

## Veteran Librarian Discovers Rare, Early Calvin Catechism

GRAND RAPIDS, Mich. A Calvin College librarian has made a rare catch.

In November, while fishing through volumes in the basement of Calvin's Hekman Library, reference librarian Conrad Bult found an Italian translation of an early French catechism by John Calvin.

Bult was sorting through a storage room when he found a book with a 19th-century-style binding. Its first part contained an Italian play from 1547. "I could not find the first part [listed] in any resources I had," said Bult, who started as a librarian at Calvin in 1965 and will retire next year.

Bult does not read Italian, but he could see the second part of the book contained marginal Scripture references. Bult had a hunch the volume was exceptional. "I've dealt with rare books for about 30 years. It's a sense you develop," he said.

Bult took the book upstairs to the library's Meeter Center, where Curator Paul Fields and Director Karin Maag confirmed his hunch. Where the library got the book, Bult can't guess. But the volume traveled without damage when Calvin College moved from downtown to the east side of Grand Rapids in the 1960s. "The book is in perfect condition," Bult said.

Fields and Maag noted that neither the anti-Roman Catholic play nor the catechism listed the author, publisher, or printer—apparently to prevent persecution. "That was a tip-off that this was unusual," Fields said.

▶ Calvin College librarian Conrad Bult with the 16th-century John Calvin catechism he found in a storage room.

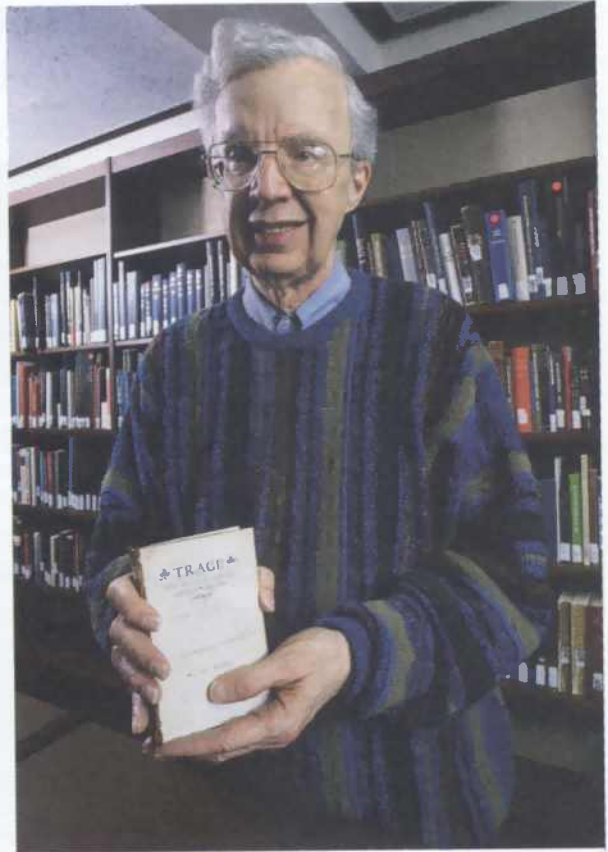


PHOTO BY JOHN CORREVEAU

"When we read and hear King's 'I Have a Dream' speech without comprehending its African American character," she says, "we undervalue the community that honed King's message. Through 150 years of protesting slavery and racism, the African American community shaped our attitudes toward racism, the words we use to describe racism, and the authorities we use to condemn racism. King was a wonderfully gifted messenger, but the message he proclaimed and the words he used to proclaim it belong to the whole African American community."

By researching documents housed in small regional collections and church libraries,

as well as documents from larger African American collections, Vander Lei hopes to build the history of "I Have a Dream" and, in doing so, resurrect African American voices long erased from public consciousness. (*Calvin College*)

### RECOVERING FROM HURRICANE GEORGES

In the months since Hurricane Georges hit their island last September, Christian Reformed World Relief Committee workers Joel and Patti Zwier have watched the Dominican Republic begin the long road to recovery. CRWRC is helping along the way.

"CRWRC, through the partner organizations with whom we work, has been

active in responding to Hurricane Georges," said Joel Zwier. "More than 5,000 families received emergency food rations. About 1,000 families received tin roofing material. Personal-hygiene kits are also being distributed."

Zwier also noted that a food-for-work project started in mid-December to promote community cleanup, reforestation, and restoration of the local infrastructure such as roads and water systems. (*CRWRC*)



▶ Joel and Patti Zwier and family are helping victims of Hurricane Georges in the Dominican Republic.