



International Conference: Between the Old and the New World:

William Ames and the Shaping of Reformed Theology and Spirituality

Tuesday afternoon 27 Feb - Thursday morning 29 Feb 2024
Pelgrimvaderskerk, Rotterdam (NL)

Keynote speakers

Dr. Gert van den Brink (Theological University of Apeldoorn)

Dr. Simon Burton (University of Edinburgh)

Dr. Philip J. Fisk (ETF Leuven)

Dr. Polly Ha (Duke Divinity School)

Dr. Jan van de Kamp (Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam/Hersteld Hervormd Seminarie)

Prof. Dr. Adriaan Neele (Puritan Reformed Theological Seminary)

Dr. Pieter Rouwendal (Theological University of Apeldoorn)

Dr. Zsombor Tóth (Research Centre for the Humanities Budapest)

Dr. Takayuki Yagi (Aoyamagakuin University)

Organizing committee

College of Economics at Aoyamagakuin University, Tokyo: Dr. Takayuki Yagi

Puritan Reformed Theological Seminary, Grand Rapids, MI: Prof. Dr. Adriaan Neele.

Theological University Apeldoorn: Dr. Gert van den Brink, and Dr. Pieter Rouwendal

Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam, Faculty of Religion and Theology, Hersteld Hervormd Seminarie: Dr. Jan van de Kamp

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Program

Note: unless otherwise indicated, lectures are in the Ankie Verbeekzaal. Only during the short paper sessions will we split up: one session will take place in the Ankie Verbeekzaal, the other in the Leerkamer.

Tuesday February 27

Time	Speaker	Lecture / activity
13.00	Takayuki Yagi and Jan van de Kamp	Welcome and introduction
13.30	Philip J. Fisk (Louvain)	The international impact of Ames
14.30		BREAK
15.00	Zsombor Tóth (Budapest)	The Reception of William Ames' Oeuvre and the Shaping of Long Reformation in Hungary and Transylvania in the 17th and 18th Centuries
16.00	<i>SHORT PAPER SESSION A</i> Chair: Adriaan Neele In: Ankie Verbeekzaal	<i>SHORT PAPER SESSION B</i> Chair: Gert van den Brink In: Leerkamer
	<i>Caleb Kobosh - A Lost Catechism: William Ames' The Chiefe Heads of Divinitie (1612)</i>	<i>Daniel Hyde - Eschatology as the End of the End of Living well to God</i>
16.30		BREAK
17.00	Simon Burton (Edinburgh)	On the Road to Universal Reformation: Ames, Richardsonian Ramism and the Hartlib Circle
18.00		Walk to restaurant - Dinner

Wednesday February 28

Time	Speaker	Lecture / activity
9.00	Jan van de Kamp (Amsterdam)	The Reception of William Ames in the German-speaking World in the Early Modern Period
10.00	<i>SHORT PAPER SESSION C</i> Chair: Pieter Rouwendal In: Ankie Verbeekzaal	<i>SHORT PAPER SESSION D</i> Chair: Takayuki Yagi In: Leerkamer
	<i>Corné Blaauw - Calling and Regeneration in the Ordo Salutis of Ames</i>	<i>Matthew Payne - Ramist Roots of Casuistry</i>
	<i>Henk Van den Belt - Faith in the Expositions of the Heidelberg Catechism of Ames and Bekker</i>	<i>Matthew Baines - Voetius's Modifications of Ames's Programme</i>
11.00		BREAK
11.30	Gert van den Brink (Apeldoorn)	Ames on the human will and the assurance of faith
12.30		Lunch
14.00		Guided tour
15.00	Adriaan Neele (Grand Rapids)	William Ames: practica, piety and voluntarism
16.00	<i>SHORT PAPER SESSION E</i> Chair: Pieter Rouwendal In: Ankie Verbeekzaal	<i>SHORT PAPER SESSION F</i> Chair: Takayuki Yagi In: Leerkamer
	<i>Tom Martin - The Exodus of English Puritans after the Hampton Court Conference.</i>	<i>Don Sinnema - Ames at the Synod of Dort</i>
16.30		BREAK
17.00	Polly Ha (Durham NC)	Moral Deliberation and Mental Health: William Ames and Human Flourishing
18.00		Walk to restaurant - Dinner

Thursday February 29

Time	Speaker	Lecture / activity
9.00	Pieter Rouwendal (Apeldoorn)	“Improper Language”: Revisiting Ames's Doctrine on the Extent of the Atonement Remonstrants
10.00	<i>SHORT PAPER SESSION E</i> Chair: Jan van de Kamp In: Ankie Verbeekzaal	<i>SHORT PAPER SESSION F</i> Chair: Gert van den Brink In: Leerkamer
	<i>Bert Koopman - Influence on the Administration of the Covenant in Dutch Theology</i>	<i>Jaime Caballero - Influence of Ames's Ecclesiology</i>
	<i>Frank Bartoe - Amesian Covenant Idea in Jonathan Edwards</i>	<i>Pieter Veerman - Church and Kingdom of God in Ames's Expositions of the Heidelberg Catechism</i>
11.00		BREAK
11.30	Takayuki Yagi (Tokyo)	Navigating the Tidal Waves of Euripus: Diego Alvarez as a Key Source for William Ames's Theology of Grace
12.30		Closing of conference Lunch

Paper Title: Changing to Stay the Same: Gisbertus Voetius's (1589-1676) Modifications to William Ames's (1576-1633) Theological and Philosophical Programme

Presenter: Matthew Baines

After William Ames's (1576-1633) untimely death, Gisbertus Voetius (1589-1676) - inaugural professor of theology at the University of Utrecht - took it upon himself to continue Ames's programme of widening and deepening reform and applying it to all aspects of church, school and society. I will explore how Voetius built on Ames's theological and philosophical programme while developing it and making important modifications to it, considering issues such as the definition of theology, the nature of theological method, the role of metaphysics in theology, the doctrine of God and the nature of faith. I will show that while Voetius pairs back some of Ames's more extreme moves (for example, Ames's rejection of metaphysics as a discrete discipline and the location of faith primarily in the will), nonetheless he does so in such a way that retains Ames's markedly Franciscan and Ramist approach to theology.

Paper Title: The Amesian Covenant Idea: A Binding of Jonathan Edwards' Experiential Thesis

Presenter: Frank Bartoe

It is the experiential aspect of Jonathan Edwards's that scholars believe was detached from the Calvinistic covenant idea. For instance, Peter DeYong suggests that Edwards compromised the Calvinistic heritage with experiential religion and Cornelius Van Til concluded that Edwards failed to make the covenant idea "truly determinative" in his system of thought. This, according to J.W. Nevin, fashioned an "intense subjectivity" that displaced the "objectivities" which define the Christian life. However, scholars have not considered Edwards's experiential thesis as it relates to covenantal thought. This paper investigates Edwards's experiential thesis with a view to the covenantal piety of William Ames. I will argue that the structure of William Ames's covenantal piety—covenant idea—, provided the framework—the connecting link—for Edwards's to harmonize the Christian life in his experiential thesis, as well as anticipate Van Til's covenant idea which was Ames's covenantal theology reengineered.

Paper Title: Faith in the Expositions of the Heidelberg Catechism by William Ames and Balthasar Bekker

Presenter: Henk van den Belt

This paper compares the concept of faith held by William Ames and Balthasar Bekker. Both theologians preached from the Heidelberg Catechism in Franeker (Friesland). Ames, influenced by the Puritans, emphasized faith as an act of the will and trust in God. He highlighted the importance of personal experience and saw the church as a community of like-minded believers.

Bekker, a proto-liberal pastor, aligned his views closely with the Heidelberg Catechism, emphasizing faith as a combination of knowledge, consent, and trust. Bekker saw faith in the context of God's covenant and sought to educate the common people in the Reformed faith through pedagogical means.

Ames, despite his Puritan background, held more modern beliefs about faith and the role of the church, whereas Bekker adhered closely to the Heidelberg Catechism. This historical exploration reveals the complexity of the transition to modernity in Reformed theology.

Sources:

- William Ames, *Christianae catecheseos sciagraphia* (Amsterdam: apud Ioannem Ianssonium, 1635) Translated as: William Ames, *The Substance of Christian Religion, or, A Plain and Easie Draught of the Christian Catechisme In LII Lectures on Chosen Texts of Scripture, for Each Lords-Day of the Year* (London: printed by T. Mabb for Thomas Davies, 1659).
- William Ames, *A Sketch of the Christian's Catechism*, translated by Todd M. Rester (Grand Rapids: Reformation Heritage Books, 2008).
- Balthasar Bekker, *Kinder-melk, of kort begryp van den Heidelbergschen Catechismus, in ongebonden en gebonden taale* (Franeker: Karst Teunis, 1668).
- Balthasar Bekker, *Gesneden broodt voor de Kristen kinderen : 't welk is de Heidelbergsche Catechismus in meer vraagen en kortere antwoorden gekerfdt tot verlichtinge der memorie en opscherpinge van 't oordeel der Kristelike jeugdt* (Franeker: Karst Teunis, 1668).
- Balthasar Bekker, *De Vaste Spysse der Volmaakten, Bestaande In eenige grondige en schriftmatige Verklaringe: Van de Leere die begreepen is in den Heidelbergsen Catechismus gebruikelik bij de Gereformeerde Kerken der Vereende Nederlanden; Bij wege van Vraagen en Antwoorden op't duidelixt en eenvoudigt toebereidt* (Leeuwarden: Nauta, 1674).

Paper Title: The Origins of the Reformed Orthodox Contiguity of Calling and Regeneration in the Ordo Salutis of William Ames (1576-1633)

Presenter: Corné Blaauw

“Exactly when a firm, technical distinction between effectual calling and regeneration was made is difficult to ascertain [...] early evidence [...] can be found in William Ames.”¹ The Arminian controversies provided the historical context for the clarification of the concepts of calling (*vocatio*) and regeneration (*regeneratio*) among the Reformed orthodox, which influenced the Leiden disputations (1597-1631) and the Synod of Dordt (1618-1619).² Yet the origins of this distinction (and proximity) between calling and regeneration probably resides in William Perkins (1558-1602)³ and William Ames (1576-1633).⁴ Since Perkins has already been appraised on these questions, we will examine Ames. The exact nature of calling and regeneration, their definitions and relationship in Ames’s thought will further illuminate: (1) Ames’s distinctive definition of faith in the context of Arminian polemics (in Coronis); (2) his controversy with his Franeker University peer, Johannes Maccovius (1588-1644); (3) the continued debate with his Roman Catholic contemporary, Robert Bellarmine (1542-1621)

¹ Beeke and Jones, “The Puritans on Regeneration” in *Puritan Theology*, 465.

² Henk van den Belt, “The Vocatio in the Leiden Disputations (1597-1631): The Influence of the Arminian Controversy on the Concept of the Divine Call to Salvation” *Church History and Religious Culture* 92.4 (2012): 539-559; W. Moehn, “Debating Regeneration: From Baptismal Water to Seed of Rebirth” in Henk van den Belt, Klaas-Willem de Jong, Willem van Vlastuin (eds.), *A Landmark in Turbulent Times: The Meaning and Relevance of the Synod of Dordt (1618-1619)* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2022), 211-224.

³ Richard A. Muller, *Grace and Freedom: William Perkins and the Early Modern Reformed Understanding of Free Choice and Divine Grace* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020), 125-154.

⁴ For additional context, see Adriaan C. Neele, “Before Jonathan Edwards: Creation, Regeneration, and Revival” in Chris Chun and Kyle C. Strobel (eds.), *Regeneration, Revival and Creation: Religious Experience and the Purpose of God in the Thought of Jonathan Edwards* (Eugene, OR: Pickwick, 2020), chap. 1. For Calvin on regeneration, see Richard A. Muller, *Calvin and the Reformed Tradition: On the Work of Christ and the Order of Salvation* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2012), 208-212. For Maastricht, see John V. Fesko, “Aquinas’s Doctrine of Justification and Infused Habits in Reformed Soteriology” in Manfred Svensson and David VanDrunen (eds.), *Aquinas Among the Protestants* (Oxford: Wiley, 2017), chap. 12. For Owen, see, Henk van den Belt, “Vocatio as Regeneration: John Owen’s Concept of Effectual Calling,” in Willem van Vlastuin and Kelly M. Kopic (eds.), *John Owen Between Orthodoxy and Modernity* (Leiden: Brill, 2019), 148-163.

on baptismal regeneration (in Bellarminus Enervatus);⁵ and (4) the Reformed understanding of the relationship between baptism and regeneration (in *Utriusque epistolae Petri*).⁶

Paper Title: William Ames (1576-1633) in the Westminster Assembly and the Cromwellian Commonwealth: the Influence of Ames's Ecclesiology on the Dissenting Brethren of the Westminster Assembly, and the Cromwellian British Commonwealth

Presenter: Jaime Daniel Caballero

This paper investigates the profound influence of William Ames (1576-1633) on the ecclesiology of the dissenting Brethren at the Westminster Assembly, and on the Cromwellian Commonwealth. The central thesis explores how Ames's theological and ecclesiological insights, formulated during his exile in Holland and communicated through works such as *Puritanismus Anglicanus* (1610) and *Medulla theologica* (1623), resonated with key figures like Thomas Goodwin and Philip Nye, shaping the contours of religious thought and church governance during a pivotal era in English history.

Ames's role as a politically persecuted individual and his experience in the Netherlands profoundly influenced his ecclesiastical thinking. This paper analyzes how Ames's experiences as an exile and his interaction with the Dutch Reformed context enriched his ecclesiological concepts, particularly his views on the relationship between church and state and the nature of ecclesiastical authority. The study delves into how Ames's adherence to Ramism inclined him towards nominalism, a philosophical viewpoint emphasizing the use of names in understanding universal concepts, and this impacted his ecclesiological stance, differing significantly from the realist perspectives predominant in his era.

Furthermore, the paper examines Ames's indirect yet significant impact on the Westminster Assembly through the dissenting Brethren. This group, influenced by Ames during their own exile in Holland, played a critical role in the Assembly and in framing the ecclesiastical landscape of the Commonwealth period. Through a critical analysis of texts like *An Apologeticall Narration* (1643) and *The Reasons Presented by the Dissenting Brethren* (1648) the study elucidates how Ames's ideas permeated the Assembly's deliberations and the broader ecclesiological discourse.

The paper also evaluates the continuity of Ames's ecclesiological ideas in various proposals during the Cromwellian Commonwealth, highlighting how these ideas were echoed in key documents like 'The Humble Propositions' and 'The Savoy Assembly.' It compares Ames's ecclesiology with that of the Scottish Covenanters and the later Congregationalist ecclesiology reflected in the London Confession of Faith, drawing parallels and noting evolutions.

In conclusion, this study not only recapitulates Ames's substantial influence on the ecclesiastical developments of his time but also discusses the viability and relevance of his magisterial congregationalist ecclesiology in contemporary theological and ecclesiastical contexts. It invites reflections on the enduring significance of Ames's ecclesiological thought and suggests avenues for future research, particularly in understanding the historical development of church-state relations and Congregationalism.

⁵ For Arminianism, see Takayuki Yagi, *A Gift from England: William Ames and his Polemical Discourse against Dutch Arminianism* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2020), chap. 4. For Maccovius, see Willem J. van Asselt, "On the Maccovius Affair," in Aza Goudriaan and Fred A. van Lieburg (ed.), *Revisiting the Synod of Dordt (1618-1619)* (Leiden: Brill, 2011), 217-242; Abraham Kuyper Jr., *Johannes Maccovius* (Leiden: D. Donner, 1899), 315-96. For Bellarmine, see Dave Holmlund, "Sibrandus Lubbertus (1555-1625) and Reformed Polemics on Authority in the Church" (PhD diss., Calvin Theological Seminary, 2016).

⁶ John W. Riggs, *Baptism in the Reformed Tradition: A Historical and Practical Theology* (Louisville, KY: Westminster J

Paper Title: The Story of a Lost Catechism: William Ames' *The Chiefe Heads of Divinitie* (1612)

Presenter: Caleb Kobosh

The structure and theology of William Ames' earliest publication, *The Chiefe Heads of Divinitie* (1612), reveals the first expression of the ideas that would define his place within the international Reformed tradition. Armed with Ramist method and protected by Sir Horace Vere, Ames' benefactor in the Netherlands, he believed that he could quickly disseminate "the doctrine revealed by God in his word, for the bringing of men unto happiness... By being joined unto him, and so partaking of his goodness." The proposed paper will explore Ames' earliest publication, arguing that the document affirms Ames' lifelong pursuit to reform education around a central principle of communion with God. In other words, Ames' catechism insists that both piety and pedagogy are inseparable components of genuine learning.

Paper Title: "To Prepare Ourselves for the World to Come": Eschatology as the End of the End of Living Well to God in William Ames (1576-1633)

Presenter: Daniel R. Hyde

"Theology is the doctrine of living to God" (*Theologia est doctrina Deo vivendi*). This memorable opening of William Ames' (1576-1633) *Medulla Sacrosanctae Theologiae* connects theology and piety in typical English Puritan fashion. How, though, did Ames apply it to particular doctrines? Reading the *Marrow*, the impression might be that Ames never made such connections except generally in its opening chapter. For example, the last chapter of the *Medulla* lays out a simple catholic eschatology: Second Coming, resurrection of the body, last judgment, and eternal life without connecting how this enables one to live to God. In his 1641 *Analyticall Exposition of both the Epistles of the Apostle Peter*, Ames did draw out doctrines and their uses, saying, "the end of all Theologicall doctrine is to live well." This paper, therefore, will analyze Ames' eschatology and his application of its effects on living well to the glory of God.

Paper Title: Ames' influence on the topic of The administration of the Covenant of Grace in the works of Dutch theologians

Presenter: Bert Koopman

William Ames (1576-1633) wrote in *The Marrow of Theology*, Book I, about *The Administration of the Covenant of Grace before the Coming of Christ* (chapter 38) and about *The Administration of the Covenant of Grace from the Coming of Christ to the End of the Word* (chapter 39). This *Administration of the Covenant of Grace before, at, and after the Coming of Christ* serves as the basis for several writings by Dutch theologians. In this paper I want to examine various writings of Dutch theologians after Ames, who made use of the original structures of Ames's *The Administration of the Covenant of Grace*, and to show how they elaborated on his work.

Paper Title: The Exodus of English Puritans after the Hampton Court Conference

Presenter: Tom Martin

William Ames left England in 1610, never to return to his native land. His reasons may appear insignificant today: use of the sign of the cross in baptisms, kneeling at communion, wearing the surplice, etc. Yet Dissenters and Nonconformists alike found them important enough to relocate overseas with their families. This paper will explore the reasons and circumstances for the Puritan emigration to the Netherlands. It also will discuss the wider effects of the Hampton Court Conference of 1604 before King James I.

Paper Title: “William Ames (1576-1633) and the Ramist Roots of Protestant Casuistry”

Presenter: Matthew N. Payne

Scholars have long recognised William Ames’s deep puritan convictions, thoroughgoing commitment to Ramist methodology, and seminal contribution to the development of Protestant casuistry, or ‘case divinity.’ Indeed, Ames’s era witnessed a convergence between puritanism and Ramism which appears to have been instrumental in the development of Protestant casuistry, as also notably reflected in the work of Richard Greenham, William Perkins, Joseph Hall, and Richard Baxter. Yet scholars have made little progress in establishing the influence of Ramism upon casuistry. This paper examines Ames’s *De Conscientia* (1630) as a test case for the thesis that the roots of Protestant casuistry lay in puritans extending the scope of Ramist dialectic from describing the natural logical function of the mind to also describing the natural moral and judicial function of the conscience, synthesising this insight with their Reformed practical divinity to produce what might be described as the Ramist art of casuistry.

Paper Title: William Ames at the Synod of Dordt

Presenter: Don Sinnema

This paper will examine Ames’ role as theological advisor to President Johannes Bogerman at the Synod of Dordt (1618-1619). Due to his expertise in the issues of the Arminian controversy, having engaged in a polemic especially with Arminian Nicolaas Grevinchoven resulting in three books, Ames was considered uniquely qualified to serve as an advisor. He served the synod while it was immersed in the Arminian issue from early December to early May, not for the Pro-Acta or Post-Acta sessions. Since Ames worked behind the scenes, he is not mentioned in the official Acta of the synod. There are only about ten brief items of evidence of his activity at the synod, apart from more detailed evidence of his participation in the Maccovius case concerning the use of scholastic terminology. An assessment will be made about which synod documents likely had meaningful input from Ames.

Paper Title: Church and the Kingdom of God in the Expositions of the Heidelberg Catechism by William Ames

Presenter: Pieter Veerman

This paper compares William Ames' teachings on Heidelberg Catechism Lord's Day 21 (church) and 48 (kingdom of God) with those of Philip Lansbergen, Cornelius van Poudroyen and Petrus van der Hagen. Because of his Puritan and non-conformist opinions Ames was caused to leave England. He gave his explanations of the Heidelberg Catechism in the context of the Netherlands.

Ames viewed the church as a community of like-minded people. For him the church is an assembly of believers. He emphasizes that the church is a mystical body. And in his teaching on the church, election has a prominent place.

This historical source research reveals how Ames' vision of a pure church relates to the catechism expositions on church and kingdom of three other seventeenth-century Reformed theologians in the Netherlands.

Sources

William Ames, *Christianae catecheseos sciagraphia* (Amsterdam: apud Ioannem Ianssonium, 1635). Translated as: William Ames, *The Substance of Christian Religion, or, A Plain and Easie Draught of the Christian Catechisme In LII Lectures on Chosen Texts of Scripture, for Each Lords-Day of the Year* (London: printed by T. Mabb for Thomas Davies, 1659).

William Ames, *A Sketch of the Christian's Catechism*, translated by Todd M. Rester (Grand Rapids: Reformation Heritage Books, 2008).

Petrus Van der Hagen, *De Heydelbergsche Catechismus, verklaert in twee-en-vyftig predikatiën, met vier Inleidings Predikatiën* (Amsterdam: Johannes van Someren, 1676).

Philip van Lansbergen, *Catechesis religionis christianae, quæ in Belgij & Palatinatus ecclesijs docetur, sermonibus lii. explicata* (Middelburg: Richard Schilders, 1594).

Philip van Lansbergen, *Den Catechismvs, ofte Onderwijsinghe inde christelijcke religie, dewelcke soo inde Nederlandtsche als Paltzsche kercken ghepredickt ende gheleert wort: In LII. predicatiën weer grondich uytgheleyt ende verklaert*, trans. Johannem Gys (Amsterdam: Cornelis Lodewijckz van der Plas, 1616).

Cornelius van Poudroyen, *Catechisatie: Dat is een grondige ende eenvoudige onderwijsinghe, over de leere des christelicken catechismi* (Utrecht: Weduwe van Esdras Willemsz Snellaert, 1653).

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