

Impact

2022 REPORT



CALVIN
THEOLOGICAL
SEMINARY



Dear Calvin Seminary Supporter,

Is it worth it? Is my investment worth it? Is it making an impact?

I hope you will flip through all the pages of this 2022 Impact Report and at the end find the answer is a resounding and appreciative – YES!

I usually say that there is always “more to the story” and that is especially true about the students, faculty and staff at Calvin Theological Seminary.

This past year, we welcomed a pastor and seminary leader and his wife and two children from Ukraine. Because it is not possible for the seminary to continue under current conditions, a CRC Missionary helped this leader arrive at Calvin Seminary for more education and training.

That one decision then ripples throughout the seminary. We provide supportive housing and through a food pantry and clothes closet and in multiple ways, we welcome this student and so many more.

Your investment is the financial and spiritual background for the reach and impact of Calvin Theological Seminary from across the street to across the globe.

When I read the Impact Report of Calvin Seminary, I now think of words like – healing, hope and encouragement.

The world is in need of healing not just from the effects of a war, but because of the ravages of sin rooted in our individual lives and society.

The world is in need of hope and messengers of the gospel not only bring good news, they help people “see” that God is still at work in this world which is the foundation for all hope!

The world is in need of encouragement because of the burdens that we all bear.

As you read this “Impact Report,” our desire is that you find a measure of healing, hope and encouragement because you see God at work through your support and prayers for Calvin Theological Seminary.

Thanks for reading and reflecting on more stories and pictures of impact at Calvin Seminary!

Blessings



Jul Medenblik, President



2022 Highlights



JANUARY
Stob Lecture - Sujin Pak
 Dr. Sujin Pak, Professor of History of Christianity and Dean of the School of Theology at Boston University, was the featured speaker for the 2022 Stob Lecture Colloquium. Her topic was "Wrestling with the Word: Biblical Interpretation Through Church History."



FEBRUARY
Seminary Ski & Snowshoe Day
 An all seminary ski and snowshoe outing in Feb 2022 was held at Pigeon Creek Park! What a day of fun for students and families.



MARCH
Medenblik Stick
 Students, faculty and staff and their families gathered for annual broomball and fellowship.



APRIL
Appreciation Luncheon
 Volunteers and Student Workers enjoy lunch in the newly renovated kitchen and Student Center.



MAY
Commencement
 Aleah Marsden walks down with her new diploma and Call to Serve towel. She is one out of the 21 graduates of the Master of Divinity degree.



MAY
Calvin Prison Initiative (CPI) Commencement
 The first graduation ceremony for a bachelor's degree inside an active prison in modern history was held inside Handlon Correctional Facility.



JUNE
Golf Outing
 The 8th Annual Golf Classic supporting the Annual Formation Fund took place at Thousand Oaks Country Club.



JUNE
New Faculty
 CTS welcomed new faculty: Dr. Wilson de Angelo Cunha, Professor of Old Testament, and Dr. Yudha Thianto, Professor of History of Christianity and Reformed Theology, who were appointed in Synod.



JULY
John Calvin's Birthday
 The H. Henry Meeter Center for Calvin Studies hosted John Calvin's 513th birthday with a presentation by director Karin Maag.



AUGUST
CPI Golf Outing
 The Second Annual Women's Golf Outing raised \$134,000 for the Calvin Prison Initiative (CPI).



SEPTEMBER
Convocation
 The faculty and staff choir led by Professor Thianto sings at the 2022 Convocation to welcome students, faculty, staff and board members.



SEPTEMBER
GRAM Event
 Donors, faculty, staff, and friends of Calvin Seminary gather at the Grand Rapids Art Museum for a time of food and fellowship and gratitude for our donors for their generous support for the Annual Fund.



OCTOBER
Annual Scholarship & Donor Dinner
 Benet Dogonyaro, Cathay Zou and Nathan Roels (L-R) are among many students, faculty, and staff who came together for a time of celebrating the generosity of our donors for our students.



NOVEMBER
ISAT Lunch
 The International Student Advisory Team hosted a lunch where international students can fellowship with and hear from faculty and staff on their transition to Grand Rapids.



DECEMBER
Christmas Around the World
 Students and their families were joined by faculty/staff for a Christmas meal and shared Christmas traditions.

Scholarship Recipients Share Gratitude & Inspiration

Every spring, Calvin Seminary's annual scholarship dinner honors our students and their supporters. Through student testimonies — like those of this year's honored scholarship recipients Adam Sculnik, Jilanne German, and Ruan Bessa — we are reminded in fresh ways why theological education matters. Those who support the seminary's mission are indeed making an impact, year after year.

These are glimpses into the stories shared that evening, stories that are made possible by a community of support.



Adam Sculnik is a future pastor, published author, apologist, and loving husband and father. He lives with his family in south Florida, where he works for and attends Sunlight Community Church. His work to establish the Christ In Action Boys Club now helps boys and their fathers the world over to know, love and serve Jesus and their local church.

At the scholarship dinner, Adam shared how when he was a new Christian, still rebuilding his marriage and relationship with his children, he sensed the call to go to seminary. Though he was without an undergraduate degree or a significant salary to help him fund graduate education, he pursued that call. First he connected with his pastor, then entered the seminary application process, and finally saw God open doors for admission and financial aid. Adam is now finishing his Master of Divinity (MDiv) online, funded significantly through donor support. ●

Jilanne German, a native Nebraskan, entered the residential MDiv program at Calvin Seminary in the fall of 2020 after serving a year at a CRC church as the interim youth and young adult director. She has also taken advantage of many opportunities to learn and grow outside of the classroom. This has included serving as a food pantry student coordinator, taking travel courses to Turkey and Israel, and working as a teaching assistant for a Calvin Prison Initiative class. She also is serving as the middle school youth director at Westend CRC. Jilanne will be graduating this spring and plans to move to Uganda in the fall to teach at a seminary as a partner missionary through Resonate Global Missions.



Jilanne gave the audience an image of her childhood summers spent with her grandparents, who lived across the country. When she traveled from her home in arid Nebraska to their hobby farm in Michigan, she soaked in the beautiful greenery. But at times she got overwhelmed by the weeds...and almost missed the house of sunflowers her grandfather had prepared for her visit. He had carefully planted and tended to the flowers, so they were ready in advance for Jilanne to enjoy. Similarly, Jilanne challenges us to look for the sunflowers God has prepared in our lives, even in a world where the weeds of sin and hurt can seem overwhelming. Thanks to scholarship support, and personal connection with a scholarship donor, Jilanne has been encouraged throughout her MDiv program. ●

Ruan Bessa was born and raised in south Brazil. He descends from a family of slaves on his father's side and Portuguese immigrants on his mother's side. His dad was an alcoholic and his mom was dedicated to host spirits at the age of 7 in a prominent African matrix religion in Brazil called "Candomblé." Drawn to faith by the powerful way the Lord set his parents free, Ruan professed faith at the age of 14. At 19, he went to seminary to better understand Scripture. Believers around him began to affirm teaching gifts in his life and so he came to Calvin Seminary to continue his theological education in order to serve the Church as a teacher. Out of the pains and struggles in his own moral biography, and attention to the moral challenges and opportunities the Church faces today, he joined the Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) program with a focus on moral theology. He is currently writing his dissertation on the role of Scripture in Christian ethics in the thought of Oliver O'Donovan, and searching for teaching opportunities in the area.



Ruan shared at the scholarship dinner that when he entered Calvin Seminary as an aspiring scholar, he felt certain what he had to say would forever change the theological field. Here at Calvin Seminary, he said he was affirmed in his giftings but also grew in learning through humility, leaning on scholars who have gone before him to gain further wisdom in his studies. He noted Calvin Seminary is a place where students can continue to grow in knowledge—with wisdom, delight, and God's love that builds up. Ruan is completing his PhD program thanks to the faithful giving of seminary supporters. ●



The Fifth Gospel

Israel and Palestine Travel Course 2023

By Sarah Schreiber and Gary Burge

The “Holy Land” or land of the Bible has always played a prominent role in the Christian understanding of faith because this land is the setting for most of the events of the Bible. As one monk in Jerusalem likes to say, the “land” is a fifth gospel in our canon. A resident Christian population in the land dating to the apostolic era continuously bore witness to the location of events there. And that witness continues to this day.

This January, Professor Gary Burge and I led students in the course *Taste And See: A Tour of Israel and Palestine*. The title of this course, “taste and see,” is especially meaningful—as scholarships for the trip come from seminary supporters who are passionate about students experiencing the land with all five senses. Their generosity makes the trip affordable for our students, and makes the land a tactile memory, useful for future teaching and preaching illustrations.

This travel course is a two-credit course taking place during the January term between our fall and spring semesters. The top of the year is an excellent time to visit this region. The tourists are not there, vistas are clear since there is no humidity, and the heat of the Middle Eastern summer is a thin memory.

So, this winter we took off from Grand Rapids to continue in the longstanding tradition of pilgrimage to the land of the Bible. Scholars Origen and Eusebius of Caesarea were both guiding pilgrims to biblical sites. The first pilgrim diary was written in the mid-4th century by a woman named Egeria, and we ourselves visited numerous spots she identified for Christian travelers who would come after her.

Through this course, we were not just pilgrims—seeking deeper meaning to our faith story through what we see in this land—but also students because

we examined the history of Biblical events and studied the material and archaeological evidence for them.

But unlike pilgrims of faith and students of biblical history alone, we also took one more step. We discover that what is important there is not just what occurred in antiquity. There are communities of Jews, Muslims, and Christians (often forgotten in the modern narrative) who today share this land. We heard their stories and tried to comprehend the rival narratives that have made this one of the most controversial regions in the world.

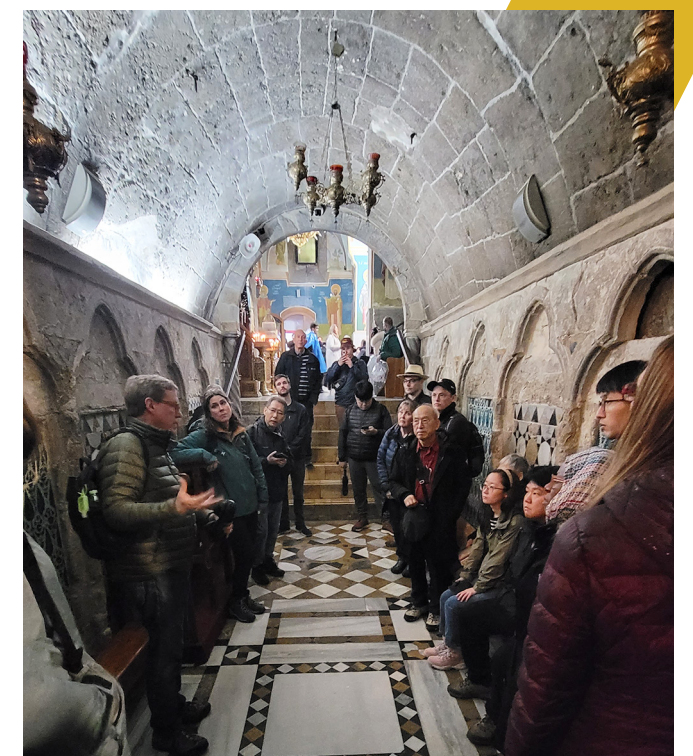
Sometimes our guest speakers came to speak to us at our hotel, and sometimes we went to learn from them in their own settings of life and ministry. Two of our most meaningful on-site visits included times of fellowship with Christians from the Nazareth Baptist School community and the Tent of Nations. Our conversations were rich and thought-provoking, and they gave us a deeper understanding of what it looks like to follow Jesus in the land today.

In addition to communal connections, Scripture came alive for students on this trip. Many things that students have read in the Bible for years suddenly clicked into place when immersed in the sights and sounds of the Bible.

For example, we listened to Scripture and spent some quiet devotional time on a hillside called Wadi Qelt where you can see all the way from Jerusalem to Jericho. It is not a smooth path between cities, but tiring and treacherous. This is the setting for the parable of the Good Samaritan, and we could imagine the difficult trek of both the robbers’ victim and the Samaritan who paused his journey to assist his neighbor. This is also a journey that Jesus himself had to make, as we read in Luke 19.

The very idea of “going up” to Jerusalem, as memorialized in the Psalms of Ascent, came to life for us seeing how Jerusalem is built on a hill. And to see rocky hillsides and cut stones everywhere helped us to understand the widespread imagery

in Scripture about God as a rock or stronghold. If you happen to be on campus soon, we would love to connect you with a student who traveled in the footsteps of Jesus. Their reflections touch on community, culture, and scriptural context—and they have expressed how their hearts are forever changed by the experience. ●





Student's Story

Sarah VerMerris, M.Div. Student

When I was in my mid-twenties, God implanted a deep love for His Word in my life. At that time, I never could have imagined that twenty years later, that initial gift of love would lead me to formal ministry training at Calvin seminary, which would consequently open up the opportunity to travel to Israel/Palestine.

My trip in January was the culmination of so many years of longing to see this place in which God's embodied story of love and redemption took place. What a gift it was to feel God's word come alive in new and unexpected ways during those weeks, as we walked and learned and gazed into the history of this place and people that have formed my own life and faith in such profound ways. But perhaps just as significant was the opportunity to encounter and learn about modern day Israel/Palestine, which like its biblical history, continues to embody both deep beauty and deep sorrow as it wrestles with how to be a land of peace and justice and equity.

Through our encounters with a variety of Palestinian and Israeli people who are courageously working for peace and reconciliation in a land that chronically lacks both, I truly encountered the presence and the face of Christ. Their commitment, tenacity, and deep faith moved and challenged me to consider the ways in which I can embody their work in my own community, seeking flourishing and shalom wherever God places me.

I pray that the work that God began in my heart and spirit in Israel/Palestine will continue to unfold and inform my faith and my life for years to come ●

"Through our encounters with a variety of Palestinian and Israeli people who are courageously working for peace and reconciliation in a land that chronically lacks both, I truly encountered the presence and the face of Christ."

—Sarah VerMerris



Thank you!

Thank you for supporting Calvin Seminary's mission of equipping the next generation of church leaders. Our students are discerning their vocations as they study Scripture and theology, build relationships with professors and mentors, and serve as interns in local churches. This immersive education benefits the church as a whole, because our graduates go out into the world well equipped for the ministry roles to which God has called them. So thank you for investing in our students; your gifts play an important part in the ongoing growth and flourishing of Christ's church.

Robert Knoor
Director of Development





Ribbon-Cutting Ceremony for Our Newly Remodeled Building

In May 2022, more than 200 guests gathered at Calvin Seminary to celebrate the success of the seminary's recent renovation project. This remarkable renovation was funded through donors' generous gifts to the "Rooted in Christ: Renewing for the Future" campaign. The celebration included a formal ribbon-cutting ceremony, led by President Jul Medenblik. Other speakers at the ceremony included the Chair of the Board of Trustees, the Dean of the Faculty, and the Student Council President.

In addition to the ribbon-cutting ceremony, there were guided tours of the building. Guests were able to see how our new classrooms support many different types of instruction, ranging from traditional face-to-face teaching to online synchronous and hybrid learning. These innovations make it possible for our faculty to connect with a wide range of students. Our guests also

saw how the beautifully remodeled chapel, gathering areas, conference rooms, and offices all serve to create a hospitable space for educational and spiritual formation. Over and over again, people remarked,

"We can't believe it's the same space!"

If you were unable to attend the celebration but would like to see the seminary's new facilities, please contact the Development Office (call us at 616-957-6088 or email us at semdevelopment@calvinseminary.edu), and our staff will be happy to arrange for an individual tour. We look forward to seeing you!

The 2022 Legacy Award

In October 2022, Jay and Kathleen Morren were named the recipients of the annual Calvin Seminary Legacy Award. The award was presented at the Scholarship and Donor Appreciation Dinner that took place at Frederik Meijer Gardens.

Jay and Kathleen are known throughout the Grand Rapids community and beyond for being faithful stewards and supporters of Christian education. For decades, they have been catalysts for growth and positive change within the South Christian School system, The Potter's House, Calvin University, and Calvin Theological Seminary. They have been strong advocates for students who are pursuing seminary education as a second career. The Morrens have also worked tirelessly to promote the development of seminary scholarships, which have made it possible for numerous students to follow God's call to ministry.

The Morrens' contributions to the seminary include Jay's service on the Executive Committee of the Board of Trustees from 1979-1985, a period of time when Calvin Seminary and Calvin College functioned as a single entity. As a member of the Executive Committee, Jay engaged with virtually every aspect of the Calvin community's life. He discussed institutional finances, admissions, and student housing. He had detailed knowledge about faculty hires, promotions, sabbaticals, and retirements. He prayed for faculty and staff who were experiencing illness or bereavement. He read correspondence from individuals and churches who wrote to the Board about current issues at Calvin. Most importantly for the seminary, Jay personally connected with seminary students. He met with them during their senior year, formally evaluated their sermons, and



interviewed those who had been recommended for candidacy and licensure. Through these personal interactions, Jay helped ensure that Calvin Seminary graduates were ready to take their next steps into Christian ministry.

Just a few years after his tenure on the Board of Trustees, Jay took on an even more challenging leadership role. In 1990, he was appointed Chairman of the ad hoc College Committee on Governance. This committee was tasked with exploring new organizational structures that would enhance the operations of the college and the seminary. Under Jay's leadership, the Committee on Governance developed a detailed plan and implementation timeline for separating the college and seminary into two distinct organizations. As a result of this bold restructuring, each school was empowered to pursue its unique mission and serve its constituents more effectively. At this important milestone in Calvin's history, it was a blessing to have Jay bring his wisdom, knowledge, and leadership skills to bear on such a complex and consequential reorganization.

We are deeply thankful for Jay and Kathleen Morren's commitment to Christian education, and for the way they have touched countless lives as a result of that commitment. Thank you, Jay and Kathleen, for setting a remarkable example of stewardship and service for future generations! ●

Our Impact in 2022

170

Pastors and ministry leaders completed Ministry in Covid-Shaped World summer courses

46,732

Unique Visitors to the Center for Excellence in Preaching (CEP) Website

2000

Worship Symposium (with The Center for Excellence in Preaching (CEP) & Calvin University)

DID YOU KNOW The groundwork that CEP laid in 2022 resulted in an award of just under \$1 million from the Lilly Endowment to be used over 5 years as part of the Compelling Preaching Initiative

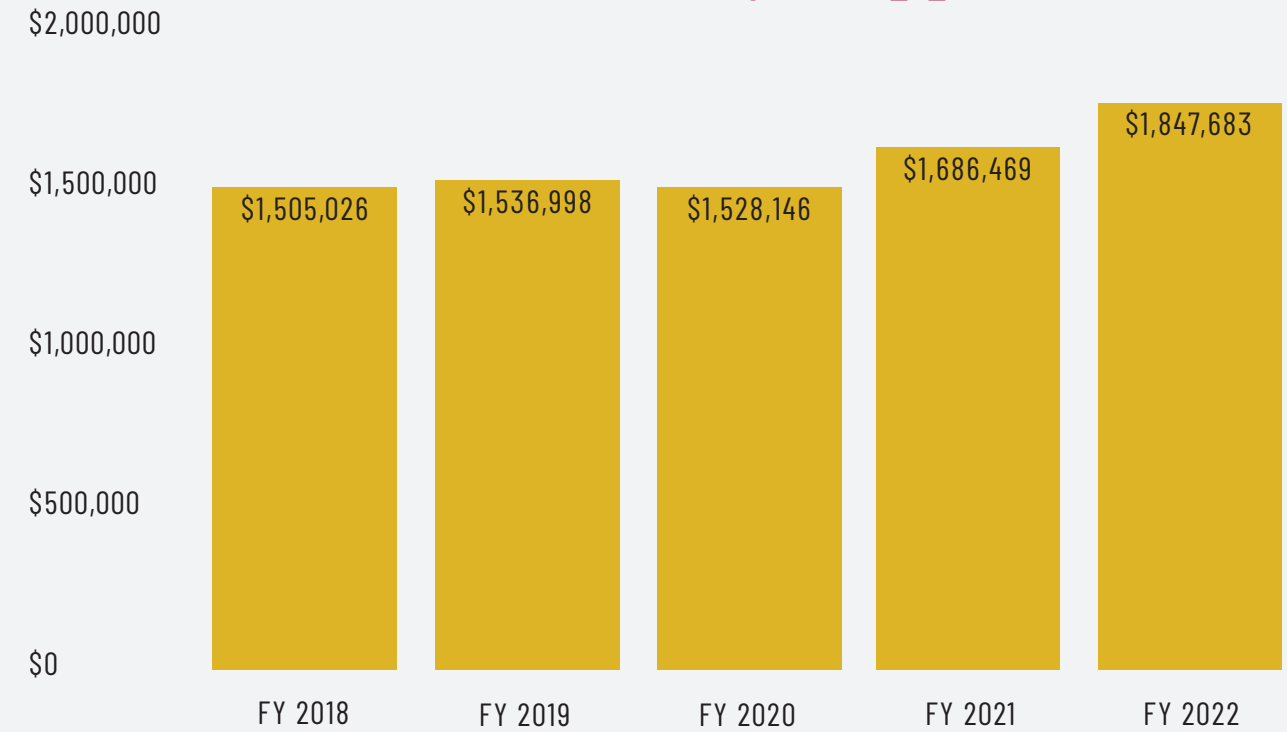
OUR STUDENTS

24

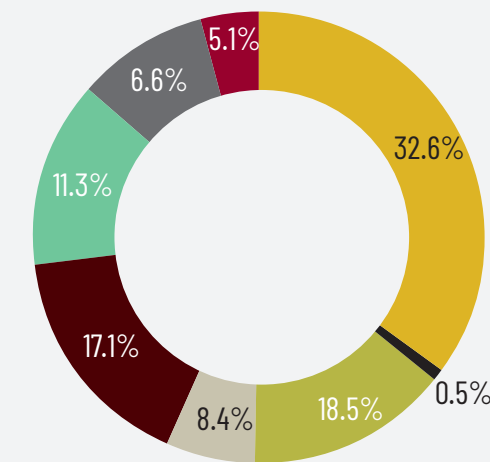
Number of countries represented in the student body

- Master of Divinity:** 84
- Master of Arts:** 28 (English & Spanish)
- Master of Theological Studies:** 10
- Master of Theology:** 25
- Doctor of Philosophy:** 32
- Doctor of Ministry:** 18
- Ecclesiastical Program for Ministerial Candidacy (EPMC):** 22
- Latina/o Ministry Certificates:** 8
- Certificate in Bible Instruction/Ministry Leadership:** 2
- Non-Degree:** 10

Annual Fund Gift Support

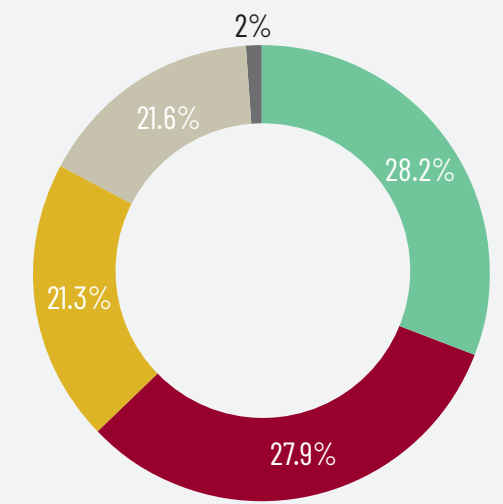


FY 2022 OPERATING EXPENSES
\$7,036,842



- Instruction
- Public Service
- Academic Support
- Student Services
- Institutional Support
- Employee Benefits
- Plant Administration
- Student Financial Assistance

FY 2022 OPERATING REVENUE
\$7,909,524



- Tuition
- Ministry Shares
- Gifts/Estate Gifts
- Release from Restrictions
- Miscellaneous Revenues

Board of Trustees

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Rev. Mark Verbruggen

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Pastor Kristin (Kris) Vos

Mr. Frank Zee

July 1, 2022 to June 30, 2023

