

Calvin Courier

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

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Commentary

In the academic year 1996-97 the Meeter Center has bidden farewell to Richard Gamble, its third Director, and has undertaken a search process to identify his successor. We are pleased to announce that Dr. Karin Maag, known to many Calvin scholars for her work at St. Andrews and her study of the Genevan Academy, will assume the directorship at the beginning of the 1997-98 academic year.

The Meeter Center also mourns the passing of Peter DeKlerk, whose work on the annual Calvin Bibliography for so long graced the pages of *Calvin Theological Journal*. Peter's service to the field of Calvin studies will be long remembered. In cooperation with *Calvin Theological Journal*, the Meeter Center has committed itself to the continuation of the annual bibliographical project, as evidenced in the bibliography of the November 1996 issue, compiled by Paul Fields, our Curator.

In addition to these rather weighty matters, the regular work of the Center has continued at a consistent pace: the Meeter

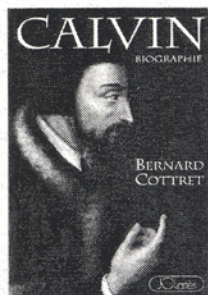
Center Colloquium series has continued with papers by Professor William Stevenson and by two Calvin students from the B.A. and Ph.D. programs. The Center also welcomed Dr. Richard Wevers, author of the concordances to Calvin's 1539 and 1559 *Institutes* and to Calvin's translation of the Bible, to an office at the Center where Professor Wevers continues his work of presenting an "electronic Calvin" to the world.

Fellows at the Center this year included Dr. Tae Kyoung Kwon and Dr. Bonnie Pattison. We congratulate Dr. Pattison on the successful completion of her Ph.D. at Princeton on "The Theological Role of Poverty in Calvin's Doctrine of the Church." We look forward, moreover, to the arrival this summer of Dr. Joy Kleinstuber of the University of Limerick, Ireland, presently the editor of Calvin's treatise against Servetus for the *Opera denuo recognita*, Dr. Taedoo Chung (Korea), Peter Aggarwal (Oxford University) and David C. Noe (student research).

Richard A. Muller, president
Meeter Center Governing Board

Book Review

Calvin Biographie by Bernard Cottret. Paris: Jean-Claude Lattès, 1995, 455 pp. \$45.95. Reviewed by Professor Dale Van Kley.



In rooting Jean Calvin's formulation of the doctrine of election in Calvin's own experience and conviction of having received an extraordinary calling from God, Bernard Cottret's new biography of the French reformer contrives to take Calvin's doctrine and experience seriously while situating them in the sixteenth century. For the extraordinary vocation that led Calvin to

preach and to institute pastors without being ordained is hardly imaginable without the new and entirely lay identity of the humanist man of letters on which Calvin originally modeled

himself, nor is the doctrine of predestination entirely intelligible without the assurance it provided for a community in exile of which Calvin, too, was a part. And yet neither consideration prevents Cottret from regarding Calvin's calling as existentially authentic or the doctrine of election as exegetically honest.

Cottret helpfully situates the doctrinal differences between French proto-Calvinists and Catholics in the larger context of the seismic rupture of spiritual sensibilities between those who, like Catholics, continued to perceive reality as a hierarchy linking the living with the departed, purgatory, and God and secular time as routinely punctuated by the miraculous and pregnant with the apocalypse; and those who—Protestants or Huguenots—allowed only Christ to mediate between the creation and a uniquely majestic God and experienced time as a linear flow divorced from either the

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