



## Friends of Calvin

*Machiel A. Van Den Berg*

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## **Friends of Calvin** Machiel A. Van Den Berg

In two dozen short, readable biographies of John Calvin's friends — including some who turned into enemies — Machiel A. van den Berg paints an intimate portrait of the great Reformer's life and circle that most of us have never seen. / Here we accompany Calvin from his early boyhood in Noyon to his student days in Paris and Orleans, to his pastorate in and exile from Geneva, all the way to his deathbed. We meet his famous Reformer friends — William Farel, Martin Bucer, Philip Melanchthon, Heinrich Bullinger, John Knox, Theodore Beza — and friends whose names are more obscure: his cousin Pierre Robert Olivétan, the first translator of the Bible into French; René de France of French royalty; Laurent de Normandie, the mayor of Noyon who later escaped to Geneva; Pierre Viret, his "best friend of all"; and Idelette van Buren, his beloved wife during their brief but happy marriage. / Calvin may be known as a scholar who preferred his study to imperial and ecclesiastical politics, but he was also a rebel of faith against the papacy, which controlled most of the empires of Europe and had a price on the heads of all "reform-minded" citizens, especially their leaders. Peppared with quotations from Calvin's voluminous letters, *Friends of Calvin* abounds with secret court relationships, love affairs, death threats, poisonings, and narrow midnight escapes from the pursuing authorities — showing a full-blooded and dangerous side of the bookish Reformer's life. Readers of these colorful narratives will come to see how much Calvin's friends influenced his life and thought. / "This work provides fresh and accessible insights into John Calvin's inner circle. The highly readable translation offers vignettes that show the Reformer's capacity for deep and enduring relationships with friends and family members."— Karin Maag / H. Henry Meeter Center for Calvin Studies, Calvin College and Seminary

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