

Hungarian Stamps 2009

500TH ANNIVERSARY OF JOHN CALVIN'S BIRTH



Magyar Posta is commemorating the 500th anniversary of the birth of John Calvin by issuing a special stamp.

John Calvin, né Jean Caulvin or Cauvin (Noyon, 10 July 1509 – Geneva, 27 May 1564), the Swiss Reformer and humanist academic of French origin who gave his name to Calvinism, was, according to Bamber Gascoigne, the greatest mind and the best organiser among the leading figures of the Reformation who created in Geneva the perfectly functioning prototype of a God-fearing city. He is mainly remembered for his works on theology and Church organisation, but he also made a considerable contribution to the development of literary French. At the age of twenty-six he wrote his main work *Institutio Religionis Christianae* (Institutes of the Christian Religion), which he constantly expanded and revised throughout his life.

This work and the Genevan Church organisation established by him served as a model throughout Europe for the formation of the Reformed and Presbyterian Churches. Beyond the aspect of religious history, Calvin's ideas influenced Western culture, changing the mentality to work and providing an ideological basis for the development of capitalism. *Source: www.wikipedia.org*

In 2006 the Synod of the Hungarian Reformed Church decided and announced that the years 2009-2014 (the period between the 500th anniversary of his birth and the 450th anniversary of his death) would be Calvin Memorial Years. The John Calvin Memorial Committee through the exhibition "500 Years of John Calvin" wishes to bring the values John Calvin and the followers of Christ based on his teachings have given to the world over 500 years closer to the Hungarian people in the 21st century. The exhibition shows the influence that the life's work of the Genevan Reformer of French origin had on European and Hungarian culture, and a multitude of artefacts that have survived the centuries. The exhibition will be held in Debrecen, where in 1567 the Calvinist branch of the Reformation in Hungary accepted the Heidelberg Catechism and the Second Helvetic Confession as fundamental documents. This is regarded as the beginning of the Reformed faith in Hungary. *Source: The Hungarian Reformed Church*

The stamp design is a portrait of John Calvin. The first day cover for it shows the symbolic figure of John Calvin becoming enlightened. The special postmark is the official emblem of the Calvin Memorial Years.

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Designed by György Oláh

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350,000 copies printed

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