

## Press Release

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HEIDELBERG, July 2, 2012

### Opening of the Jonathan Edwards Center Germany at Universität Heidelberg

New centre for American religious history in cooperation with the Yale Divinity School

The Heidelberg Center for American Studies (HCA) and the Faculty of Theology of Heidelberg University extended an open invitation to the inauguration of the Jonathan Edwards Center Germany. The centre for research in American religious history is a cooperative project with the Yale Divinity School (USA). The opening ceremony will take place Wednesday, 11 July 2012, with religious scholar Prof. Dr. Peter J. Thuesen (Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis) delivering the inaugural lecture and an international symposium on Thursday, 12 July. Both events focus on the centre's namesake, Puritan preacher Jonathan Edwards (1703 to 1758), who is widely acknowledged as the most important theologian in the history of American religion.

The Jonathan Edwards Center Germany is under the direction of Prof. Dr. Jan Stievermann, the Heidelberg religious historian who brought the institution to Heidelberg. "As a platform for interdisciplinary research and teaching in the history of religion in America, the centre is a perfect fit, a confluence of American Studies at the HCA and the history of the church", explained Prof. Stievermann. Future activities will focus on Puritanism in New England, the life and work of Jonathan Edwards, as well as the theologian's legacy in contemporary Christianity. The institutions involved – the Faculty of Theology, the HCA, and the Jonathan Edwards Center at Yale Divinity School – support research projects on Edwards and US religious history, offer seminars, and organise lectures, conferences, and student and faculty exchanges with Yale and other international institutions. In addition, the Jonathan Edwards Center Germany provides access to the digital resources of its sister institute at Yale and collects materials on Edwards and his era.

On 11 July, Prof. Theusen will lecture on "Jonathan Edwards and the Transatlantic World of Books". Beforehand, Prof. Stievermann and Prof. Dr. Kenneth Minkema, Director of the Jonathan Edwards Center at the Yale Divinity School, will explain the work and responsibilities of the centre. The ceremonial address will begin at 6:15pm at the Heidelberg Center for American Studies, Curt und Heidemarie Engelhorn Palais, Hauptstraße 120 in Heidelberg.

The symposium on 12 July, entitled "New Avenues in Jonathan Edwards Studies and Eighteenth-Century Religious History", will focus on the transatlantic view of the history of religion, examining the reciprocal relationships and developing dynamics between Europe and America. Approximately 45 participants are expected, including Prof. Minkema, Prof. Dr. Hermann Wellenreuther (University of Göttingen), Dr. Reiner Smolinski (Georgia State University), Prof. Dr. Andreas Beck (Evangelical Theological Faculty, Leuven) and Dr. Sarah Rivett (Princeton University). The symposium is also being held in the HCA.

Both events are open to the public. For more information and to see the programme, go to [www.jonathanedwardsgermany.org/invitation-to-an-inauguration](http://www.jonathanedwardsgermany.org/invitation-to-an-inauguration).

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