



# Calvin Courier

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

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## From the Director

As I begin my post as director of the Meeter Center, I am conscious both of my debt of gratitude to former and present colleagues and of the significant opportunities open to the Meeter Center in this new phase. Arriving in Grand Rapids on August 19, I have settled in well, largely thanks to the friendly welcome I have received from staff and faculty at Calvin College and Seminary.

I was born and brought up in Montreal, Canada, but spent the last eight years of my life at the University of Saint Andrews in Scotland, first as a graduate student, then as a postdoctoral fellow and teaching fellow in the modern history department. I also spent significant amounts of time in Switzerland, working in Geneva on my doctoral research and in Zurich on my postdoctoral project. My contacts with scholars across Europe have shown me that there is a deep, and in many cases growing, interest in Reformation history and the history of Calvinism. I hope to build on these links and increase the collaboration of other research centers and archives with the Meeter Center.

This year promises to be an active one in the Meeter Center. Our major event for the autumn occurred on Saturday, October 11, when we hosted an afternoon conference to mark the birth anniversary of Philip

Melanchthon, the German Reformer and educator.

Plans are underway to publish the proceedings of this conference. The

Meeter Center is also delighted to be sponsoring a session at the Sixteenth Century Studies Conference, one of the largest gatherings of scholars in early modern history, in

Atlanta at the end of October. Other plans include the creation of a booklet detailing the sources available for scholars in the Meeter Center, the overhaul of our Web page and the continued recruitment of high-caliber scholars for our Meeter Center fellowships.

As these and other plans get underway, we look forward to your comments, suggestions and visits. The Meeter Center exists to provide research opportunities for scholars and others with an interest in Calvinism and the Reformation. We appreciate your support of our activities and look forward to the next years.

*Karin Y. Maag*



## Melanchthon Conference

In honor of the 500th anniversary of Philip Melanchthon's birth, the Meeter Center devoted its fall colloquium on the afternoon of Saturday, October 11, 1997, to a consideration of various aspects of his theology and influence. Four scholars presented stimulating papers.

Dr. Timothy Wengert, Professor of the History of Christianity at the Lutheran Theological Seminary at Philadelphia, delivered the first paper of the afternoon, "We Will Feast Together in Heaven Forever": The Epistolary Friendship of John Calvin and Philip

Melanchthon." Despite their theological differences, the relationship between the two men has traditionally been understood as being very close. This assessment, argued Professor Wengert, fails to appreciate sufficiently the etiquette of Renaissance letter writing, which contextualizes their correspondence. Once this is recognized, it becomes evident that the relationship between Calvin and Melanchthon was an epistolary friendship, a kind of literary fiction imposed on a complex web of interaction, not all of which was friendly. Discernible within the twenty-nine known

*continued on page 4*