

Calvin/CRCNA Connection

Connecting Calvin College and the Christian Reformed Church in North America

Fall 2010



PHILIPPIANS
CAMPUS BIBLE STUDY

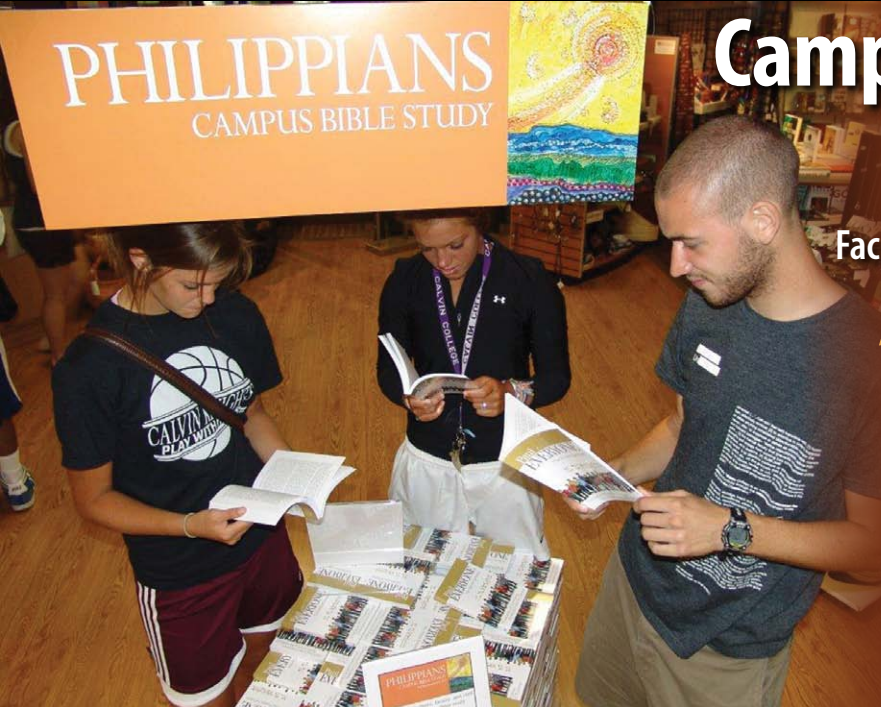
Campus-wide Bible study builds community

Faculty, staff, students join in examining Philippians

“There are lots of choices that face students especially at the start of a new school year,” said Calvin associate chaplain Aaron Winkle. “Giving our campus participants and leaders a chance to really spend time with God’s word presented people with a choice, and we hoped it was one they would take advantage of.”

This fall, students, faculty and staff were encouraged to lead or join a group Bible study focused on the book of Philippians—and more than 1,300 did.

(continues inside)



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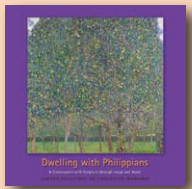
Campus-wide Bible study builds community (continued from cover)

"We have had Bible studies in the residence halls for years," said Winkle. "But when we started thinking about this Bible study, we talked about what we could do to broaden the level of involvement. How could we get off-campus students involved? How could we get faculty and staff involved and maybe even make some of these studies intergenerational? To see that actually happening now... is really exciting."

The Philippians studies have gone in some unexpected directions, referring to the development of "affinity groups"—people who already share a common interest gathering around the study of Philippians, said Bible study co-planner Calvin chaplain Mary Hulst. Other groups have added their own twist such as studying the book in Spanish, Korean and Greek. "In some ways our job now," she said, "is to stay out of the way. People got on board with this, they got excited about it and they will take it places we hadn't even thought about."

"What so many have done is exactly what we had prayed would happen," added Winkle. "It's exciting to see what God might have in store for this campus as so many people come together to study His word."

To order *Dwelling with Philippians*, produced by the Calvin Institute of Christian Worship: www.calvin.edu/campus-store.



Serving with hearts, hands and feet

Calvin's entire incoming first-year class and transfer students dispersed across Grand Rapids for three days of StreetFest, a service-learning opportunity that introduces students to a commitment to service and learning that is central to a Calvin education.

The theme chosen for this year's program was "Beautiful Feet." The theme is based on Isaiah 52: "How beautiful on the mountains are the feet of those who bring good news, who proclaim peace, who bring good tidings, who proclaim salvation, who say to Zion, 'Your God reigns!'"

At Fuller Avenue Christian Reformed Church three incoming students nailed chicken wire on a wooden frame to create a compost container for the church's community garden. Calvin professor Dan Miller, an elder at Fuller Ave., and StreetFest leader Nick Vryhof watched Barb Richardson (Batavia, N.Y.), Kaitlyn Kloosterman (Kalamazoo, Mich.) and Kellan Day (Wayland, Mich.) while Ben Waldron, creator and tender of the garden, supervised.

StreetFest organizers hope that students will use this one-day experience as a starting point for future engagement with the city's service agencies, churches and schools.

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Internships provide unique opportunities

Amanda Hoffmeyer landed an internship with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service while still a student at Calvin and before April 20, the date that changed everything in states bordering the Gulf of Mexico: the date an explosion on a BP offshore drilling platform killed 11 workers, injured 17 others and set off the world's largest oil spill disaster in history. The BP oil spill significantly altered Hoffmeyer's first few weeks of work, too.

After two weeks of training, Hoffmeyer spent 15 hours a day walking the coast performing a live-bird assessment and documenting any dead birds. "They wanted a baseline for what was the natural mortality of shoreline birds for comparison," she said. Hoffmeyer and other crew members secured the dead birds as possible future evidence.

Now, the internship is back to "normal," which includes spending the better part of some days on the lookout for exotic plants like Cogongrass, Guinea grass and Brazilian Pepper, and destroying the species, which originate in areas outside of the United States, with herbicide spray.

Other days, Hoffmeyer combs the beaches of central eastern Florida monitoring sea turtle activity or responding to wildlife calls from around the area.

Hoffmeyer was one of many Calvin students and recent grads engaged in an internship recently. Read more stories like hers at www.calvin.edu/news/stories/internships.



events

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Coop's Column: Reflections on the Christian walk

Former Calvin chaplain Dale Cooper is writing a new column on worship for the Calvin Institute of Christian Worship that each week explores central questions surrounding a practice followers of Jesus have pursued for generations, and centuries, around the world. In his introduction to the new series, Coop wrote: "Worshiping God worthily demands careful thinking about what we're doing and why ... Accordingly, as I write, I shall offer a prayer that what I write and you read

equips us to live more faithfully and as God intends." To read these columns, visit: www.coopscolumn.org.



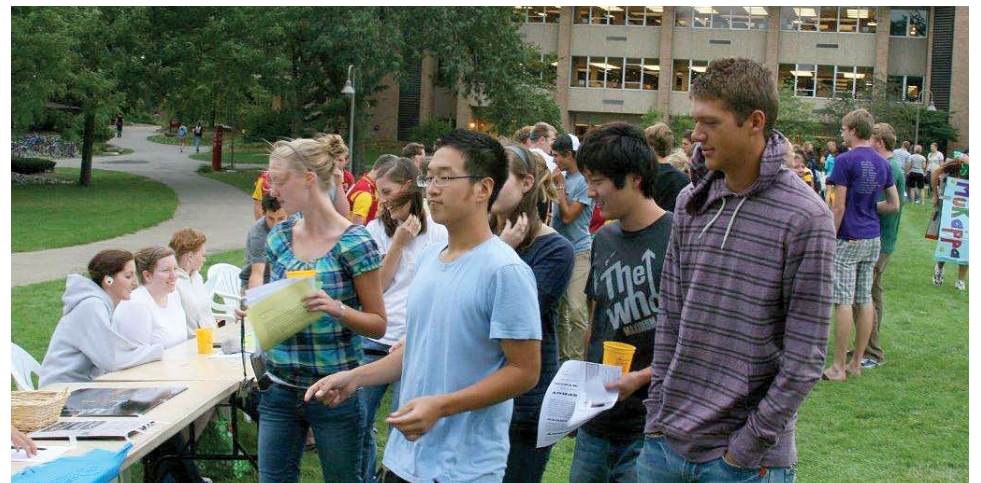
Churches connect with students


One student was looking for a Reformed church. Another was looking for a particular church: Roosevelt Christian Reformed. And Calvin junior Tiffany Blaauwendraat was looking for a church like the one back home in Truro, N.S. "The preaching is very important to me," said Blaauwendraat, who identifies herself as "mostly CRC." "I don't mind going somewhere that has a different worship style and so forth, but they have to preach what I believe," she said.

The students were church shopping at the 2010 edition of Cokes and Clubs, the annual showcase of Calvin College student organizations. Thirty-eight church booths formed

an annex to the ring of 65 clubs circling the Commons Lawn. The churches were there at the invitation of Janet Glassford, the department assistant in Calvin's campus ministries office. "We really want students connected with churches," she said. Though Glassford has invited churches for three years, this was their debut on the Commons Lawn. "It was a huge circle," she said. "The churches really rose to the occasion they brought giveaways and displays."

Blaauwendraat found the church showcase helpful: "Everyone says there are so many churches around here," she said, "but it's hard to know what it's all about until you talk to someone from there."





Beginning a good work...



Gaylen Byker
PRESIDENT,
CALVIN COLLEGE

Every September on the first day of classes our campus community comes together to begin the academic year with a time of worship in our annual convocation service. First-year students are given the center seats on the floor of the VanNoord Arena, where they are surrounded by faculty, staff and returning students. It was gratifying to see the class of 2014—numbering nearly 1,000—in the place where they will be recognized as graduates when we send them out from Calvin at their Commencement ceremony in a few short years.

This year's convocation address was given by our college chaplain, Dr. Mary Hulst, who spoke on Philippians 1:6, "...being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus." She spoke about how both God's sovereignty and God's unfailing love are active in our lives. You can watch and listen to this inspiring talk at www.calvin.edu/convocation.

While surveying our first-year students from the convocation stage, I was again reminded of the great responsibility and privilege we have to educate young people for their future work in God's kingdom. We are indeed confident that our God has begun a good work in our students' lives and will be faithful to complete it.

I have the great privilege of leading a group of wonderful young men from one of our residence halls in a Bible study on Tuesday evenings; one of many groups on and off campus that are studying Philippians. What an honor to be with these young Christian men as we reflect on God's word together. Some are preparing for future military service or have recently completed military service. The depth and maturity of their faith lifts me and helps me to reflect upon my own past and future with Christ.

The time with these young men gives me a broader sense of how God works in our lives. I was a product of a Christian school and joined the military soon after high school. I considered myself a young man of faith much like the young men in my Bible study. When I served in Vietnam, I treasured my faith in an entirely new way. After my term of service I enrolled at Calvin. It was difficult for a young man with some experience in the world to join a class of students four years younger.

I learned in those Calvin classrooms, and as a Calvin residence hall director with my wife, Susan, that we are one small piece of God's plan. We, along with thousands of Calvin students, are led in classrooms, residence halls and apartments every day by a tremendous cloud of witnesses. They include Reformed Christian teacher/scholars, parents, mentors and friends. It is my prayer for all Calvin students that "God will meet all (y)our needs according to his glorious riches in Jesus Christ."



Gaylen J. Byker
PRESIDENT, CALVIN COLLEGE