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### Book Review: Lifting Hearts to the Lord: Worship with John Calvin in Sixteenth Century Geneva

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*Lifting Hearts to the Lord: Worship with John Calvin in Sixteenth-Century Geneva.* By Karin Maag. Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2016. 209 pp. \$28.00 (paper).

*Lifting Hearts to the Lord* by Karin Maag is part of a series of Christian documentary case studies focused on the history of Christian worship (ix). In this volume, Maag gives a comprehensive overview of Calvinist worship in sixteenth-century Geneva.

Maag sets the stage for the text in part one, giving the historical background of Geneva during the sixteenth century. She opens with a brief description of Geneva and the bishop's role in running the city after the fall of the Roman Empire and the eventual shift of the population from Catholic to Protestant worship. One of the most helpful items in part one is the side-by-side timeline that gives an overview of what is happening in the world, in Christianity, and in Geneva between 1500 to 1600. It nicely lays out important events and helps put Calvin's teachings in historical perspective (6-12). Another feature that begins in part one and continues throughout the text is the notes in the side margins. In part one, these consist mainly of explanations to clarify points in the text, which is extremely helpful for someone who may not be familiar with the Calvinist worshipping community during the sixteenth century.

Part two consists of primary sources focused on the teachings and sermons of Calvin as well as a collection of drawings, paintings, and other artifacts relevant to the worshipping community. Each of the visuals has a description and historical explanation to support its importance or significance to Calvinism. For example, part of the caption next to the picture of the Tables of the Law explains that this is "what might have been put up on the walls of churches to replace the religious images removed by the iconoclasts" and that it "provided not only the text of the Ten Commandments but also the summary of the Law and the greatest commandment,... (47)." The remaining documents in this section of the text focus on the order of the actual worship services, practices, and teachings, as well as, sermons from Calvin himself. The notes in the margins continue throughout part two, clarifying points of worship and acting as a guide to assist the reader. It is in this section that the marginal notes

are most helpful, asking thought provoking questions leading the reader to deeper analysis and understanding of Calvinism during the sixteenth century.

The last part of the text, part three, serves as a guide to assist in the use of the text depending on concentration, varying from devotional use, to small group study, and lastly, to areas of other interest. While part three is the shortest section of the text, it is one of the most useful of the sections for a teacher. This section provides study questions based on interest for each part of the text. In addition to the marginal notes found throughout the text, these questions act as a guide to help students understand the religion in its historical context both during and after reading the previous two sections.

- *Chris Shively, Independent Scholar*

