theology at Princeton Theological Seminary and for forty-eight years associate editor, then editor of the Consultations and Conferences of the Abraham Kuyper Center

The Consultations and Conferences of the Abraham Kuyper Center

The Seminary’s Abraham Kuyper Center for Public Theology sponsors consultations and conferences on the role of religion in the various “spheres of life,” from economics to politics to the natural sciences. Covering all of that ground makes for an active schedule of events.

The Seminary holds an annual Kuyper Lecture thanks to the generosity of Dr. Rimmer and Mrs. Ruth de Vries. This past spring, Robert A. Seiple, president and CEO of the Council for America’s First Freedom and former U.S. Ambassador-at-Large for International Religious Freedom, delivered the lecture to a capacity crowd in the Main Lounge of the Mackay Campus Center. His talk, titled “The Gospel Blimp Revisited: A Reflection on Christian Witness and Persecution,” explored the “complex intersection between proselytism and persecution.” (See our web site for the full text of the address.) The Kuyper Center sponsored a consultation on Seiple’s address the next morning. Ms. Kaley Middlebrooks Carpenter of Princeton Seminary, Dr. D.J. Smit of the University of Stellenbosch, South Africa, and Dr. C.J. Klop of the Radboud Universiteit Nijmegen, the Netherlands, replied to the substance of the talk from different disciplinary perspectives.

This past July, the Abraham Kuyper Center hosted the Fifth Triennial Conference of the International Society for the Study of Reformed Communities (ISSRC). More than twenty scholars gathered in Princeton to discuss the mission of “Reformed Theology Today.” These include Japanese translations of books by his father and grandfather, the manuscript of an address by his father on “The Reformed Faith in the U.S.A.,” and the original typescript of a tribute to John Mackay composed by a committee of the faculty of which Hugh T. Kerr Jr. served as convener.
New at Luce Library: The Center for the Study of Scottish Philosophy

The Center for the Study of Scottish Philosophy, established at the University of Aberdeen in 2003, was relocated to Princeton Seminary in 2006 after its director, Dr. Gordon Graham, became the Seminary’s Henry Luce III Professor of Philosophy and the Arts. Special Collections looks forward to providing scholarly support for researchers associated with this center. The center will be holding its inaugural conference, titled “Philosophy, Theology, Education: Scottish Foundations to American Tradition,” from September 7 to 9 on the campus of Princeton Seminary. For more information, visit the center’s web site at www.ptsem.edu/cssp.

Witness to the Word: Conferences on Karl Barth

The Center for Barth Studies at Princeton Theological Seminary has begun cosponsoring annual conferences on Karl Barth (1886–1968) with the Karl Barth Society of North America. These conferences, modeled on the European Barth Tagungen that take place annually in the Swiss town of Leuenberg and the Dutch town of Driebergen, will focus on a different aspect of Barth’s theology and ethics each year. The format of the conferences incorporates small group discussions, after-dinner talks, and daily chapel services in addition to lectures in order to foster conversation and collegiality. The conference this past spring, titled “Thy Word Is Truth: Reading Scripture Theologically with Karl Barth,” attracted more than sixty students, professors, and pastors to the Seminary’s campus. The event featured lectures from five scholars of Karl Barth: George Hunsinger of Princeton Seminary, A. Katherine Grieb of Virginia Theological Seminary, Paul Dafydd Jones of the University of Virginia, Paul Molnar of St. John’s University, and John Webster of the University of Aberdeen. The conference-goers also heard about the influence of Karl Barth in the Netherlands and South Africa from two international scholars who delivered after-dinner talks.

The title of this year’s conference is “Karl Barth and American Evangelicals: Friends or Foes?” The conference will begin with a banquet dinner on Sunday, June 24 and conclude on the afternoon of Wednesday, June 27. A session on Cornelius Van Til’s critique of Karl Barth and its legacy will lead to an exploration of possible areas of convergence between Barth and evangelicals (including Christology and ecclesiology) and areas of divergence (including the relation between philosophy and theology and the question of universal salvation). A special feature of this conference will be break-out sessions that will discuss Barth’s influence on four major streams in contemporary evangelical thought: postliberalism, postmodernism, neo-Anabaptism, and radical orthodoxy. For details about the conference and to register, please visit http://library.ptsem.edu/collections/barth.

Special Collections houses the research collection of the Center for Barth Studies. Scholars, pastors, and other researchers are always welcome to make use of its materials, including its extensive collections of articles by and about Karl Barth and its English translations of the Latin and Greek phrases in the Church Dogmatics.

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Luce News

We are pleased to welcome Matthew Reeder back to Special Collections. Matt worked with us during his college years. Now a graduate of the School of Communication, Information, and Library Studies at Rutgers University, he is helping us with temporary cataloging and processing. Nice to have you back, Matt!

Hans Seijlhouwer, archivist of The Historical Documentation Centre for Dutch Protestantism at the Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam, visited Special Collections in November. He assisted Clifford Anderson and Christine Schwartz, head cataloger in the Seminary Libraries, with the digitization of Abraham Kuyper’s personal papers. Look for more details about this project in an upcoming newsletter.

Alexander Street Press has announced the forthcoming publication of The Digital Karl Barth Library. The digital collection will initially include the Karl Barth Gesamtausgabe and the entire Kirchliche Dogmatik. See our web site for late-breaking information.

Special Collections posted the full run of Studies in Reformed Theology and History (1993–2005) to its digital collections. The serial offers monograph-length studies such as Calvin and Bernard of Clairvaux, Reformed Ecclesiology, and Jonathan Edwards and the Experience of Beauty. The serial may be accessed at no charge at scede.library.ptsem.edu.

Special Collections made a major acquisition of Kuyperiana in May 2006 by purchasing the Rev. Tjitze Kuipers’s collection of materials by and about Abraham Kuyper (1837–1920). Kuipers’s collection is the most comprehensive in the world and includes many rare items otherwise unavailable to scholars. Kuipers is preparing a new scholarly bibliography of Abraham Kuyper (in collaboration with Clifford Anderson and Barend Meijer of the Theological University of Kampen [Vrijgemaakt]).
As the Seminary gets ready to celebrate its bicentennial in 2012, three very special portraits of its earliest founders have found their way back to Princeton.

The first is a portrait of Archibald Alexander (1772–1851), the first professor appointed by the Presbyterian Church’s General Assembly to the faculty of Princeton Theological Seminary. Although not signed, it is very likely that this portrait was painted by Edward Ludlow Mooney (1813–1887), a New York City-based portrait artist. Mooney’s portrait of Archibald Alexander’s son, Joseph Addison Alexander, who taught biblical languages at the Seminary and read the Scriptures in some six different languages as part of his daily devotions, may be seen in the lobby of Speer Library.

The portrait of Archibald Alexander is a gift to the Seminary from his descendant and namesake Archibald Alexander, a retired attorney living in Bozeman, Montana. From old labels on the back of the current frame, it can be determined that the portrait was once in the family of Archibald Alexander’s grandson, the Rev. Maitland Alexander (1867–1940), an 1892 graduate of Princeton Seminary who was a noted preacher and the well-loved pastor of the First Presbyterian Church of Pittsburgh, which he served for thirty years.

Two other wonderful portraits—of Samuel Miller (1769–1850) and of Sarah Sergeant Miller (1778–1861), his wife—were also donated to the Seminary this fall.

The subject of the first portrait, Samuel Miller, came to the Seminary as its second professor in 1813 after a brilliant career as a New York City Presbyterian pastor. The portrait was painted by the noted British-born American painter Thomas Sully. It portrays Miller in middle age, in his final period as a pastor just before his move to Princeton, and thus complements nicely the familiar Seminary-owned portrait of Miller in old age by John Neagle.

Sarah Sergeant Miller is the subject of the second portrait. She was the daughter of Jonathan Dickinson Sergeant, a Princeton attorney and member of the revolutionary Continental Congress, and granddaughter of the Rev. Elihu Spencer, pastor of the First Presbyterian Church of Trenton and a trustee of Princeton University. She was very well educated and a close student of the Bible. According to one nineteenth-century biographer, she “was accustomed to spend a portion of the day, generally after breakfast, at her table with her Bible and commentary, in reading and studying the word of God, as though she were a teacher at the Seminary.” She was a leader among Princeton women in devotional, benevolent, and educational work, and the same biographer says of her that she “opened her hand to the poor, and was never happy unless she had some schemes for doing good in her head.” The portrait was painted in 1805 by John Wesley Jarvis, a nephew of the founder of Methodism, John Wesley.

These two portraits were donated by Breckinridge Willcox, U.S. attorney for the District of Maryland from 1986 until 1992. “Breck” Willcox also served with the U.S. Department of Justice in Washington and headed the white-collar crime and government investigations practice group for the law firm of Arent Fox. He was a direct descendant of Samuel and Sarah Miller, through their daughter, Margaret, and their son-in-law, John C. Breckinridge (1797–1841), a noted Presbyterian minister and professor of pastoral theology at PTS. Breck Willcox remembered seeing the portraits as a boy in the Laurel, Maryland, country home of his grandfather, Samuel Miller Breckinridge Long, a graduate of Princeton University who served in the administrations of Woodrow Wilson and Franklin Delano Roosevelt and as ambassador to Italy from 1933 to 1936. In a communication received in Princeton shortly before his death this fall, Willcox wrote of the portraits that he was “delighted that the Millers have finally returned home and will have a place of prominence there.” He, along with some fifty other members of the larger Breckinridge family, participated in a family reunion in Princeton last June that included a tour of the University and the Seminary and a talk on historic Breckinridge-Princeton connections that reach back several generations.