



*John Calvin*

# Calvin Courier

The newsletter of the H. Henry Meeter Center for Calvin Studies

Fall 2008, Number 42

## From the Director

Our summer months were busy as usual, both with our visiting scholars and with the very successful Genevan paleography course we ran in June. Eleven participants benefitted from Dr. Thomas Lambert's expertise, and by the end of the two weeks, class members were impressed at how far they had come. See the report on p. 3.

In late August, we received news that we have received a grant of \$118,116 from the National Endowment for the Humanities for a three-week summer institute, this time for high school teachers, entitled "Making Sense of the Reformation". It will run from June 27 to July 19. This is our third summer seminar or institute proposal that was successfully funded by the NEH. See further details about presenters and their topics on p. 2.

We also continue to work on plans for a very busy year marking John Calvin's 500th birthday. A few of the events we have planned so far are the opening January

Series lecture by John Witte Jr. entitled "Separation of Church and State - Calvin Style", the Artist Series concert of Psalm settings by Dutch organist Sietze DeVries in October, and the Stob Lecture on Calvin by David Steinmetz in November. For more information on 2009 events visit:

<http://www.calvin.edu/meeter/events/calvin2009.htm>

Please also note that the Meeter Center has had a commemorative medal struck, which is available for sale through the Calvin College campus store. The website for orders is in the article below.

All recipients of the Calvin Courier are warmly invited to attend any and all of the Calvin Year events, especially the biennial Calvin Studies Society conference: "John Calvin: Myth and Reality", which will take place here in Grand Rapids, hosted by the Meeter Center, from April 16 to April 18, 2009. More information on the program and registration details can be found on p. 2.

*Karin Y. Maag*

## John Calvin 500th Anniversary Commemorative Medal



*Above: The 500th Anniversary Commemorative Medal is the latest addition to the Meeter Center's medal collection. Medals have been made of the great reformers and achievements of the Reformation throughout the past five centuries. The Center's collection is on permanent exhibit with the oldest medal dating to 1555.*

The bronze medal, commissioned by the H. Henry Meeter Center for Calvin Studies, is one of a limited casting of 500. The portrait on the front of the medal was crafted by Darrell DeRuiter. Overall medal design was drafted by Ryan Noppen. The heart in the hand image on the reverse of the medal dates from the mid-16th century. Below it is Calvin's signature. The medal comes in a stylish gift box along with a numbered and signed card of authenticity. Retail cost for the medal is \$32.99 USD plus tax and shipping and handling. It can be purchased at the Calvin Campus Store in person or ordered online at:

<http://www.calvin.edu/meeter/calvin2009/2009medal.htm>

## “John Calvin: Myth and Reality”

To mark the Reformer John Calvin’s 500th birthday, the Meeter Center for Calvin Studies at Calvin College and Calvin Theological Seminary in Grand Rapids, Michigan, will host the 2009 Calvin Studies Society conference, “John Calvin: Myth and Reality,” from Thursday, April 16 to Saturday, April 18, 2009. This conference will bring together Calvin experts from around the world, and provides an outstanding opportunity for everyone from faculty and students at all levels to pastors and interested lay-people to join in the discussion on Calvin and his impact and reputation, both in the past and today.

On the evening of Friday April 17, there will be a predestination panel with participants: Richard Muller (Calvin Theological Seminary); Richard Mouw (Fuller Theological Seminary); and Laura Smit (Calvin College). Other speakers and topics include the following:

**Irena Dingel**, University of Mainz, “Calvinism on the Borders of the Empire: Johannes Wigand and the Lutheran Reaction to Calvinism”

**Rev. Randy Engle**, Troy Christian Reformed Church, “Calvin and Worship/Music”

**Constantin Fasolt**, University of Chicago, “Respect for the Word: What Calvin and Wittgenstein had against Images”

**David Koyzis**, Redeemer University College, “God’s Gracious Provision: Calvin and his Heirs on Political Order”

**Diane Margolf**, Colorado State University, “Calvin and Church Discipline: Penance, Apology and Reconciliation”

**Elsie McKee**, Princeton Theological Seminary, “‘Calvin Never Changed His Mind’ – or Did He? Evidence from the Young Reformer’s Teaching on Prayer”

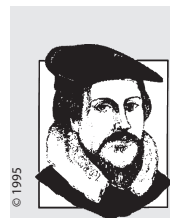
**Richard Muller**, Calvin Theological Seminary, “Demoting Calvin?”

**Graeme Murdoch**, Trinity College Dublin, “Calvinism and Moral Discipline in France”

**Jay Shim**, Dordt College, “Orthodoxy and Practice in the Calvinist Churches of Korea”

**Yudha Thianto**, Trinity Christian College, “Elements of Calvin’s Theology and Practice in the Reformed Churches in Java in the Early Nineteenth Century”

**John Thompson**, Fuller Theological Seminary, “The Good, the Bad, and the Indifferent: Myths, Realities, and Ambiguities in Calvin’s Teachings about Women”



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**Mark Valeri**, Union Theological Seminary, “Calvin and the Social Order in Early America: Moral Ideals and Regional Variations”

**Mirjam van Veen**, Free University Amsterdam, “Cruel, Cold and False: Calvin Through the Eyes of his Sixteenth-Century Dutch Opponents”

Registration fees are \$60.00 for the full conference, \$30.00 for students and Calvin College and Seminary Faculty and Staff, and \$25.00 for a single day. For more information on the conference or to download a registration form please visit: <http://www.calvin.edu/meeter/calvinconference2009/mainpage.htm>

## “Making Sense of the Reformation”

In the summer of 2009, the Meeter Center will host an NEH Institute for high school teachers entitled “Making Sense of the Reformation”. It will enable teachers from around the country to engage with the best and most accessible scholarship on the Reformation, and to develop teaching materials that help their students make sense of the Reformation. The three key topics to be dealt with in the institute are (1) belief systems as expressed by different confessional groups at the time of the Reformation (Catholic, Lutheran, Anabaptist and Reformed); (2) practices (including worship, church discipline, and outreach); and (3) conflicts and resolutions (whether between civil and religious powers, between different branches of the Christian church, or within confessional groups). Speakers and topics include:

**Francis Bremer**, Millersville College, “The New England Model”

**Michael Graham**, University of Akron, “Church Discipline”

**Susan Karant-Nunn**, University of Arizona, “Catholicism and Lutheranism”

**Christine Kooi**, Louisiana State at Baton Rouge, “The Dutch Model”

**Karin Maag**, Calvin College, “Education, Training, and Printing”

**Raymond Mentzer**, University of Iowa, “The French Model”

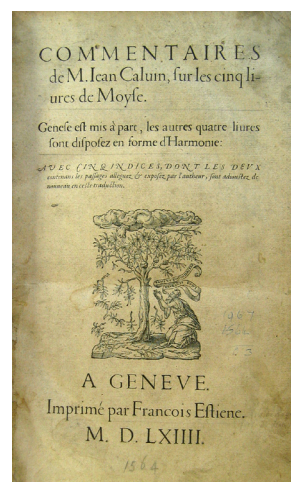
**John Roth**, Goshen College, “Anabaptism and the Radicals”

**John Witvliet**, Calvin College, “Worship”

**Randall Zachmann**, Notre Dame, “Calvinism”

## Rare Book Addition

The Meeter Center recently purchased the *Commentaires de M. Jean Calvin, sur les cinq livres de Moyse...d’Harmonie*. Geneva: François Estienne, 1564. It is the first French edition of the commentary and contains extensive handwritten marginalia by an early owner of the work. This title complements the 1563 Latin edition of the commentary, which the Center also owns.





## 2008 Paleography Course

Eleven participants from across the US gathered for two weeks of intensive instruction in reading 16th century French manuscripts from the Genevan archives. Dr Thomas Lambert, the instructor, is actively involved in the ongoing edition and publication of the sixteenth-century Genevan Consistory registers. The students benefitted both from his paleographical expertise and from his extensive experience in Genevan history and archival research. In the mornings, participants gathered for seminar-style classes whereas in the afternoon, one could find small groups of paleographers at the Meeter Center's tables, engrossed in trying to decipher another word or another sentence, or checking their findings with each other.

In their evaluations, participants gave very positive reports on their experience over the two weeks: one wrote "[Tom Lambert] clearly has a passion for what he does. This course gave me the tools that I will need for my research." Another stated, "I am now able to read many documents that I would otherwise still not be able to read." A third wrote, "The experience was wonderful all the way around". The two-week course was funded by a \$2,000 grant from the Sixteenth Century Studies Conference and by generous donations from the Friends of the Meeter Center. We hope to offer the course again in 2010.

## "What Are We Going To Do?"

"Dad, what are we going to do in Grand Rapids?" That was one of the questions raised at our supper table some weeks before we left Surrey, BC, Canada. Of course, Dad himself knew exactly what he wanted to do in Grand Rapids. Being a full-time pastor and finishing off a doctoral dissertation is a bit of a juggling act. Therefore, Dad was looking forward to having four weeks to concentrate exclusively on research and writing with all the Calvin resources imaginable at his fingertips. In this regard, the H. Henry Meeter Center fulfilled every expectation and more. Two words come to mind immediately: thoroughness and ease of access. Concerning thoroughness, there was not one Calvin resource (book, article, microfiche) that I wished for which I

could not find at the Meeter Center. Concerning ease of access, the CaRD database and the well organized filing system of journal articles saves a scholar many hours – if not days – of research time.

However, let's return to that pre-trip supper table. "Dad, what are the rest of us going to do in Grand Rapids?" The rest includes my wife and our five children, aged one month to eleven years old. Indeed, it was a valid question. At the time it was asked, though, Dad could only provide some vague assurance that Grand Rapids is a big city and certainly there must be many things to do there. As it turns out, while the family was at the Center, the time slipped by quickly because everyone was enjoying themselves thoroughly. In the first place, the accommodations in the renovated dorms were more than adequate, even for a family of seven. The staff at the Center also looked after the little details, and if anything was amiss they were more than willing to solve it as soon as possible. Secondly, and more importantly, we built new relationships and, by the end of our stay, left with fond memories. Paul Fields' demonstration of the "pointing finger" in the rare book collection still makes its way into our dinner time conversations. Karin Maag's oatmeal and chocolate chip dessert cake was delightfully consumed and helped make a bond with our children. And Ryan Noppen's collection of model planes, as well as his impromptu model painting lessons, will not soon be forgotten. Dad came to the

*continued on page 4*



*2008 Paleography Course Participants*

*Front Row Left to Right: Ryosaku Inoue, Donna Donald, Megan Drohan, Tom Lambert (Instructor), Christopher Lane, John McCormack, Todd Restor*

*Back Row Left to Right: Otto Selles, Adam Duker, David Scaer, Ted Van Raalte, Thomas Donlan*



*Rev. Jason Van Vliet*

## Lecture Recordings

*For our friends who cannot attend, Meeter Center Lectures and Colloquia are recorded, with speakers' permission, and are accessible on the Center's website via podcasts.*

## “What Are We Going To Do?” *continued*

Meeter Center to use a library full of Calvin resources. However, our whole family left with much more than that. So much so, in fact, that at the supper table, shortly before we left, one of our children asked, “Dad, can we move to Grand Rapids?” Our heartfelt thanks to the staff at the Center, as well as the Van Halsema family for financing the fellowship.

*Jason & Janet Van Vliet and children*

## Recent Acquisitions

Belt, H. van den. *The Authority of Scripture in Reformed Theology: Truth and Trust*. Leiden: Brill, 2008.

Dunne, Michael. *Calvinist Humor in American Literature*. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2007.

Holt, Mack P. ed. *Adaptations of Calvinism in Reformation Europe: Essays in Honour of Brian G. Armstrong*. Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007.

Joby, Christopher Richard. *Calvinism and the Arts: A Re-assessment*. Leuven: Peeters, 2007.

Venema, Cornelis P. *Accepted and Renewed in Christ: The “Two-fold Grace of God” and the Interpretation of Calvin’s Theology*. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2007.

Walker, Williston. *Calvin: Revolutionary, Theologian, Pastor*. Fearn, Tain, Ross-shire: Christian Focus, 2005.

### **Hugh and Eve Meeter Calvinism Awards for High School Seniors**

The 2009 research paper topic is:  
**Would John Calvin’s Ideals of Government Work in Today’s  
North American Society?**

For further details and application instructions visit:  
[http://www.calvin.edu/meeter/scholarships/highschool\\_award.htm](http://www.calvin.edu/meeter/scholarships/highschool_award.htm)

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