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*John Calvin*

# Calvin Courier

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

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## From the Director

As we move toward the Meeter Center's 25th anniversary (2007–08) and the 500th anniversary of Calvin's birth (2009), the Meeter Center continues to grow and develop. After many years of effort, we have completed the index-ing of the Calvinism article file, thanks to the sterling work of Charles Brown in particular (see page 2). Our book collection continues to grow as well: in December we purchased a rare, first-surviving edition (1545) of Calvin's Latin catechism. You can find more details on page 3.

We have a busy spring and summer planned. On April 6 the Meeter Center held its biennial lecture, featuring Professor Raymond Mentzer of the Department of Religious Studies at the University of Iowa. He spoke about the ways in which early modern French Protestants set up their church interiors and made use of seating arrangements to make statements about status in their communities.

Following that, the Calvin Studies Society met in Grand Rapids from April 7–9 at Calvin Theological Seminary.

The Center was highlighted during the conference, particularly during the presentation and the display of Reformation-era commemorative medals on Thursday, April 7.

In June the Meeter Center will host its fourth biennial Genevan paleography course, taught by Dr. Tom Lambert, who has worked extensively on the Genevan consistory records in Calvin's time. We deeply appreciate the contributions from Friends of the Meeter Center, who have made it possible for us to offer a bursary to each qualified participant. Please see page 4 on how to contribute to the Friends of the Meeter Center fund to support projects including the paleography bursaries, Friends of the Meeter Center fellowships, and collection enhancement through donations earmarked for rare books. We have also selected seven fellowship holders who will spend time doing research in the Center in the summer and early fall. There are more details about them on page 3.

Thank you for your continued interest and ongoing support for our work.

*Karin Y. Maag*

## Seating Disputes in the Huguenot Church

On April 6, Dr. Raymond Mentzer presented the Meeter Center Biennial Lecture, entitled "No Benches Are Reserved: Seating Disputes in the French Reformation Church." Dr. Mentzer's lecture focused on 16th and 17th century Protestant France, when chairs and benches first became church service mainstays.

The origins of church seating reside in the emphasis John Calvin and his fellow Reformers placed on regenerating right belief and devotion among the faithful. One consequence of this aim was a new focus on church preaching. In order to accommodate the new Reformed worship style, temples across France were built or

renovated to include pulpits orbited by pews and chairs. Seating was segregated according to age, sex, and social status.

In theory, seating within each section was public and unassigned. In practice, however, benches and chairs, bought and built by church members, became highly coveted

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## New Acquisitions

### Books

DeKoster, Lester. *Light for the City: Calvin's Preaching, Source of Life and Liberty*. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans Pub., 2004.

Edmondson, Stephen. *Calvin's Christology*. Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004.

Engammare, Max. *L'ordre du temps: l'invention de la ponctualité au XVIe siècle*. Geneva: Librairie Droz, 2004.

Helm, Paul. *John Calvin's Ideas*. Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2004.

Kooi, Cornelis van der. *As in a Mirror: John Calvin and Karl Barth on Knowing God: A Diptych*. Translated by Donald Mader. Leiden: Brill, 2005.

Selderhuis, Herman, ed. *Calvinus praeceptor ecclesiae*. Papers of the International Congress on Calvin Research, Princeton, August 20–24, 2002. Geneva: Librairie Droz, 2004.

Spierling, Karen. *Infant Baptism in Reformation Geneva: The Shaping of a Community, 1536–1564*. Aldershot, England; Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2005.

### Articles

Beeke, Joel. "Calvin's Piety." *Mid-America Journal of Theology* 15, 2004: 33–65.

Faber, Riemer. "The Influence of Erasmus' Annotations on Calvin's Galatians." *Dutch Review of Church History* 84, 2004: 268–83.

Ganoczy, Alexandre. "Calvin, Jean, Theologian and Reformer." In *Dictionary of the Reformation*, edited by Klaus Ganser and Bruno Steimer, 44–48. New York: The Crossroad, 2004.

Kingdon, Robert. "Uses of the Psalter in Calvin's Geneva." In *Der Genfer Psalter und seine Rezeption in Deutschland, der Schweiz und den Niederlanden*, edited by Eckhard Grunewald,

21–32. Tübingen: Max Niemeyer Verlag, 2004.

Maag, Karin. "Higher Education for Melancthon and Calvinism: A Comparative Approach." In *Melancthon und der Calvinismus*, edited by Günter Frank and Herman Selderhuis, 61–74. Stuttgart: Frommann-Holzboog, 2005.

Park, Gon-taik. "A Short Study on Calvin's Biographies." Korean text. *Presbyterian Theological Quarterly* 71, no. 3, 2004: 34–70.

Tinker, Michael. "John Calvin's Concept of Divine Accommodation: A Hermeneutical Corrective." *Churchman*, 118, no. 4, 2004: 325–58.

VanDrunen, David. "The Context of Natural Law: John Calvin's Doctrine of the Two Kingdoms." *Journal of Church and State*, 46, no. 3, 2004: 503–25.

### Dissertations

Balserak, Jon. "*Deus humanitus saepe cum suis agere solet*: An Analysis of Divine Accommodation in the Thought of John Calvin." Ph.D. diss., University of Edinburgh, 2003.

Park, Gyeong Su. "John Calvin as an advocate of Church Unity: A New Portrait of John Calvin." Ph.D. diss., Claremont Graduate University, 2004.

Quaintance, Chad. "The Blessed Life: Theological Interpretation and Use of the Beatitudes by Augustine, Calvin, and Barth." Ph.D. diss., Union Theological Seminary and Presbyterian School of Christian Education, 2003.

## A Job Well Done

When the Center's Calvinism Resources Database (CaRD) was created ten years ago, a variety of students entered the bibliographical material, but the subject categories attributed to each article awaited more careful analysis.

Approximately seven years ago, Charles Brown took on the part-time task of adding subjects to each citation. It has been a Herculean task, which he has performed carefully and studiously. Now it is finished.

We wish to thank Charles for his work and good attitude throughout this project. Originally Charles came to us as a volunteer, but as the project continued, it was hoped that he could receive a small stipend. So, in addition to Charles, we also wish to thank Mrs. Annette Kirk, president of The Russell Kirk Center for Cultural Renewal, for her help in securing funding from the Willard Foundation, as well as the Friends of the Meeter Center for their help in providing funding for this job.



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## Rare Catechism Added to Collection



John Calvin's 1545 Latin catechism, *Catechismus ecclesiae genevensis hoc est formula erudiendi pueros in doctrina Christi*, was recently purchased by the Meeter Center. One of only four copies known to exist in libraries worldwide, the catechism was originally published in both Latin and French. Other surviving copies are held by the Genevan University Library, the Zentralbibliothek in Zurich, and the British Library in London. There is one surviving French 1545 edition of the catechism, in the library of Gotha, Germany.

The catechism uses the question-and-answer format to train and test children and new converts in the basics of doctrine and the Christian life. Questions and answers cover the Ten Commandments, the Apostles' Creed, the Lord's Prayer, and the sacraments of Baptism and the Lord's Supper. This work, now the only known copy held by a North American library, complements the Center's 1545 Italian edition of the same catechism.

*Paul Fields, curator  
H. Henry Meeter Center*

## Seating Disputes in the Huguenot Church

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closely guarded, and intensely disputed possessions. Dr. Mentzer offered an abundance of examples in which hapless consistories attempted to resolve fierce seating conflicts. In one instance, a dispute over the inheritance of a bench in the town of Alès involving three women and a merchant's family escalated from the local consistory to the regional colloquy, then the regional senate, and even to the royal court. The quarrel was resolved when the consistory locked the contested bench in the bell tower. Illustrating the potential for such disputes to rend local congregations, both parties subsequently refrained from attending church.

Dr. Mentzer concluded his lecture by underscoring the ubiquity and intractability of seating disputes in the French Reformed churches. He noted that something as mundane as seating

actually caused more division in the community of believers than attempts to control dogma and theology. Seating, which was originally implemented in an effort to restore piety, instead produced disruption and distraction.

*Jeff Rop, Calvin College history major*

## Meeter Center Colloquium Series

*October 13, 2005* Dr. Christopher Kaiser, professor of historical and systematic theology at Western Theological Seminary, will speak at the Meeter Center's fall colloquium. His topic will be "Beliefs in Modern Science, Then and Now."

*March 16, 2006* The Meeter Center's spring colloquium will feature Rev. Joel Beeke, pastor of the Heritage Netherlands Reformed church. His topic will be "The Puritan Art of Meditation."

## Fellowships Awarded in 2005

**Faculty Research Fellowship:** Dr. Daniel Eppley, an assistant professor and Turner Distinguished Professor of Religious Studies at McMurry University, Abilene, Texas, will research sixteenth century Presbyterian Puritan hermeneutics.

**Student Research Fellowships:** Mr. Geoff Cooke, a Ph.D. candidate from the London School of Theology, U.K., will pursue research on assurance of faith in the 1536 & 1539 *Institutes*.

Mr. Patrick O'Banion, a Ph.D. candidate at St. Louis University, St. Louis, Mo., plans to study Zanchi.

**Emo Van Halsema Fellowship:** Rev. Kornelius Kuswanto, a professor of Old Testament at South East Asia Bible Seminary, Malang, Indonesia, will examine Calvin's attitude toward the Jews.

**Friends of the Meeter Center Fellowships:** Dr. Yun Lak Chung, a professor of New Testament at Anyang University, Anyang City, Korea, plans to study Calvin's understanding of the law.

Ms. Genevieve Gross, a Ph.D. candidate from the University of Geneva, Geneva, Switzerland, will research secondary figures of the French-speaking Reformation.

Mr. Johan de Niet, a Ph.D. candidate at the Free University, Amsterdam, The Netherlands, will study the sixteenth century

**Fellowship Applications** for 2006 may be obtained from the Meeter Center upon request and should be returned by January 1, 2006. Application forms are also available on our Web site.

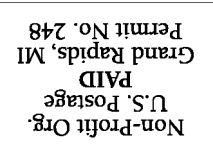
# Friends of the Meeter Center

We welcome members to the Friends of the Meeter Center. Friends' donations help provide funding for special programs, including the Friends of the Meeter Center Fellowships and the CD *Music of the Genevan Psalter*. 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

# Hugh and Eve Meeter Calvinism Awards for High School Seniors

This year the Meeter Center received seven papers on the topic "Why Has Education Been So Central for John Calvin and Calvinism?" Joseph Breems from Moreno Valley, Calif., won the first-place award of \$2,500, and second-place winner Kristin Haagsma of Grand Rapids, Mich. won \$1,250. The topic for next year's competition is "Calvin and the Visual Arts." Contact the Meeter Center to receive an informative brochure about next year's contest. Papers should be received by January 15, 2006.



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