

Online archive opens the Reformers' works: Post-Reformation Digital Library

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Some surprises started unfolding when a team of Calvin Theological Seminary professors and graduate students recently launched the Post-Reformation Digital Library.

Chief eye-openers included successfully tracking down manuscripts from Reformed theologians that were once thought to be lost.

Another revelation: theologians and philosophers in the 16th to 18th centuries were brutally honest about their doctrinal positions and emotions, including the well-known Reformer John Calvin, who occasionally pushed the boundaries of good taste. In one sermon about rowdy adolescents, Calvin compares them to “little turds.”

“We’ve got things coming out of the woodwork that [were] lost for centuries,” said Todd Rester, a doctoral student who served on the project’s six-member editorial board. Documents once thought missing include a profession of faith from Calvin’s successor, Theodore Beza.

Google Books, the Internet Archive and digital libraries in Europe and North America already had the documents scanned and online, Rester said. CTS’s site makes tracking down these original writings easier by bringing them all under one online roof.

Working under the direction of Richard Muller, professor of historical theology at the seminary, the site required two years of work to complete and features a list of research libraries, scholarly initiatives and other sources.

The bibliography is organized alphabetically by authors’ names, which take users to digital versions of their works. The site is an archive not only of Reformers’ works but also of those who influenced the Reformers.

The site has links to Reformed, Lutheran, Roman Catholic, Anabaptist, Arminian-Remonstrant and Socinian-Unitarian thinkers as well as secondary sources. One link features arguments against allowing pianos and pipe organs in Reformed church services—they were deemed too ostentatious. -*Religion News Service*