

CONTENTS

Foreword: R. Albert Mohler Jr. xi
Preface: David W. Hall xv
Abbreviations xxi

PART ONE: CALVIN'S TIMES

1. Calvin's Children 1
WILLIAM A. McCOMISH
2. Calvin and Ecclesiastical Discipline 21
ROBERT M. KINGDON
3. Calvin the Lawyer 34
JOHN WITTE JR.
4. Calvin the Frenchman 59
HENRI A. G. BLOCHER
5. Calvin and Women: Between Irritation and Admiration 84
ISABELLE GRAESSLÉ
6. Preaching as Worship in the Pulpit of John Calvin 95
HUGHES OLIPHANT OLD
7. Calvin the Liturgist 118
TERRY L. JOHNSON
8. Calvin's New Testament Commentaries and His Work
as an Exegete 153
GEORGE W. KNIGHT III
9. Calvin and Luther: Comrades in Christ 166
JAMES EDWARD MCGOLDRICK

Contents

PART TWO: CALVIN'S TOPICS

10. The Catholicity of Calvin's Theology 189
DOUGLAS F. KELLY
11. John Calvin on Sacred and Secular History 217
RICHARD BURNETT
12. Calvin's Principle of Worship 247
R. SCOTT CLARK
13. Calvin's Doctrine of Assurance Revisited 270
ANTHONY N. S. LANE
14. Calvin's Principles of Governance: Homology in Church
and State 314
DAVID W. HALL
15. Prayer in Calvin's Soteriology 343
JAE SUNG KIM
16. John Calvin's Doctrine of Scripture 356
A. T. B. MCGOWAN
17. Calvin's Eucharistic Ecclesiology 381
MICHAEL HORTON

PART THREE: CALVIN TODAY AND TOMORROW

18. Calvin Bibliography 419
RICHARD C. GAMBLE
19. Consistently Contested: Calvin among Nineteenth-Century
Reformed Protestants in the United States 435
DARRYL G. HART
20. Calvin's Impact on the Arts 464
WILLIAM EDGAR
21. Calvinism in Asia 487
JAE SUNG KIM

Contents

22. Union with Christ in Calvin's Theology: Grounds for a Divinization Theory? 504
BRUCE L. McCORMACK
23. See You in Heaven: Calvin's View of Life, Death, and Eternal Life 530
HERMAN J. SELDERHUIS
- Appendix: Original Schedule of Calvin500 Tribute Conference 547
Index of Scripture 551
Index of Subjects and Names 553
Contributors 567

I

CALVIN'S CHILDREN

WILLIAM A. McCOMISH



This essay concerns the spread of John Calvin's ideas in the world. It is not based on a narrow study of a particular aspect of Calvin's life or work but rather provides a wide-ranging survey of Calvinist influence on the development of modern civilization. I am profoundly grateful to Dr. David Hall for his invitation to be a keynote speaker at the Calvin500 celebrations. I am deeply aware of the honor that he has shown me, and I believe that this invitation, and this essay that I now present to you, represents an "action de grace" or thanksgiving. It is also a confession of my faith, and it is a conviction statement. If it were not for Calvin and his successors, I would not be what I am. If it were not for Calvin and his successors—whom I have chosen to call his "children"—the modern world would be a much more primitive and barbarous place than it is. If we look only at the sixteenth century and look only at Geneva or at theology, then we are lost in a time warp and will never know who we are or from where we have come.

WILLIAM A. MCCOMISH

We are gathered here today on sacred ground—not that Calvinists have sacred ground, but we are here where it all began and in buildings that are powerful symbols for us all. My time frame is five hundred years and my field the whole world. In this conference we are aware of the great Latin motto of Geneva, *Post tenebras lux*, “Light comes after darkness,” but I would like to place this article under the magnificent motto of my old and battered home city of Belfast in Northern Ireland, *Pro tanto quid retribuamus*, “For what we have received let us be truly thankful.”

It is not enough to regard Calvinism as a purely academic theological system. From its beginnings in Geneva it had a strong practical application in human life in the real world. Calvin, I believe, was the greatest Christian theologian since St. Paul, and his work has ensured that for five centuries his followers have benefited from a vision of Jesus Christ that is more true, more accurate, and more clear than any other. But this revolutionary mind-set has not been confined to academic theologians. The kind of responsible middle-class people who accepted Calvinism then went out into the world with a living faith to serve their Master, Jesus Christ, in the world. I am reminded of the great question of Isaiah 53:1: “Who hath believed our report? and to whom is the arm of the LORD revealed?” (KJV).

Calvinists have lived in many countries and worked in many areas. The Calvinist principle of individual responsibility has led to wave after wave of Presbyterians turning their faith into practice in many different fields—and I will cite examples such as those of banking, politics, business, political thought and democracy, human rights, education, and Bible translation, printing, distribution, and reading. This is the topic of my present essay, which is also very personal. It is my own selection of a very few iconic women and men who, I believe, carry the heritage of Calvin’s work in Geneva. In a very modest way I am following Theodore Beza when he wrote his *Icones* of 1580.¹ Some of my choices may surprise you, and fraternally, I suggest that creating your own list to celebrate Calvin500 would be a worthy exercise.

1. Theodore Beza, *Icones id est verae imagines virorum doctrina simul et pietate illustrum . . . quibus adiectae sunt nonnullae picturae quas Emblemata vocant* (Geneva, 1580).

Presbyterians, Calvinists, are not called to celebrate their own vision of the past. Rather, we are called to strive for God's kingdom in our own place and in our own time. But it is part of the pleasure of this fifth centenary to look back and not only to draw strength from the past but to gather strength to face an uncertain future. It is not my intention to produce a panegyric of Calvinist history, and this is my first caveat: Calvinists have made plenty of mistakes. Do we not, after all, believe that we are fallen, imperfect creatures that can be saved only by the grace of God? Yet one major feature of Calvinism has been the evolution of our practice, and we will see how the application of Calvinist faith to resistance theory or to human rights has changed over the centuries. This is normal and admirable. It must not be thought that Calvinism has always spoken with one voice; it has always been plural. It is an old joke, but a truth, that where you have three Presbyterians, you have five points of view! This is not a weakness but a strength. Calvinism and Presbyterianism are not authoritarian systems in which clone-like sectarians endlessly repeat a truth that they have been taught by their guru. Calvinists have seized a theological truth, and this truth has set them free to use their individual responsibility to apply a multitude of attitudes and solutions to the problems and challenges of the world.

My second caveat is to point out that although I believe Calvinism to be the primary force for progress in human society, I do not do so in any sectarian way. We are not alone in doing good and improving the lives of people. Who can ignore the work of the Quakers, the Methodists, and the Catholics, as well as secular groups and other faith families?

My third caveat is to state clearly that this essay is by no means exhaustive. Millions of women and men have lived lives far from the limelight but have put their faith into practice in modest, limited circumstances known perhaps only to themselves and to God. Calvinism at its best is a mass movement, not an elitist one. To concentrate on a few interesting people is not to decry or to diminish the rest. All, in Calvinism, are equal in the sight of God. I must add that one major difficulty for me in writing this essay is that there is simply too much to say. There are too many people to whom I would like to introduce you! We are in very good company.

Beginnings

The history of Calvinism really begins with the cataclysmic plague of the fourteenth century—the Black Death that wiped out a third, a half, perhaps two-thirds of the population of Europe. All figures are inaccurate, since there were so many dead that they could be neither counted nor buried. What is clear is that the Black Death spelled the end of the feudal system in western Europe. The system that had developed (after the fall of the late Roman empire) of the illiterate lord in his castle and the illiterate serfs laboring in the fields broke down for good. The towns sprang up, and a new, literate middle class came into being: the merchant, the trader, the industrialist, the banker. For the first time in a thousand years, literacy was not confined to the church. A literate, secular middle class now took life and religion seriously, wanted to read the Bible, hear intelligent sermons, and take part in the government of the church, as well as to have responsibilities in business and government. It was this new, urban middle class that became Protestant, in Hamburg, Zurich, Venice, and Amsterdam; in Edinburgh, Lausanne, Philadelphia, and Debrecen; and in Geneva—which is the perfect example because in 1536 the new middle-class citizens overturned an aristocratic civil government and Roman ecclesiastical government to take control of both themselves.

The Bible

Calvinists were not the first or the only translators of the Bible. The fourth-century *Biblia Vulgata* of Jerome contained many errors, but had been used for centuries. The wave of Greek-speaking scholars who came to western Europe in the mid-fifteenth century following the fall of Constantinople to the Turks stimulated the rediscovery of Greek texts in Renaissance Italy, notably at Florence and Ferrara. Theologians produced Greek New Testaments that were the basis of Protestant biblical scholarship. Erasmus's Greek New Testament was published in 1516 and was contemporary with the *Complutensian Polyglot* of the Spanish Cardinal Ximenes of 1522, published after twenty years of labor. Calvinist seminaries, including the Genevan Academy (founded by Calvin in 1559),

taught from the Greek text. Theodore Beza published his Greek New Testament in 1565.²

The method of teaching was to develop propositions from the text that were formed into commonplaces and theses that were then developed into doctrines. This propositional form of revelation was controlled by a Melancthonian hierarchy in the use of the books of the Bible. Calvin and others taught that if the Epistle to the Romans were properly understood, it would enable understanding of the whole Bible. The first and fourth Gospels were next in the order of authority, with the rest of the New Testament following, and the Old Testament following after that.

Comprehension of the biblical text was essential to the Calvinists for two reasons. The first was that Calvin and his associates understood clearly that the education of the clergy was essential to the Reformation's survival. In an increasingly educated secular world, people would listen only to properly trained ministers. The Genevan Academy attracted hundreds of young men from all over Europe and sent them out to preach the Word. Preaching was popular and an essential part of the life of the Calvinists—as it is today. The second reason was that private Bible study, alone or in the family circle, was encouraged and indeed required. Thus, translations were necessary as furnishings for church and home. The Calvinists became the greatest preachers and biblical translators in history. Bibles in French, English, and Italian were translated in Geneva. Calvin's own cousin Olivetan published a French translation in 1535. It was in Geneva that Robert Estienne, one of Calvin's followers, first divided the Bible into chapter and verse in his 1551 New Testament. Many other translations followed: an Irish version by 1602 and a Lithuanian version by 1662,³ as well as Dutch (authorized by the Synod of Dort), Hungarian, Spanish, Polish, German—many in several versions, but all inspired by the Calvinist hunger to know and to practice the will of God. The vast

2. For all editions of the Bible, the best source is still the classic Thomas H. Darlow and Horace F. Moule, *Historical Catalogue of the Printed Editions of Holy Scripture* (London: Bible House, British and Foreign Bible Society, 1905–11). A good recent book on Beza is A. Dufour, *Théodore de Bèze Poète et théologien* (Geneva: Droz, 2006).

3. Stanislaus Kot, *La Réforme dans le Grand-Duché de Lithuanie* (Brussels, 1953); Henry Hall, *An Account of the Translation of the Bible into the Lithuanian Tongue* (Oxford, 1659); R. Steele, "Materials for the History of the Lithuanian Bible," *The Library*, January 1907.

WILLIAM A. MCCOMISH

amount of work involved in the making of these translations will never be known, but we can glean some idea of their success by looking briefly at two Bibles.

The Geneva English Bible was published by a group of exiles fleeing the persecution of the Catholic Mary Tudor in 1560. It is popularly known as the “Breeches” Bible because in Genesis 3:7 Adam and Eve made themselves breeches to cover their nakedness. But for fifty years it was the standard Bible in English and was reprinted some 160 times, making it one of the best sellers of all time. Its influence on the Protestant mind-set of the British is incalculable, especially when we realize that it was not simply the text that was reproduced but vast numbers of marginal notes inspired by Calvin, Beza, and Olivetan. James VI and I, who did not much like Presbyterians, wrote that the notes were “very partial, untrue, seditious, and savouring too much of dangerous and traitorous conceits,”⁴ which is high praise indeed!

Another Bible with a specifically Genevan origin was that of Giovanni Diodati, a professor in the Genevan Academy and a delegate to the Synod of Dort. Diodati rapidly translated the New Testament into Italian in 1607 to support a Protestant conspiracy to take control of the Venetian Republic, where there were many Protestants among the ruling classes. Unfortunately, the conspiracy failed, but the Diodati Bible remained the standard translation used by Italian Protestants until our own day.⁵

These are only two Bibles; each Bible has its history. The outlines of the history of the Breeches and the Diodati Bibles are woefully inadequate, but I hope they begin to show the determination of those whom I have chosen to call “Calvin’s children.”

The reading and the preaching of the Word⁶ was at the center of all Calvinist worship, life, and work. It is still our specificity. The serious-

4. An interesting discussion of preaching in seventeenth-century England, which underlines the importance of the Geneva Bible, is to be found in Christopher Hill, *Society and Puritanism in Pre-Revolutionary England* (London: Panther Books, 1964).

5. William A. McComish, *The Epigones* (Allison Park, PA: Pickwick Publications, 1989).

6. See the answer to question 89 of the WSC: “The Spirit of God maketh the reading, but especially the preaching of the Word, an effectual means of convincing and converting sinners, and of building them up in holiness and comfort, through faith, unto salvation.”

ness and skill of those involved in this effort make it a summit of human achievement. And it is from this achievement that all else follows.

Political Thought

Calvin was a practical man in a real situation. He was not simply an academic theorist meditating in his office on the state of the world. Calvin dealt with the real problems of the real city of Geneva at many levels, not only theologically but practically, in matters as diverse as economics and education. We will discuss these matters later on, but what I want to consider now is Calvin's attitude to political power, comprising his thoughts on resistance against tyrants and democracy.

Democracy and Resistance

I have no doubt that Calvin was a democrat. Democracy is no one thing but has an infinite number of applications and functions. But in the basic sense that Calvin opposed autocratic government in the church and in the state and believed in the rule of the majority and the right of protest, he was a democrat. We can see this very simply in the archetypal Calvinist institution of the Company of Pastors. The executive function of the group is exercised by the whole group in discussion and not by a bishop, and one member of the group is equal to another. All power ultimately comes from God. This is as true, of course, in secular as in ecclesiastical matters. Calvin in his *Institutes* praises the work of the Genevan *Petit conseil*, where responsibility is shared by a number of people.⁷ He wrote that a system composed of a mixture of aristocracy (not hereditary aristocracy but rather the body of believers) and democracy is the ideal.⁸ But Calvin was faced with the harsh political realities of sixteenth-century Europe. His reading of Scripture led him, like Martin Luther, to state that kings were to be obeyed and that even bad magistrates were to be obeyed.

7. Classic study of Calvin's political thought in J. W. Allen, *A History of Political Thought in the Sixteenth Century* (London: Methuen, 1928 [and many reprints]).

8. John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, ed. John T. McNeill, trans. Ford Lewis Battles (London: SCM Press, 1961), 4.20.8.

But what should be done in a situation of intolerable injustice—for instance, when members of the true church were being persecuted? How was tyranny to be resisted? Calvin, from the more-or-less secure city of Geneva, where secular and religious governments were fused in the Supreme Council, suggested that it was the Christian duty of elected magistrates to resist tyranny. But what if you were a Scot, a Dutchman, or a persecuted French Protestant? Calvin's doctrine of opposition to tyranny was essentially passive and based on medieval political thought as expressed in the editions of the *Institutes* printed in 1539, 1543, and 1550. But in the 1559 edition he seems to suggest for the first time that the elect have a right to rebel if an ungodly tyrant orders them to break God's law.⁹ This idea is repeated in a stronger form in a 1561 writing on Daniel. This was the period when the political and religious struggle was coming to a head in Scotland and the wars of religion were beginning in France. An evolution from Calvin's own doctrine began in his own lifetime as the Scotsman John Knox used his Calvinist faith to resist autocratic and, as he saw it, ungodly government. Scotland, with the encouragement of Knox, was the first country where the Calvinists were strong enough to rise against government, closely followed by the French Huguenots¹⁰ and the Dutch Protestants¹¹ in 1566.

This right of rebellion, or resistance theory, became typical of Calvinists after 1560. One original aim in each case was to install some form of theocentric model after the Genevan experiment. The idea of the ideal state was one in which the ruler would protect and promote the true church. The magnificent final passage in the anonymous 1578 French Protestant work *Vindiciae contra tyrannos*¹² illustrates the political ideal for sixteenth-century Calvinists: "Piety bids us maintain the Law and the Church of God: justice demands that we bind the hands of the

9. *Ibid.*, 4.20.3–7. See also T. H. L. Parker, *John Calvin* (London: Dent, 1975), *passim*.

10. Allen, *A History of Political Thought in the Sixteenth Century*, pt. 2. See also John Bowle, *Western Political Thought* (London: Methuen, 1947 [and reprints]).

11. Much material, but read Johan H. Huizinga's long essay "Dutch Civilisation in the Seventeenth Century," in *Dutch Civilisation in the Seventeenth Century, and Other Essays* (London: Collins, 1968).

12. Anonymous, *Vindiciae contra tyrannos, sive de principis in populum populi que in principem legitima potestate, Stephano Junio Bruto Celia auctore* (Bâle, 1579 [Latin]; 1581 [French]).

tyrant who would destroy all right and all good government: charity requires that we lend a hand to lift up the fallen. Those who make no account of these things would drive piety, justice and charity from the world." Government is concerned not only with religion but also with justice and with welfare.

These were very advanced ideas for the time, as they still are in many countries. Too much may be made of the difference between Calvin and the Calvinists in the matter of political thought. They were in different situations, and ideas were evolving. The basic principle is that tyranny is not the will of God, who will himself judge the tyrant, and that the godly have the duty to resist by passive or active means. Many Protestants had to live as minorities in Roman Catholic or Muslim countries in either western or eastern Europe, and from these communities comes the idea of demanding freedom of conscience and the rights of minorities, law being applied to protect the rights of the individual as well as the community. This was the real beginning of the secular concept of human rights.¹³ A clear thread can be traced from the sixteenth-century Calvinists to the modern concepts of democracy with their protection of minority rights. It is no surprise to note that Jean-Jacques Rousseau, who promulgated the idea that government is a social contract between ruler and ruled, was baptized in St. Pierre Cathedral or that the father of American democratic theory, James Madison (1751–1836), who argued for the rights of minorities and individuals to protect them from tyranny in his great papers in *The Federalist*, was a Presbyterian.¹⁴

Let me now introduce you to a few more of Calvin's children who have striven for human rights, liberty, democracy, and justice in many lands. They have not struggled alone but are an essential group in the establishment of a just and democratic world. I believe that they are the *sine qua non*, the group without which there would have been nothing. I cannot see democracy arising from any other European or Asiatic faith family without these impulses.

13. Bowle, *Western Political Thought*, bk. 3, chap. 2.

14. *The Federalist* papers date from 1787 to 1788. Madison, fourth president of the United States, 1751–1836, wrote about a third of them. They are the basis for American pluralist republican democracy.

Education

I have already noted that a literate population is an essential element for the Calvinist. This leads us to two further developments: (1) the education of children, and (2) the freedom of the press. When the citizens of Geneva adopted the reform of the church in 1536, they also adopted measures to educate children and care for the poor. Literacy was vital for the industrial and commercial society then developing. In Calvin's time, the college was founded for youth, and this right of education was not confined to the children of the rich; the children of the poor were to be taught and prepared for useful trades—education was not to be bought.¹⁵ The Genevan Academy was founded in 1559 (now the University of Geneva) for the training of ministers.

This Calvinist concern for education became typical of Reformed bodies everywhere—for example, the founding of Princeton by American Presbyterians and the work of the Czech Calvinist Comenius (1592–1670), one of the first believers in universal education, an idea that he expounded in his *Didactica magna*. Comenius, who was asked to be the first president of Harvard, also published the *Orbis Pictus*, a kind of illustrated children's encyclopedia that was the first-ever picture book for children. It is not surprising, either, that the library of the University of Oxford was founded by Sir Thomas Bodley (1545–1613), the Geneva-educated son of one of the translators of the English “Breeches” Bible.

Freedom of the Press

The freedom of the press, which is an essential component of democracy, has no greater exponent than the Calvinist English poet and statesman John Milton (1608–74). In his *Areopagitica*¹⁶ he thunders against censorship: “When complaints are freely heard, deeply considered, and

15. There are many recent works on life in Calvin's Geneva, but it is still worth reading the section in Richard Henry Tawney, *Religion and the Rise of Capitalism* (London: Penguin, 1926 [and reprints]).

16. John Milton, *Areopagitica: A Speech of Mr John Milton for the Liberty of Unlicensed Printing to the Parliament of England* (1644). Milton, now remembered as a poet, was foreign secretary to Cromwell's government.

speedily reformed, then is the utmost bound of civil liberty attained” and “Where there is much desire to learn, there of necessity will be much arguing, much writing, many opinions; for opinion in good men is but knowledge in the making.” Once again I must leave aside a vast amount of material on the relationship between Calvin’s children and the freedom of the press, but I wish to mention the role of the Scottish Presbyterian Lord Reith¹⁷ (1889–1971), the founder of the independent British Broadcasting Corporation (the BBC), who courageously defended the independence of that organization against Winston Churchill during the Second World War when Churchill wanted the BBC to become an instrument of government propaganda.

Human Rights, Justice, and Democracy

The number of Calvin’s children who have worked for human rights, justice, and democracy is not to be numbered in hundreds or thousands, but in millions, many of them known only to God. Many are unexpected figures, such as the Marquis of Montrose, a Presbyterian elder, who fought brilliantly for Charles I in the seventeenth-century English Civil War. He was a poet and a soldier, but it was he who warned the king not to aim at “absoluteness,” since Charles I believed in the divine right of kings and was no democrat.¹⁸

The United States was also founded on a revolt against tyranny largely carried out by Calvin’s children, in no small amount by Irish Presbyterians who had been forced to cross the Atlantic because of religious persecution. The Declaration of Independence is in the handwriting of Charles Thompson, an Irish Presbyterian. It was printed by a second Irish Presbyterian, John Dunlap; it was first read in public by John Nixon; and it was first signed by John Hancock (and subsequently signed by seven others, William Whipple, Robert Payne, Thomas McKean, Thomas Nelson, Matthew Thornton, George Taylor, and Edward Rutledge).¹⁹ Thus, eleven Irish Presbyterians in

17. Ian McIntyre, *The Expense of Glory: A Life of John Reith* (New York: HarperCollins, 1995).

18. John Buchan, *Montrose* (London: Oxford University Press, 1928 [and reprints]).

19. William F. Marshall, *Ulster Sails West* (Belfast: Quota Press, 1943).

WILLIAM A. MCCOMISH

all were a dominant force in the establishment of American independence. Although the Geneva of Calvin and Beza was not a particularly liberal environment as seen from the twenty-first century rather than the brutal sixteenth, the ideas to which it gave rise have changed the face of the world.

This love of liberty has not diminished with the passing years. In the Second World War, the elderly and aristocratic president of the French Reformed Church, Marc Boegner (1881–1970),²⁰ denounced the treatment of the Jews, political prisoners, and imprisoned Protestant ministers to the heads of the Nazi puppet government in France, Petain and Laval—not by letter or by declaration but by personal interviews in which his courage put him in great danger. It was typical of the man that he later denounced French brutality in Algeria during the independence struggle in that country. Another figure from the same period was Willem Visser't Hooft (1900–1985), the Dutch Protestant founder of the World Council of Churches, who was very active in the resistance movement against the occupation of Holland.²¹ Notably, a plaque in St. Pierre commemorates the first ecumenical service in western Europe after the war, in 1946. The preacher was the famous German pastor Martin Niemöller, just released from one of Hitler's concentration camps.

More Opponents of Tyranny

The turbulent years since 1945 have produced many opponents of tyranny inspired by Genevan ideals. "Sam" Ratulangi (1890–1949), Indonesian national independence hero and fervent Protestant, was a doctor of science from Switzerland. He returned to his country and obliged the colonial government to abolish forced labor in his home province of Minahasa. Involved in the independence movement, he died in a prison camp.²²

20. There is a biography on the Web site of the Académie française. See also his own works *L'Evangile et le racisme* (Paris, 1939) and *Le Problème de l'unité chrétienne* (Paris: Je sers, 1947), among others.

21. Willem A. Visser't Hooft, *Memoirs*, 2nd ed. (Geneva: WCC Publications, 1987).

22. Samuel Ratulangi, *Indonesia in den Pacific* (Surabaya 1937); C. P. F. Luhulima, *Ekonomi Politik Asia Pacifik* (Jakarta, 2004). See also the article on Ratulangi as national independence hero, "Dr G.S.S.Y. Ratulangi 1890–1949," available on the Web site of the Information Department of the Republic of Indonesia.

Dr. Chun Ming Kao, the general secretary of the Presbyterian Church of Taiwan, spent seven years in prison for refusing to give the names of his friends after the Kaohsiung incident of 1979 when a Human Rights Day rally was brutally dispersed by the then military government of that island.²³ The brothers Allen and John Foster Dulles, both Presbyterian elders, served their country in the Cold War, Allen as head of the CIA and John Foster as Secretary of State (1953–59), when it was believed that democracy was in great danger. John Foster was very active in the church, a founder of the Federal Council of Churches and the World Council of Churches.²⁴

General Fidel Ramos (born 1928) of the Philippines, another Protestant, became president of his country. When the vast People Power Revolution broke out to oust Ferdinand Marcos in 1986, Ramos not only refused to use the army to crush the demonstrators for democracy, but went over to their side. As president he did much to bring in protection for Philippine migrant workers, of whom there are millions throughout the world.²⁵ Byers Naudé (1915–2004) was a distinguished minister of the South African Dutch Reformed Church. From a very conservative background he came to feel a tension between his Christian, Calvinist faith and the political reality of his country. He resigned from his post after the Sharpeville Massacre of 1960 and denounced apartheid, saying that he believed the authority of God came before the authority of man. He was one of the leaders who advocated civil rights for all and democracy, and one of those who negotiated the ending of the apartheid system. He was nominated for a Nobel Peace Prize.²⁶

Individual Responsibility

The Calvinist teaching of individual responsibility has inexorably led Calvinists to promote and defend human rights. This has been, and in many cases still is, a long, slow process. In the seventeenth century,

23. C. M. Kao, *The Path to the Cross* (Taipei, 2001). See also his speech to the General Council of the World Council of Reformed Churches at Seoul 1989, "The Lord Turned My Grief to Joy."

24. Richard H. Immerman, *John Foster Dulles: Piety, Pragmatism, and Power in U.S. Foreign Policy* (Lanham, MD: SR Books, 1998).

25. Bryan Johnson, *Four Days of Courage* (New York: Free Press, 1987).

26. B. Lugan, *Ces français qui ont fait l'Afrique du Sud*; International Commission of Jurists, *The Trial of Byers Naudé* (Geneva, 1975) (Nobel Peace Prize nominations).

WILLIAM A. MCCOMISH

Dutch Protestants could see no incompatibility between their faith and the slave trade, and there is at least one Dutch Protestant church beside a slave dungeon on the coast of Ghana. The human nature of black people was not universally accepted. But by the eighteenth century, much had changed, and an Irish Presbyterian, Thomas McCabe, was able to prevent the setting up of a slave-trade company in Belfast.²⁷

In the nineteenth century, the Scottish explorer and Presbyterian missionary David Livingstone²⁸ was a well-known opponent of the slave trade, while in the United States, another Presbyterian, this time of Irish extraction, Horace Greeley²⁹ (1811–82), founder of the *New York Tribune*, was also an opponent of slavery. He fought the Fugitive Slave Law of 1850 and condemned other social evils, such as drink, gambling, and prostitution. Another group that became Protestant in the tens of thousands in the twentieth century and who were not, at one time, considered human beings were Europe's Gypsies. Hundreds of thousands of them were gassed in Hitler's concentration camps, and it was in these frightful places that Protestant pastors, imprisoned with them, spoke of the love of God. In their surprise and joy at this good news, they converted, and thousands of Gypsies are now members of the Evangelical Reformed Church of France.

Humanitarianism

The nineteenth and the twentieth centuries have seen many of Calvin's children striving for peace, justice, and humanitarianism. Henry Dunant³⁰

27. Robert M. Young, *Historical Notices of Old Belfast and Its Vicinity* (Whitefish, MT: Kessinger Publishing, 2007).

28. The Livingstone archives are in the library of the University of Glasgow. Lionized by Victorian society, Livingstone was a failure as a missionary but very influential in the matter of the slave trade. For a general history that includes much Reformed and Presbyterian material, see Stephen Neill, *A History of Christian Missions* (New York: Penguin Books, 1964).

29. See Horace Greeley, *The American Conflict* (Chicago: G. & C. W. Sherwood, 1864–66), and *Recollections of a Busy Life* (New York: J. B. Ford & Co., 1868); see also Glyndon G. Van Dusen, *Horace Greeley: Nineteenth-Century Crusader* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1953).

30. See Dunant's own book on the Battle of Solferino, the publications of the International Red Cross, and the Henry Dunant Institute, in Geneva. There is a museum at Heiden, in Switzerland.

(1828–1910) was the founder of the International Red Cross (he also founded the YMCA!). The Red Cross is the archetypal Genevan Protestant institution: efficient, dedicated, and neutral. In the mid-nineteenth century the first modern wars were fought with machine guns and barbed wire. Dunant decided to take action after seeing the slaughter at the battle of Solferino in Italy. The organization was set up in Geneva in the year that the battle of Shiloh was fought in the American Civil War. The International Red Cross is a secular organization that employs people without any religious discrimination, but it retains close personal and financial links to the French-language Protestantism of Switzerland. Many young Protestant Swiss work for this organization. This has always been the case. They are far too many to discuss here, but one representative figure might be Dr. Marcel Junod³¹ (1904–61). Born into a family of Protestant ministers in Neuchâtel, he was the first foreign doctor to go to Hiroshima after the nuclear attack. Thanks to the International Red Cross, he arrived with several tons of medical supplies.

Woodrow Wilson³² (1856–1924), another child of a Presbyterian minister, was instrumental in setting up the League of Nations after the First World War, in the hope that it might prevent future armed conflicts. It was a noble endeavor that foundered in the rising fascist movements of the thirties. But Wilson revealed his roots when he located its headquarters in Geneva, now the European center of the United Nations and some two hundred other international organizations.

Dunant and Wilson are well-known historical figures, but as I have said before, there is a vast cloud of Calvinist witnesses, some little known.

Let me conclude this long section by drawing your attention to an American Presbyterian missionary in China, Wilson Plumer Mills. He was in Nanking (Nanjing) when it was taken and sacked by the Japanese in 1937. Some two hundred fifty thousand to three hundred fifty thousand people were killed and at least eighty thousand women raped, many in frightful circumstances. Mills was instrumental in setting

31. P. Junod, *Le troisième combattant* (1947; repr., ICRC, 1989); *Témoin d'Hiroshima* (Jussy, 2004).

32. There is a standard biography of Wilson in several volumes by Arthur Stanley Link. Wilson's *Messages and Papers* have been published, and there is a Woodrow Wilson Presidential Library.

WILLIAM A. MCCOMISH

up a safety zone for civilians in the city, a zone that eventually held two hundred thousand people and offered some security in the midst of rape, arson, torture, massacre, and pillage.³³ Calvin's children have gone far, and accomplished much.

All Areas of Human Endeavor

Calvin's children have been active in all fields of human endeavor. I have no time to treat all aspects in this chapter, which features little about preaching or missionary work, about church organization and history, about science, medicine, women's issues, or philosophy. That all these aspects merit attention is evident. In astronomy, for instance, it is fascinating to note that the library of the Genevan Academy contained modern works on astronomy at a time when the Roman Catholics were silencing Galileo and the Lutherans persecuting Kepler.³⁴

I wish to draw your attention to one subject that is frequently mentioned as a Calvinist specificity: finance and economics. Since Max Weber's *Die Protestantische Ethik* in 1903, and R. H. Tawney's *Religion and the Rise of Capitalism* in 1926,³⁵ it has been accepted that there is a strong link between the Genevan Reformation and the beginning of modern capitalism. There is no reason to doubt this. Calvinism is the only major faith that grew in the early modern period of European history, when the industrialists, traders, and bankers were beginning to take control of the cities. Calvin himself had no very developed economic system to offer, but in practice his city protected the poor and was suspicious of excessive wealth.

What was really revolutionary was Calvin's attitude to credit. The practice of lending money for a rate of interest no more bothered Calvin

33. Iris Chang, *The Rape of Nanking: The Forgotten Holocaust of World War II* (New York: Penguin Books, 1998). See also the published diaries of John Rabe, *The Good German of Nanking*, ed. E. Wickert, trans. J. E. Woods (New York: Little, Brown and Company, 1998).

34. McComish, *The Epigones*, 209ff.

35. See note 15. Max Weber, "Die Protestantische Ethik und der Geist des Kapitalismus," in *Archiv für Socialwissenschaft und Sozialpolitik* 20 (1905); E. Troeltsch, *Die Sociallehren der christlichen Kirchen* (1911).

than would the hire of a house or a field for rent. But this practice was revolutionary at the time. The lending of money for interest, called usury, was denounced by the Roman Catholic Church at several councils, one of which ordered the exclusion from the sacraments for usurers, claimed that their wills were invalid, and forbade their burial in sacred ground. There must have been a limited application of these rules as well as a lot of hypocrisy—even Notre Dame in Paris was built in this way. Once again it was a matter of bad Bible translation based on one of the many mistranslations of the Vulgate, in this case a text from St. Luke. Yet Aristotle was also quoted as being against usury, and Thomas Aquinas wrote against it. Calvin could find nothing against it in Scripture. He never mentions the subject in the *Institutes*.³⁶ The Jews were allowed to take interest payments from the time of the Lateran Council in 1215, and the early Protestants did so without any problem. This was one reason why the Protestants controlled the financing of the printing industry. Among Calvin's followers were book publishers such as Estienne, and Protestant works were printed and sold in vastly greater numbers than those of their opponents.

Usury also led to a great development of banking. In the Renaissance, the Italian city-states were Europe's bankers. Then the bishop of the important banking city of Lucca converted to Protestantism and, in turn, converted the leading banking families. Peter Martyr Vermigli (1500–1562) was a notable theologian, and his "Commonplaces" were an important source for Calvin's *Institutes*.³⁷ These Luccan families came to Geneva and founded the Genevan banking industry. Many of their descendants are still among us, and they have produced many theologians—Turretini, Diodati, Micheli, Burlamachi, Calandrini—to be joined by other Italian Protestants from farther south, the Fatio family and the Lombards. They were joined by French Huguenot bankers in 1685, when Louis XIV

36. See note 8. William A. McComish, "Between Greed and Charity: A Religious Perspective on Our Relationship with Money," *Revue Economique et Sociale* (Lausanne) vol. 66, décembre 2008.

37. See the McNeill/Battles edition of the *Institutes*. They trace more than four hundred correlations between Vermigli and Calvin's text. A current edition of his works is forthcoming. There are biographies by Schlosser (1809) and Schmidt (1858). See article in the *Dictionary of National Biography*. See also the Peter Martyr library at Truman State University Press.

WILLIAM A. MCCOMISH

revoked the Edict of Nantes and the best part of the French Protestants chose exile rather than conversion.

It was often said that the Genevan bankers were not necessarily more competent than others, but that they were more honest. In the light of recent financial scandal, I believe that we should encourage a swift return to the Calvinist virtues of thrift, integrity, and hard work. There are so many Protestant bankers in the history of Europe and America that it is hard to single one out, but I might mention Andrew W. Mellon³⁸ (1855–1937), the forty-ninth Secretary of the Treasury of the United States, the owner of his own bank from the age of twenty-seven, and the founder of Gulf Oil and ALCOA. He gave away vast sums of money for charity and his art collection to create the National Gallery in Washington, DC.

Women

This chapter has concentrated on men, and it would be false to imagine that Protestant women have been anything other than equal partners in the struggle to reveal Christ to the world. Not enough of them have been celebrated in this article, but I would like to mention two courageous women whose faith, integrity, and courage are typical of millions of their sisters and should be an inspiration to millions of others.

It sometimes surprises visitors to discover a Portuguese chapel in St. Pierre Cathedral, but this chapel was the tomb of Princess Emilie of Nassau (1569–1629), daughter of William the Silent, who married a Portuguese prince. Refusing to renounce her Protestant faith, she deserted her husband and went into exile in Geneva, preferring uncertainty to wealth and comfort.³⁹

One French Protestant heroine is Marie Durand, whose brother was a minister. Arrested for her faith at the age of fifteen in 1730, she was imprisoned in the Tower of Constance at Aigues Mortes in the south of

38. See his own *Taxation: The People's Business* (New York: Macmillan, 1924) and the biography by David Cannadine, *Mellon: An American Life* (New York: Vintage, 2008). The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation and the U.S. Treasury archives are also worth exploring.

39. M. F. Alves de Azevedo, *Suiçasímbolo de civilização progresso e cultura* (Lisbon, 1970); C. V. Wedgwood, *William the Silent* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1944).

France. She needed to say only one word, to abjure her Protestant faith, but this she refused to do, and so she remained in the tower for thirty-seven years. The word *resister*, which she carved into the stone of her prison, gave a particular meaning to the word *resistance* as it related to the French *resistance* to the German occupation of their country.⁴⁰

Conclusion

I am now coming toward the end of this essay. I have used the terms *Reformed*, *Calvinist*, and *Presbyterian* as alternatives. Yet not all of Calvin's children would have used any of these terms about themselves. The modern world owes such a vast debt to Calvin and his children that the influence is pervasive and universal. Some Calvinists have even belonged to other faith families. An Archbishop of Canterbury, George Abbot⁴¹ (1562–1633), sent a delegation to the Synod of Dort, which had no delegation from the Presbyterian Church of Scotland. Another is Cyril Lucaris,⁴² Patriarch of Constantinople, who published Calvinist confessions of faith in 1633 and 1645!

Calvin's children can be counted in millions, and they have changed the world. They have been an influence for good, and they have evolved with their times. It is immensely important to tell the world who we are and from where we come, and to teach our own people so that they may become more confident in facing the future, sure in the knowledge of Calvinist honesty, courage, integrity, faith, and devotion in the past.

The history of Calvinism is not only a history of theology and religious institutions. It is above all a history of the transformation of people's lives, faith, and behavior. It is people's history. It is time that this great story was told to all our own people—and to the world. The lives of Calvin's

40. *Bulletin de la Société de l'histoire du Protestantisme français*, passim, but especially the 1968 anniversary edition. See also the Web site of the Musée du desert.

41. Paul A. Welsby, *George Abbot, the Unwanted Archbishop* (London: SPCK, 1962); Richard A. Christophers, *George Abbot, Archbishop of Canterbury, 1562–1633: A Bibliography* (Charlottesville, VA: University Press of Virginia, 1966).

42. These confessions of faith have caused concern among Orthodox Church theologians. See Sir Steven Runciman, *The Great Church in Captivity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986).

WILLIAM A. MCCOMISH

children have been transformed by their faith—and these transformed lives have changed the world.

Epilogue

It is possible that the Reformed Ecumenical Council and the World Alliance of Reformed Churches will unite at Grand Rapids in 2010. It is my hope and prayer that all bodies constituting Calvin's children will join to form one vast movement, to promote Jesus Christ in this world. Yes, I know that we are very different, but I believe that we are more like each other than we are like anyone else.

Let us thank God for the life and work of John Calvin.
I thank God that I am one of his children.
As he wrote himself at the end of the *Institutes*—God be praised!