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0521816475 - The Cambridge Companion to John Calvin - Edited by Donald K. McKim

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JOHN CALVIN

John Calvin (1509–1564) stands with Martin Luther (1483–1546) as the premier theologian of the sixteenth-century Protestant Reformation. Calvin's thought spread throughout Europe to the New World and later throughout the whole world. His insights and influence continue to endure today, presenting a model of theological scholarship grounded in Scripture as well as providing nurture for Christian believers within churches across the globe. Dr Donald K. McKim gathers together an international array of major Calvin scholars to consider phases of Calvin's theological thought and influence. Historians and theologians meet to present a full picture of Calvin's contexts, the major themes in Calvin's writings, and the ways in which his thought spread and has increasing importance. Chapters serve as guide to their topics and provide further readings for additional study. This is an accessible introduction to this significant Protestant reformer and will appeal to the specialist and non-specialist alike.

DONALD K. MCKIM has served as Academic Dean and Professor of Theology at Memphis Theological Seminary and Professor of Theology at the University of Dubuque Theological Seminary, in addition to being a pastor in Presbyterian Church (USA) churches. He is the author and editor of over twenty-five books and currently works as Academic and Reference editor for Westminster John Knox Press.

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John E. Karnes  
Jack B. Rogers  
Ford Lewis Battles

Valued teachers and friends  
With gratitude

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## Preface

John Calvin (1509–1564) stands with Martin Luther (1483–1546) as the premier theologian of the sixteenth-century Protestant Reformation. Like his older contemporary, Calvin was concerned with the reform of the Christian church and with understanding the message of the Holy Scriptures as the Word of God. Calvin's thought spread throughout Europe to the New World and later throughout the whole world. His followers, in various ways, have allied themselves with his theological understandings or developed and modified them according to the needs of their times and places. Today, Calvin's insights and influence continue to endure, presenting a model of theological scholarship grounded in Scripture as well as providing nurture for Christian believers within churches across the globe. The reach of Calvin's thought has been extensive, pervading not only Christian theology, but also such arenas as biblical interpretation, Christian spirituality, and social ethics. Historically and intellectually, Calvin's labors have had lasting significance.

This *Companion* introduces the life and work of John Calvin. The writers here are Calvin specialists who are eminently suited to discuss their topics. Their essays are oriented toward students and those with little or no background in Calvin studies. But scholars will also find their pieces eminently suggestive and helpful. Together they constitute an introduction and an overview of the significant Genevan reformer.

Calvin's life and context are considered in the Part I of this book. The two opening essays survey Calvin's experiences and the city of Geneva where most of his work was carried out. These perspectives are important for understanding who Calvin was and the environment in which he lived and ministered. They orient us with insights on the formative influences that shaped his life journey.

Part II considers Calvin's wide-ranging work. Here the scope of his writings is examined as well as his practice as a biblical interpreter, an aspect of Calvin's activities which continues to bring insights today. Calvin's theology is explored here as it developed, consideration being given to its

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main themes and to the theological topics to which it contributed. Since Calvin's theological thought is tightly linked to his ethical insights these are also discussed as an important dimension for understanding Calvin. One of Calvin's primary duties was preaching which he did numerous times per week, so Calvin's work in this dimension of his ministry is also considered, both in terms of his theological understanding of the nature of preaching and his preaching practices as well.

Despite the rigors of his theology, Calvin's writings also provide a rich sense of devotion to God and personal appropriation of the Christian gospel. So Calvin's piety is presented here to highlight this aspect of the reformer's writings. Yet Calvin's was not an "inward-looking spirituality." Instead, his theology and his faith catapulted him into the midst of social-ethical issues as he played an important role in the public life of the city of Geneva. His views on the nature of church and state took on a key place in his work with the city government and as a pastor and teacher. His developing theological views also propelled him into prominent roles in dealing with controversies of his day which for him and his contemporaries were often life and death matters. Essays emphasizing these elements are found in this section as well.

Part III of this volume is entitled "After Calvin." The essays here relate to how Calvin's thought spread, initially through Europe, and then beyond. This is the focus of the first piece in the section. Theologically, followers of Calvin became known as Calvinists. An essay in this section considers the theological developments fostered by those who looked to Calvin for essential directions but then modified and developed his thought in light of the contexts and controversies they faced as "Calvinism" grew in prominence. The worldwide spread of Calvin's heritage is considered here as well. This essay demonstrates the wide reach and expanse of Calvin's influence among theologians and churches throughout the world.

It should not be thought that Calvin's emphases and thought spread and then disappeared. In "Calvin Today," Part IV, scholars consider Calvin's role in church history, his place in Christian theology, and Calvin in today's ecumenical context. Here we see how churches who look to Calvin as one who set basic trajectories for theology (often called "Reformed" theology – and churches, often called "Reformed" churches) continue to find nourishment in his work and how these churches have worked in the ecumenical settings of Christian churches worldwide. The final essay in the volume acquaints readers with the numerous significant resources for studying Calvin's thought today. These tools will provide appropriate next steps for those who have found the preceding essays springboards toward further Calvin study.

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This volume was aided immensely by the support and kind advice of Kevin Taylor of Cambridge University Press. Kevin's help has been very important and our friendship is much valued. His fine assistant, Gillian Dadd, also provided splendid support and good humor along the way. Kate Brett, Senior Commissioning Editor for Religious Studies at the Press, who took over Kevin's duties, has been patient and kind in the final stages of the work, a delightful person with whom to work. I would also like to thank Joanne Hill for her splendid copy-editing work on this volume.

This book, as all other of my writings, is presented with deepest gratitude for my family, LindaJo, Stephen, and Karl McKim. Their love and support means everything to me. Through this work, I give back to them in a small way a measure of the joy they have given me through the years and continue to provide.

It is appropriate to dedicate this book to three persons who have helped my own studies of Calvin through the years. My former pastor, John E. Karnes, secured my first copy of Calvin's *Institutes* thirty-five years ago and introduced me to Calvin's theology. At Westminster College I studied Calvin with Jack Rogers, a delightful experience with a master teacher and wonderful friend. My teacher at Pittsburgh Seminary was Ford Lewis Battles, a Calvin scholar without peer, and for whose support of my work I'll always be deeply grateful.

DONALD K. MCKIM

*July 10, 2003*

*494th anniversary of the birth of John Calvin*

## Chronology of John Calvin

1509	Born in Noyon, Picardy, France
1521	Receives first benefice
1523–1527	University of Paris
1528–1529	University of Orléans
1529–1531	University of Bourges
1531–1533	In Paris and Orléans
1532	Publishes <i>Commentary on Seneca's De Clementia</i>
1533	Nicholas Cop's Address
1534	In Paris, Angoulême, and Noyon; resigns benefices
1534	To Basle
1535	First edition of the <i>Institutes</i> published in Latin (6 chapters)
1536–1538	Pastor in Geneva until expelled
1538–1541	Pastor of French refugees in Strasbourg
1539	Second edition of the <i>Institutes</i> published in Latin (17 chapters)
1541–1564	Return and ministry in Geneva
1541	Edition of the <i>Institutes</i> in French
1543	Edition of the <i>Institutes</i> in Latin (21 chapters)
1545	Sabastian Castellio banished from Geneva
1551	Bolsec Controversy
1555	Michael Servetus executed
1559	Final Latin edition of the <i>Institutes</i> published (80 chapters)
1560	Final French edition of the <i>Institutes</i> published
1564	Dies in Geneva and buried in unmarked grave

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McKim, Donald K., ed., *Calvin's Institutes: Abridged Edition*. Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2001.

## Abbreviations

- BC* *Bibliotheca Calviniana: les oeuvres de Jean Calvin publiés au xvie siècle*. Ed. Rodolphe Peter and Jean-François Gilmont. 3 vols. Travaux d'humanisme et Renaissance, no. 255, etc. Geneva: Librairie Droz, 1991–.
- CO* *Ioannis Calvinii opera quae supersunt omnia*. Ed. G. [Wilhelm] Baum, E. Cunitz, and E. Reuss. 59 vols. bound in 31. *Corpus Reformatorum*, vols. 29–87. Brunswick: C. A. Schwetschke and Son, 1863–1900.
- Inst.* *Institutes of the Christian Religion*.
- OC* *Ioannis Calvinii opera omnia*. Series 2: *Opera exegetica*. Geneva: Droz, 1998–. Series 3: *Scripta ecclesiastica*. Geneva: Droz, 1991–.
- OS* *Ioannis Calvinii opera selecta*. Ed. Peter Barth, Wilhelm Niesel, and Dora Scheuner. 5 vols. Munich: C. Kaiser, 1926–52.
- SC* *Supplementa Calviniana. Sermons inédits*. Ed. Erwin Mülhaupt et al. Neukirchen: Neukirchener Verlag, 1936–61.
- T&T* *Tracts and Treatises*. Trans. Henry Beveridge. 3 vols. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1959.
- TT* *Calvin: Theological Treatises*. Trans. with Introduction and notes by John K. S. Reid. Library of Christian Classics. Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1954.