

*John Calvin*

# Calvin Courier

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

Fall 2001, Number 28

## From the Director

This edition of *Calvin Courier* brings you up to date with our activities since spring. Once again we welcomed visitors and scholars to the Center for periods of research and for conferences and courses. Our second biennial Genevan paleography course went extremely well, and we hope to offer it again in 2003. This year participants came from across the U.S. as well as from Japan.

The Meeter Center resources include mainly books and articles, but we also have artifacts of the Reformation period. In particular we were able to acquire in 1998 an extensive collection of commemorative medals of John Calvin. In that regard, we note with sadness the death of the Reverend Raymond Teeuwissen on July 31, 2001, who originally assembled the collection during his many years as director of the John Knox House in Geneva. Reverend Teeuwissen felt the Meeter Center was the most appropri-

ate home for his medals, and we honor him for his many diligent years in putting the collection together.

In May 2002 the Meeter Center will be twenty years old, and we will mark the occasion with a special *Calvin Courier* in the spring. It will highlight the Meeter Center activities over the past two decades and provide an update on the careers of those who have held Meeter Center fellowships over the years. We particularly encourage current scholars of Calvin, Calvinism, and the Reformation to apply for a Meeter Center fellowship. Criteria and application forms are available on our website.

Once again, thank you for your continued interest in Calvin studies and the work of the Meeter Center. We welcome enquiries by telephone or e-mail and look forward to many more fruitful years of work together.

*Karin Y. Maag*

## Calvin Studies Society Colloquium

Over seventy people attended the thirteenth Colloquium of the Calvin Studies Society, "Calvin and the Church," at Calvin Theological Seminary, May 24–26, 2001. At the opening session Karin Maag, director of the Meeter Center and a board member of the Society, introduced James DeJong, president of the Seminary and a long-time CSS member, who welcomed the attendees.

William Naphy of the University of Aberdeen presented the first paper, "Calvin's Church and the Genevan State," in which he argued that there was a "remarkable degree of consensus" in church-state relations. Resistance to ministerial plans came not so much from the state as an institution as from groups or individuals in the general populace. Robert Kingdon, from the University of Wisconsin-Madison, was the commentator.

"Acting on Calvin's Ideas: The Church in France" was the topic of Raymond Mentzer from the University of Iowa. Drawing on

consistory registers as well as the acts of the French National Synods, Professor Mentzer described how French Reformed churches diverged from the church in Geneva especially regarding synodical structures, the four offices (the diaconate in particular), the role of pastor, and oversight of communion. Otto Selles of Calvin College offered commentary.

Karin Maag introduced Herman Selderhuis of the Theological University of Apeldoorn as the Meeter Center Biennial Lecturer. In "The Church on Stage: Calvin's Dynamic Ecclesiology" Selderhuis turned to Calvin's Psalms commentaries and the image of "theatre" to expound Calvin's ecclesiology, for, according to Professor Selderhuis, a more complete and dynamic ecclesiology is found there than in the *Institutes*. Ward Holder of Stonehill College presented questions and comments.

*continued on page 4*



## New Acquisitions

### Books

Asselt, Willem J. van, and Eef Dekker, eds. *Reformation and Scholasticism: An Ecumenical Enterprise*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2001.

Bruhn, Karen. "What These Seemers Be: Calvinist Concepts of Identity and Measure for Measure." Ph.D. diss., University of North Carolina, 1998.

Calvin, John. *Come Out from Among Them: 'Anti-Nicodemite' Writings of John Calvin*. Translated from the French by Seth Skolnitsky. Dallas, Texas: Protestant Heritage Press, 2001.

d'Assonville, Victor E. *Der Begriff "doctrina" bei Johannes Calvin: eine theologische Analyse*. Rostocker theologische Studien 6, Münster: LIT, 2001.

Lillback, Peter A. *The Binding of God: Calvin's Role in the Development of Covenant Theology*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2001.

Spijker, Willem van 't. *Calvin: Biographie und Theologie*. Translated by Hinrich Stoevesandt. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2001.

### Articles

Balserak, John. "The God of Love and Weakness: Calvin's Understanding of God's Accommodating Relationship with His People." *The Westminster Theological Journal* 62, no. 2, 2002: 177–95.

Botha, S. J. "Calvyn se leer oor die kerk." *Hervormde Teologiese Studies* 56, nos. 2 and 3, 2000: 572–84.

Burger, Christoph. "Werben um Bullingers Beistand: Calvin's Briefe von 1537/38." In *Die Zürcher Reformation: Ausstrahlungen und Rückwirkungen*. 101–20. New York: Peter Lang, 2001.

Fath, Sébastien. "Calvin aux États-Unis: des Pères pèlerins à l'affaire Lewinski." *La Revue Réformée* 52, no. 213, 2001: 1–26.

Demura, Akira. "From Zwingli to Calvin: A Comparative Study of Zwingli's Elenchus and Calvin's Brieve Instruction." In *Die Zürcher Reformation: Ausstrahlungen und Rückwirkungen*. 87–99. New York: Peter Lang, 2001.

Thomas, G. Michael. "Constructing and Clarifying the Doctrine of Predestination: Theodore Beza's Letters During, and in the Wake of, the Bolsec Controversy (1551–1555)." *Reformation and Renaissance Review* 4, 2000: 7–28.

Van Bemmelen, Peter. "Divine Accommodation and Biblical Creation: Calvin vs. McGrath." *Andrews University Seminary Studies* 39, no. 1, 2001: 109–16.

## A Nice Story Becomes Even Nicer

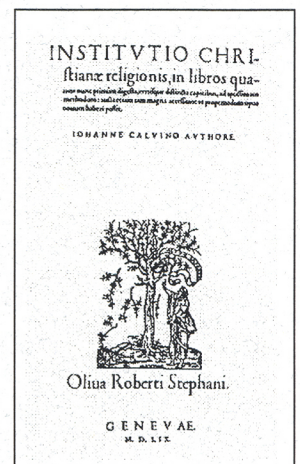
Recently I received a letter from a retired CRC pastor who began by saying, "You probably don't know me, but..." I read on with a smile because I do know who he is and in fact often use him as an encouragement to bibliophiles.

Twenty years ago in Grand Rapids, the Reverend Henry DeRooy found Calvin's 1559 Latin *Institutes* during his usual foray through the used book shelves of the equivalent of our present-day Good Will stores. The body of the book was in good shape, but the title page was loose and the book as a whole was bound in a decrepit Victorian cover. Rev. DeRooy notified the store that they had a valuable book (it was subsequently discovered that at that time no one else in the U.S. had a cataloged copy) and that they should notify Calvin College. They weren't so inclined, so he bought it for a few dollars and brought it to the Meeter Center. From the college he received enough money so that he and his wife could visit the Netherlands.

The story doesn't end there! I responded to Rev. DeRooy's letter by saying how much I enjoy telling others about his find and what a wonderful addition the book is to our collection, especially since we have had it recently rebound by our conservator in Chicago.

A few weeks later I received a second letter from Rev. DeRooy with a check for \$1,000 and the following explanation. He was glad to hear that we appreciated his story and the book. He wished to show his appreciation for Calvin College and for his trip to the Netherlands, so he was returning \$1,000 to the Meeter Center so that other books could be bought. We appreciate his sentiments and generosity.

Paul Fields  
Curator, H. Henry Meeter Center



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E-mail: [meeter@calvin.edu](mailto:meeter@calvin.edu)

Web: <http://www.calvin.edu/meeter/>



## Colloquia and Conferences

### Meeter Center Colloquium Series

October 18, 2001: Dr. Karin Maag, the director of the H. Henry Meeter Center for Calvin Studies, spoke on "Life in Reformation Geneva" as part of the Calvin College Noontime Series.

November 15, 2001: Dr. Willem Jan van Asselt, senior lecturer of church history at the Faculty of Theology, Utrecht University, The Netherlands, will give the fall lecture on "The Fundamental Meaning of Theology: Archtypal and Ectypal Theology in 17th Century Reformed Thought."

March 20, 2002: Dr. Karin Maag will speak on the topic of pastors in the Reformation at a lecture cosponsored by the History Department and the Meeter Center.

April 11, 2002: Professor Henry Luttikhuisen, professor of art history at Calvin College, will be the Meeter Center's spring lecturer. His topic will be "Did the Visual Arts Really Disappear with the Reformation?"

### Genevan Paleography



*Genevan paleography class*

The Meeter Center's second session on Genevan paleography was held June 4–15, 2001. Drawn by the opportunity to develop or polish skills for Reformation research, participants came from Calvin College and Seminary, universities across the U.S.A., and Japan. Dr. Tom Lambert, currently associate editor of the Geneva Consistory Project, shared his expertise. In addition to providing copies of archival documents, Lambert lectured on Genevan history, methods for archival research, and the merits of various dictionaries and online resources.

The challenge of reading handwritten documents in sixteenth-century French should not go unmentioned. Deciphering seems to be the more accurate description of the activity given the variety of writing styles, nonstandardized spelling, and personal abbreviations. "That squiggle at the beginning of line three is a what?" "What alphabet is he using?" "Are you sure we're still working in French?" "Try working from the end of that word."

Two weeks of working with documents did yield significant improvement and no small sense of accomplishment as writing became more readily recognized, even readable. Another benefit was the presentation by Paul Fields, curator of the Meeter Center, on the history of printing, including some remarkable pieces from the Center's rare books collection.

*Carol Williams  
Calvin Theological Seminary*

### Hot Summer and Cool Work



*Roelf Theodoor te Velde*

Our journey to Grand Rapids was the first airplane experience and the first acquaintance with the United States for me, my wife, and our two-year-old son. Many things were new to us, but we did have a great time on the Calvin College campus. Many thanks to Karin, Susan, Paul, and Yudha, who each in his or her own way did so much to welcome and help us. Conversations with professors Richard A. Muller and Lyle D. Bierma were very helpful for my research.

As a doctoral student of the Theological University of the Reformed Churches ("vrijgemaakt") in the Netherlands, located at Kampen, I work on a dissertation in systematic theology concerning the connection between method and content in the doctrine of God. One of my main focuses is the doctrine of God as it was developed in Reformed orthodoxy (ca. 1560–1750). During my stay at the Meeter Center I intended to examine parts of the discussion on method in the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. I was really surprised by the excellent resources and working conditions that enabled me to fulfill all the specific goals I had set for myself: first, to study the phenomenon of Ramism; second, to investigate the views and the influence of the Italian philosopher Jacopo Zabarella; third, to look into early Reformed orthodox contributions to theological method. While it was sometimes unbearably hot outside, the calm and cool environment of the Meeter Center provided fertile conditions for intensive research.

My family and I greatly enjoyed the kindness of so many people at the Meeter Center and Calvin Theological Seminary as well as at Woodlawn Christian Reformed Church. We return to the Netherlands with gratitude and with the hope of returning.

*Roelf Theodoor te Velde, Ph.D. candidate  
Theological University of Kampen (Broederweg)*

**Fellowship Applications** for 2002 may be obtained from the Meeter Center upon request and should be returned by January 1, 2002. Application forms are also available on our Web site.



## Calvin Studies Society Colloquium

(continued from page 1)

Gene Haas, Redeemer University College, addressed the question, "Did Calvin's views contribute to the emphasis on individualism in modern ethics?" In "Calvin, the Church, and Ethics," Professor Haas contended that Calvin rejects the view that the believer is an individual subject before God, unshaped by the communal bonds of the church. Arie Griffioen of Calvin College was the commentator.

As a result of reading a *New York Times* review ("John Calvin Got a Bad Rap") of Marilynne Robinson's *The Death of Adam*, John Hesselink of Western Theological Seminary wrote to the author about her interest in Calvin. After several letters and a visit to the University of Iowa where Professor Robinson teaches, John suggested that the CSS invite Professor Robinson to speak on the topic, "The Polemic against Calvin: The Origins and Consequences of Historical Investigation." John Bolt of Calvin Seminary offered reactions and comments.

On Friday evening following a delicious meal prepared by the College Food Service, participants enjoyed an entertaining "Banchetto Musicale," a sixteenth and seventeenth centuries miscellany performed by Ruth Brook, Terry Hare, Calvin Stapert, Nancy Van Baak, and Lisa Walhout.

Karen Spierling of the University of Louisville discussed "Calvin, Baptism, and Excommunication in 16<sup>th</sup> Century Geneva," arguing that for many Genevans family and economic ties were more important in the rite of baptism than piety. For men who wished to serve as godparents even though they were barred from communion, the authorities determined that "he who is not

capable of one is not capable of the other." Elsie McKee of Princeton Seminary was the respondent.

"Children and the Church in Calvin's Geneva" was presented by Barbara Pitkin of Stanford University. To demonstrate that the Reformation in Geneva brought significant changes to the place of children in the church, Professor Pitkin considered the ritual of baptism, methods of religious instruction, and participation in the Lord's Supper. John Hesselink provided comments.

Election results were announced at the Society's business meeting: Randall Zachman of Notre Dame was elected vice-president and program chair for 2003, while Barbara Pitkin and Herman Selderhuis were elected to the Board. CSS President Donald Sinnema of Trinity Christian College and program chair for 2001 expressed the Society's gratitude to Calvin Seminary and the Meeter Center for their generous support of the Colloquium.

A few weeks after the Colloquium, CSS board members selected the topic "Calvin and the Company of Pastors" for the 2003 Colloquium to be held at Notre Dame, May 22-24. For more information on the CSS, go to [www.CalvinStudiesSociety.org](http://www.CalvinStudiesSociety.org)

David Foxgrover  
CSS secretary-treasurer

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

The topic for 2002 is "John Calvin and Religious Persecution." Contact the Meeter Center to receive an informative brochure about next year's contest. Papers should be received by January 15, 2002.

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The H. Henry Meeter Center for Calvin Studies  
Calvin College and Calvin Theological Seminary  
3201 Burton Street, SE  
Grand Rapids, MI 49546-4388