



*John Calvin*

# Calvin Courier

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

*Spring 1999, Number 23*

## From the Director

As we move once again towards spring, the Meeter Center is happy to report on the continuing expansion of its activities. Over the course of this academic year a total of seventeen classes of undergraduates from the college and of graduates from Calvin Seminary and other local seminaries will have visited the Center to hear a presentation on early printing and the Reformation. The highlight for students is seeing first hand some of our rare books and understanding more clearly how the Reformation and printing came together as such a potent force.

We continue to reach out to the world beyond our own institution in different ways: in late May/early June, we will have our first paleography course, helping people to learn to decipher Genevan documents from the sixteenth century (see page 2 for details). Also in May the Meeter Center is cohosting with the Calvin Institute for Christian Worship an invitational symposium on worship in the Medieval and Reformation worlds. A grant from the Calvin

Center for Christian Scholarship is funding this symposium. In August the Meeter Center will also cosponsor a major international conference in St. Andrews, Scotland, on French religious books of the sixteenth century.

This coming summer and early fall will see five different visiting scholars come to the Meeter Center thanks to our fellowship program. We are especially grateful to the Friends of the Meeter Center for their ongoing support. Thanks to their donations we will again offer a Friends of the Meeter Center Fellowship, this time to Hungarian scholar Dr. Balint Korsos (for more information on the 1999 fellows see page 3).

All these endeavors as well as our ongoing work on the Psalms recordings help to make the Meeter Center known more widely. Your support and interest sustain and encourage us in this work. Thank you.

*Karin Y. Maag*

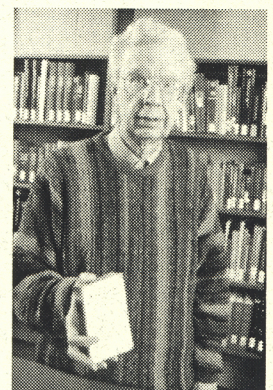
## John Calvin, a Catechism, and Conrad

[Editor's note: this summer, after thirty-four years of service to Calvin College, Conrad Bult will retire as reference librarian. He wrote the following short article about the 1547 Italian translation of John Calvin's Genevan catechism of 1541, which came to light earlier this year. This 1547 Italian translation is quite rare, as it appears to be the only copy in a North American library, and there are only four known copies of it in Europe.]

Here we have a small book, about the size of a pocket New Testament, without covers and only a fragment of a nineteenth-century leather binding on the spine. "Where did it come from?" and "Why did you look through it?" are the frequently asked questions that I received. This small item is a challenge for catalogers, as it is in fact two books bound together for reasons known only to the binder and perhaps the original owner.

Uncataloged, or perhaps waiting to be recatalogued, it languished unknown and unsung in a room not usable for other purposes in the Hekman Memorial Library on our previous campus. It made the trip from the old campus to the new Hekman Library, but here the accommodations were no better.

I looked through the volume page by page, hoping to find additional information about it, as the title page simply translated it as a Tragedy on Free Will printed in Italian in 1545. Then following 139 pages of the Italian play, there was a



*continued on page 4*



## New Acquisitions

### Books

Babelon, Jean-Pierre, et al. *L'édit de Nantes*. Paris: Editions de la Réunion des musées nationaux, 1998.

Calvin, Jean. *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, vol. 1, Russian language edition, Grand Rapids: CRC World Literature Ministries, 1997.

Calvin, Jean. *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, vol. 2, Russian language edition, Grand Rapids: CRC World Literature Ministries, 1997.

Calvini, Ioannis. *De aeterna dei praedestinatione: de la predestination eternelle*. Edited by Wilhelm H. Neuser. Scripta Ecclesiastica, 3rd ser., vol. 1. Genève: Librairie Droz, 1998.

Higman Francis. *Lire et découvrir: la circulation des idées au temps de la Réforme*. Genève: Librairie Droz, 1998.

Jelsema, A. J. *De ziel van Calvijn*. Kampen: THU-Kampen, 1998.

Kwon, Ho-Duck. *Eduard Böhl's Aufnahme der reformatorischen theologie, besonders der Calvins*. Korean text. Seoul, Korea: Solomon Press, 1998.


Millet, Olivier. *Calvin et ses contemporains: actes du colloque de Paris*. Genève: Librairie Droz, 1998.

Parker, Charles H. *The Reformation of Community: Social Welfare and Calvinist Charity in Holland, 1572-1620*. Cambridge, U.K.; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998.

### Dissertations

Ahn, Myung Jun. "Brevitas et Facilitas: A study of a vital aspect in the theological hermeneutics of John Calvin." Ph.D. diss., Universiteit van Pretoria, 1998.

Rossall, Judith Ann. "God's Activity and the Believer's Experience in the Theology of John Calvin." Ph. D. diss., University of Durham, 1991.



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### Rare Books

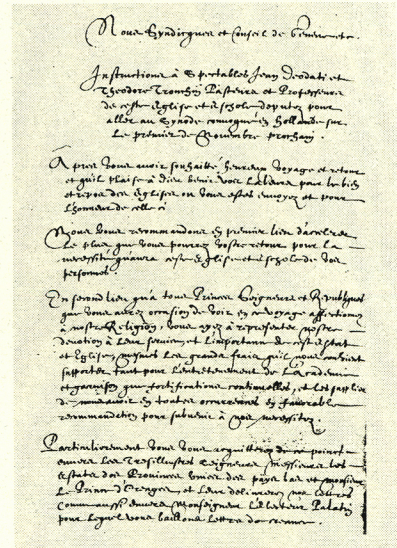
Calvin, Jean. *Commentaires de M. Jean Calvin sur le liure des Pseaumes*. Genève: Imprimé par Conrad Badius, 1561.

Calvin, Jean. *Leçons et expositions familiares sur les douze petis Prophetes*. Lyon: Sébastien Honorat, 1563.

Calvin, Jean. *Commentaires de M. Jehan Calvin sur toutes les Epistres de l' Apostre saint Paul, & aussi sur l'Epistre aux Hebreux: Ite sur les Epistres Canoniques de S. Pierre, saint Jehan, saint Jaques, and saint Jude, lesquelles sont aussi appeeles Catholiques*. Genève: Imprimé par Estienne Anastase, 1560.

### Can You Read This?

One of the goals of Reformation research is to work on primary sources, documents that were written at the time of the Reformation. The difficulty for scholars, however, is that many of these sources are handwritten. Even today not everyone's handwriting is very readable. Sixteenth-century handwriting is even more difficult because of the use of abbreviations in the text, unfamiliar vocabulary, and nonstandardized spelling. However with the help of expert paleographers these problems are surmountable.



To help the process along the Meeter Center is offering a two-week paleography course on Genevan documents. This is a new venture for the Center, but if successful, it will be repeated. The course will run from May 31 through June 11 and is being taught by Dr. Tom Lambert, who has extensive experience in Genevan paleography. These sessions are particularly suited to those embarking on graduate research or scholars who wish to brush up on their paleography skills.

The class will take place in the mornings with the afternoons free for preparation for the next day and for work on individual research projects using the Meeter Center's fine collection. If you are interested in joining next year's group, please contact the Meeter Center.



## Colloquia and Conferences

### Meeter Center Colloquium Series

May 8, 1999: Invitational Symposium on Worship and Liturgy in the Reformation and its Medieval Antecedents was cosponsored by the Calvin Institute for Christian Worship and the H. Henry Meeter Center for Calvin Studies. Participants included faculty from Calvin and several American universities. This symposium was funded by a grant from the Calvin Center for Christian Scholarship.

August 30 – September 2, 1999: The French Religious Book Conference, cosponsored by the University of St. Andrews and the Meeter Center, has as its central objective to bring together distinguished speakers and guests to consider the French Religious Book in the sixteenth century. The conference will be the largest gathering of experts in this field this decade. The papers delivered at the conference will form the basis of an edited volume to be published in the near future. Director Maag will deliver a paper.

November 18, 1999: Dr. Debra Rienstra, professor of English at Calvin College, will be the Meeter Center's fall lecturer. Her topic will be "Mary Sidney's Psalms and the English Reformation: Writing along the Sacred Text."

## Fellowships Awarded in 1999

**Faculty Research Fellowship** Dr. Scott Manetsch, assistant professor of religion at Northwestern College in Orange City, Iowa, will do research this summer on the influence and thought of Theodore Beza.

**Emo F. J. Van Halsema Fellowship** Rev. Jung Woo Yoo, associate pastor of education, Emmanuel Presbyterian Church in Seoul, Korea, plans to do work on Calvin's theology of the Holy Spirit.

**Student Research Fellowship** Ms. Karen Spierling, a Ph. D. candidate at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, will research the topic of baptism in Calvin's Geneva. University of Arizona Ph. D. candidate Mr. Michael Bruening plans to study Pierre Viret, vernacular religious literature, and the Reformation in France.

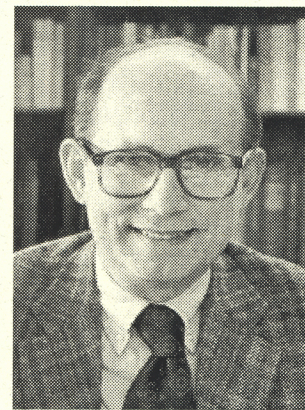
**Friends of the Meeter Center Fellowship** Dr. Bálint Korsós, an associate principal in the high school of the Pápa Reformed College in Hungary, will study Calvin's political doctrines.

**Nonstipendiary Fellowship** Dr. Hwan Bong Lee, a professor of theology at Kosin University, Pusan, Korea, is currently studying the Calvinistic view of structural pluralism.

**Fellowship applications** for 2000 may be obtained from the Meeter Center upon request and must be returned by January 1, 2000. Application forms are also available on our Web site.

## Meeter Center's Biennial Lecture

At the Meeter Center Biennial Lecture held on May 8, 1999, Professor Robert Kingdon presented his paper entitled "The Genevan Revolution in Christian Worship." In this lecture Professor Kingdon contrasted the Roman Catholic Mass before the Reformation with the Reformed worship services in Geneva at the time of Calvin.



One of the most notable differences between the two worship services was that in Roman Catholic worship the Mass was basically a visual experience rather than an auditory one. The priests used Latin throughout the Mass, speaking in low voices most of the time. The people attending the Mass only watched the rituals done by the priests without participating in them. The parish churches before the Reformation did not normally have preachers, and only during certain church seasons—such as Lent and Advent—did a preacher come to one particular parish church.

In the Roman Catholic system, Professor Kingdon continued, sacraments were given primary emphasis, while in the Protestant worship services emphasis was placed on the preaching of the Word of God. Ministers in the Reformed churches in Geneva were well trained in rhetoric and some of them came from noble families. The preachers were required to have strong voices so that the

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## Hugh and Eve Meeter Calvinism Awards to High School Seniors

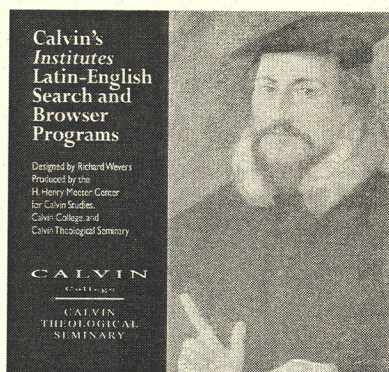
Each year the Meeter Center coordinates the process for this award. This year we had an all-time record of twenty-one entries on the topic: "The Care of the Poor according to John Calvin and Its Twentieth-Century Implications." The judges were very impressed with the overall caliber of the papers; many of the students wrote thoughtful essays on this topic. The first prize of \$2,500 went to Gerda Kits of Richmond Hill, Ontario, Canada, and the second prize of \$1,250 went to Karissa de Koning of Sarnia, Ontario, Canada.

We are delighted that the generosity of the Meeter family enables this award to be offered annually. The awards cover part of the tuition costs for these students as they enter college. The topic for next year's competition is "John Calvin on the Role of the Pastor in the Sixteenth Century and Today." Deadline for entries is January 15, 2000. Further information and explanatory brochures are available from the Meeter Center at the address on page 2.



## Calvin's Institutes: New Search Program

Calvin's 1559 Latin/English version of the *Institutes* is now available on one searchable CD-ROM, with browser, designed by Richard Wevers and produced by the H. Henry Meeter Center for Calvin Studies. The CD-ROM may be purchased by sending a check in US dollars made out to the Meeter Center to the address below.



Total includes shipping and handling: US residents: \$56.45  
Canada: \$56.52 Elsewhere: \$60.00

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## John Calvin, a Catechism, and Conrad

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new title page, and the Italian catechism appeared and you know the rest of the story. Research on this book was a joint effort by many library staff members, and all library personnel are understandably proud that this rare artifact is now a cherished part of the Meeter Center collection.

Perhaps the credit for my love of books should go to my father, John L. Bult, seminary class of 1932, who nourished my interest in books of all kinds from the *Sugar Creek Gang* to Dutch-American history.

Conrad Bult  
Reference Librarian  
Calvin College Hekman Library

## Meeter Center's Biennial Lecture

(continued from page 3)

congregation could understand them well. Among those preachers are well-known names such as William Farel, Pierre Viret, and most importantly, John Calvin.

As a preacher Calvin was always able to convince people that he understood the Word of God better than anyone else could. Calvin was also particularly adept in his use of the French language, using short, simple, and clear sentences. In his sermons Calvin would read directly from the Hebrew or Greek Bible and translate the passage into French. He followed *lectio continuo*, preaching from the Bible one book after another, chapter by chapter, verse by verse.

Unlike the Mass the worship service in the Reformed church involved direct participation by the entire congregation. They recited creeds, offered prayers, and sang from the Psalter in French. In every worship service they were expected to be active participants and not just observers.

With the accuracy of a research scholar and the fluidity of a storyteller Professor Kingdon presented his paper to an audience of more than fifty people. The lecture itself was both interesting and informative. It was clear through the questions the audience asked that this lecture generated eagerness among the audience for an even better knowledge of Reformed worship services in Geneva in the sixteenth century.

Yudha Thianto, Ph.D. student  
Calvin Theological Seminary

### Friends of the Meeter Center

We welcome members to the Friends of the Meeter Center. Checks may be made out to Friends of the Meeter Center and sent to the Center's address. Thank you for your support! Annual membership fees are:

Student	\$20	Associate	\$100
Supporter	\$40	Partner	\$200
Donor	\$75	Benefactor	\$500

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