

## Newsletter April 2023



Matt Lundberg  
Director

In a recent article in the *Chronicle of Higher Education* (pay wall), a mid-career faculty member reflected on her experience with past mentors. In particular, the author discussed ways in which some important mentors in her graduate school and early career experience ended up deeply disappointing her. These mentors had meant a great deal to her, and she envisioned their relationship continuing and turning more into scholarly partnership. But that hope faded when her mentors became increasingly distant or unavailable.

This article struck a chord with me because my work with the de Vries Institute over the past three years has involved assigning mentorship pairings for newer faculty at Calvin University during their Faith & Learning Fellowships and for members of the de Vries Postdoctoral Teaching Fellows program. This responsibility has prompted me to think more than ever before about the varied forms that mentorship takes and about the shape of healthy, constructive, life-giving mentorship.

At its heart, mentorship is about community. And for Christian institutions and scholars, faith should inform how we understand community. Mentorship plays a key role in communities whose members invest in one another and take responsibility for one another, even at some cost to themselves. Mentorship involves those who have been involved in faculty work for quite a while offering their experiences and wisdom to those who are newer to the profession. At its best—or so it seems to me—healthy mentorship involves that balance of challenge and encouragement that we all need to flourish. At its best, it serves as a stage along the way to collegial equality and perhaps even scholarly friendship, as the mentor invites the one mentored into fuller and fuller participation in the life and work of the institution and the profession. Indeed, for Christians in academic life, mentorship can be one form of what the Apostles' Creed calls the "communion of saints."

Thinking about mentorship over the last few years has also led me to recognize ways in which I have likely failed as a mentor in the past. When I was in a full-time teaching role, I'm sure there were times when certain students saw me as a prospective mentor but the busyness of work (and my sometimes overly task-oriented mentality) meant that I didn't slow down enough to have the kinds of conversations that would nurture those students. Mentorship at its best is an investment in another person, and that requires *time*. Though such time is often in short supply, it's worth reminding ourselves regularly that it's time well spent, even if it comes at the cost of other things we could be doing. Investing in the lives of the people entrusted to us and our community is a precious obligation.

At the end of the *Chronicle* article, the author reflected on how a more enduring mentor in her professional life had appeared in an unlikely place—so unlikely that she hardly even recognized the person as a mentor. The key characteristics of this person were that she was welcoming, encouraging, and looked for ways to provide opportunities for the junior faculty member. This is a reminder that mentorship takes lots of forms, some of them unexpected. What is crucial—and sometimes quite difficult, given the often frenzied pace of today's academic life—is that we remain attentive to opportunities to be a presence in the life and work of those around us. That may not be easy, even for the Christian scholar, but the commitments that guide Christian life give us every reason to recognize it as part of our calling.

## Kuyper Prize and Conference

The 2023 Kuyper Conference will be taking place from May 9-11 on the campus of Redeemer University in Hamilton, Ontario, Canada.

The theme of the conference is *Kuyper and Kintsugi: Public Theology for Repair, Reconciliation, and Restoration* and will include plenary sessions featuring John G. Stackhouse Jr. (Crandall University), Haejin Shim Fujimura (Academy Kintsugi), and Vincent Bacote (Wheaton College). At the heart of it all will be the awarding of the 2023 Kuyper Prize to Makoto Fujimura, who will also be giving a keynote lecture. [Read more about Fujimura's work and the prize.](#)



Makoto Fujimura

[Register for the Kuyper Conference.](#)

## Two New Reflecting Faith Courses!

One of the central de Vries Institute programs is [Reflecting Faith: Resources for Christians in the Academy](#). Reflecting Faith is a platform of short online faculty development courses. Each course takes an element of Christian faith or an aspect of academic practice (e.g., teaching) and provides *biblical* content and *rich theological* resources related to the topic, while moving quickly toward *practical* applications of faith integration in this area across a variety of academic disciplines. Over the course of 8-10 hours, participants will deepen their capacity to reflect wisely and Christianly on their academic work, with their imaginations kindled regarding their teaching and research.

This month we are launching two new courses: "Sin: Learning in a Fractured World" and "Faith and Online Pedagogy."



There are two ways to take these courses:

**Self-directed.** You can sign up at <https://reflectingfaith.org> and gain immediate access to a course, which you work through individually at your own pace. Courses are priced affordably on a sliding scale based on ability to pay.

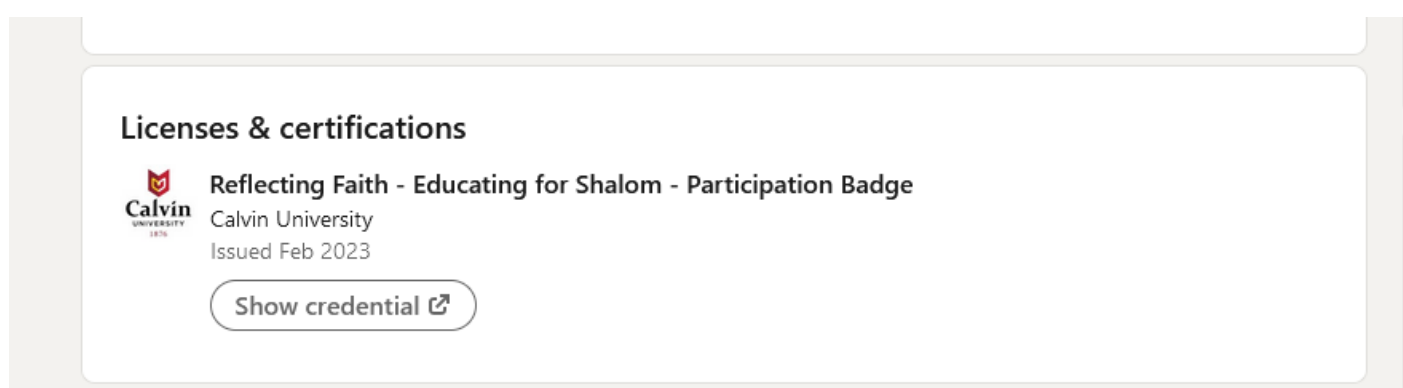
**Cohort-based with an instructor.** Institutions can gather cohorts of their faculty to take a course together, with de Vries staff serving as the instructor or faculty from those institutions serving as instructors (after completing a leadership training process through the de Vries Institute). To inquire about this option, contact us at [dvi@calvin.edu](mailto:dvi@calvin.edu).

## Reflecting Faith Certifications through Credly

In partnership with Calvin University's Global Campus, the de Vries Institute is happy to announce that we are now issuing certifications to participants in Reflecting Faith courses upon their completion of a course. These certifications will be issued through [Credly](#), a digital certification provider. Your Credly account will keep a record of completed courses, make it possible to print transcripts of your work, and can be connected to social media accounts. For example, some recent participants in our Educating for Shalom course have displayed the digital badge on their LinkedIn accounts.

These digital certifications are "stackable." Those who complete five courses will be issued a Certification in Faith and Higher Education.

These resources provide an effective way for Reflecting Faith participants to track and verify the hard work they have put into deepening their faith integration capacities.

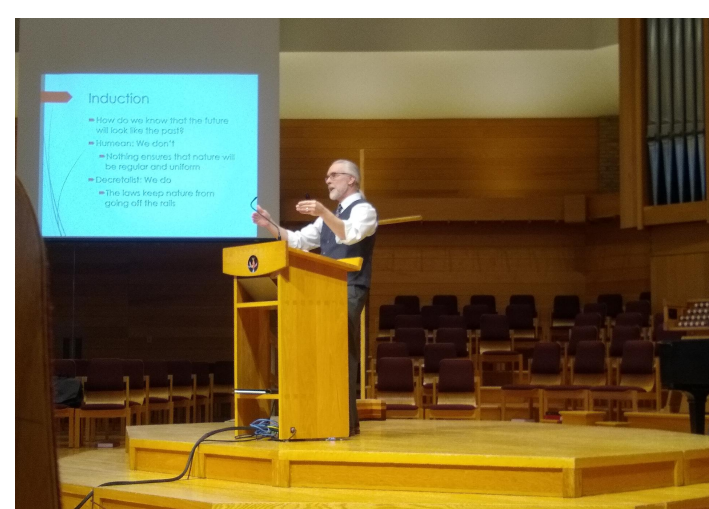


## Upcoming INCHE Asia/Oceania Conference

The International Network of Christian Higher Education ([INCHE](#)) is an organization devoted to building Christian higher education globally. INCHE regularly hosts regional conferences where networks of scholars and institutions can be strengthened through the sharing of learning regarding the challenges and opportunities faced by faith-activated higher education.

After a successful spring 2022 INCHE [Europe conference](#) in Budapest, Hungary, in June of 2023 INCHE will be holding its Asia/Oceania regional conference at Handong Global University in South Korea. De Vries Institute director Matt Lundberg will be there, presenting a paper titled "Bridging the Gap Between Graduate School and Christian Higher Education." He eagerly anticipates meeting scholars and administrators from across that region of the world and learning from one another about how Christian faith shapes the work we do in our various contexts.

[Register for this conference](#) and [explore INCHE membership](#). One of the benefits of INCHE membership is its quarterly newsletter, which is a treasure chest of insights from around the world about the important work of Christian higher education.



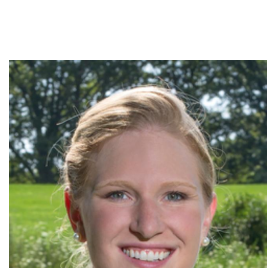
## What Is a Law of Nature?

Along with the West Michigan chapter of the [American Scientific Affiliation](#), the de Vries Institute was thrilled to co-sponsor a recent lecture by Prof. Jeff Koperski, a philosopher of science from Saginaw Valley State University.

Drawing in part on his recent book, *Divine Action, Determinism, and the Laws of Nature* ([open access](#)), Koperski inspected the notion of a "law of nature," which is a term that people frequently use but often don't think carefully about. In dialogue with various contributions in recent philosophy of science and philosophy of religion, and with specific examples from various domains of scientific understanding, he proposed a conception of laws of nature as God-given *constraints* upon how nature behaves.

Koperski's lecture was an excellent example of the importance of careful thinking about the concepts that guide today's scientifically-minded and tech-driven age. [Watch the lecture.](#)

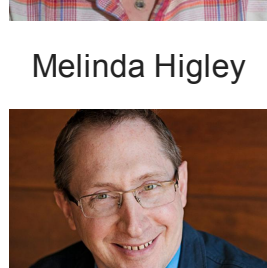
## Calvin Faith & Learning Fellows



Melinda Higley

One of the central programs of the de Vries Institute on Calvin's campus is a Faith & Learning Fellowship for newer faculty members. Typically completed during their 2nd and 4th years of service on the Calvin faculty, these fellows participate in a program of mentorship, guided reading, cohort discussion, and independent reading and writing.

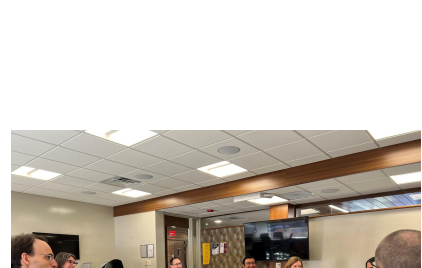
We recently asked two of our 2022-23 4th Year "Fellows" to pass along a reading suggestion:



Forrest Wakeman

• Melinda Higley (Geology) recommends *Refugia Faith*, by Debra Rienstra. In Melinda's words, "I have always felt that the small, the unseen, the undercounted, matter. *Refugia* helps me to connect that intuition to my faith and why it's important to keep going with it."

• Forrest Wakeman (Music) recommends *Adorning the Dark*, by Andrew Peterson. In Forrest's words, "The book is a great look at faith, the creative process, and what it means to flourish as a member of God's kingdom – it's a fairly easy read and while it's focused on musical creativity on the surface, it really digs into Kingdom life at its core."



Faith & Learning Fellows meeting on Calvin's campus

## Calvin Global Campus

The de Vries Institute is blessed to work closely with [Calvin University's Global Campus](#). Not only do some of dVI's staff members devote part of their work time to the Global Campus, but the Global Campus also manages the online platform ([learn.calvin.edu](http://learn.calvin.edu)) that hosts dVI's Reflecting Faith faculty development courses.

Other initiatives of the Calvin Global Campus include:

- Incubating new master's degree and certificate programs at Calvin, such as the brand new [Master of Arts in Teaching](#), a one-year accelerated program through which adults with an undergrad degree can earn a master's and teaching certificate. The first cohort of this program starts in May. See Calvin's full list of [graduate programs](#).
- Promoting the development of [non-academic programs](#) that lead to microcredentials.
- Developing educational opportunities that impact communities both near and far, such as a partnership with educators in Indonesia and, right in Calvin's back yard, a learning initiative to provide educational opportunities to an underserved neighborhood nearby.
- Providing leadership for academic excellence in online education through training, instructional design resources, and standards.
- Overseeing Calvin's transformational outreach educational through the [Calvin Prison Initiative](#) and [Ready for Life](#).

Calvin's Global Campus team has played an integral role in expanding the Calvin mission to learning communities.

## Péter Balla's Commentary on 2 Corinthians

The de Vries Institute is blessed to have an [Advisory Council](#) with representatives from institutions around the world, as well as members from Calvin University and Calvin Theological Seminary.

One member of this committee is the Rev. Prof. Dr. [Péter Balla](#) from Károli Gáspár University in Hungary. A New Testament scholar, Balla previously served a term as the rector of his university and now serves as vice rector for religion and spirituality.

Balla recently published a new commentary on Paul's second letter to the Corinthians. This important resource is [available online](#) and free of charge. Along with Dr. Balla, we hope that this fruit of his scholarly labors will be a blessing to the global church—including Christian academics doing their work in a way that is mindful of Scripture.

## Other Calvin University Centers & Institutes: Center for Innovation in Business

The [Calvin Center for Innovation in Business](#) (CCIB) engages students, faculty, and the broader business community to support and develop the [Calvin University School of Business](#), raising the level of business education and scholarship at Calvin University to ensure students are well-equipped for lives of service and leadership in business.

Programming for the CCIB focuses on three main goals and objectives:

- **Providing educational excellence.** The CCIB works to attract, retain, encourage, and grow Calvin business faculty and students by fostering ongoing support of scholarship and engagement through a variety of opportunities, including faculty and student grants, student research projects, conferences, discussion forums, book clubs, networking opportunities, and more.
- **Promote experiential learning.** Experiential learning, by definition, is the process by which students develop knowledge, skills, and values through direct experiences. To that end, the CCIB works alongside Calvin faculty and staff to identify and execute project-based, experiential learning opportunities and internships for Calvin business students, which promote the highest level of learning among students.
- **Engage the broader business community.** Through mutually beneficial relationships with local businesses and organizations, the CCIB is able to positively and significantly impact Calvin students by allowing them to integrate knowledge and skills learned in the classroom with tangible, hands-on experiences. The CCIB is responsible for identifying [Calvin Action Projects](#) (CAP), which engage students in project-based learning opportunities and allow them to act as consultants on real business problems. Additionally, the CCIB regularly sponsors and hosts business-related community events, including the Chick-Fil-A Leadercast.

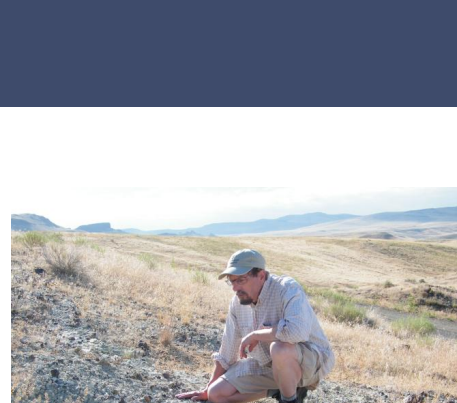
In October 2023, the CCIB and Calvin School of Business will be hosting a Symposium on business and the biblical notion of *shalom*. Further information, including a call for papers, can be [found online](#).

## DVI Team Member Profile: Ralph Stearley

This month, we highlight Ralph Stearley, an emeritus Calvin professor and de Vries Institute contributing scholar.

How long have you been at Calvin and in what roles over the years?

- I worked full-time for Calvin from 1992 until 2019 as a member of Calvin's GEO Dept. During that time, I taught or co-taught upwards of 20 different courses, including a course on climate change and a January interim course on the Great Lakes. I helped to create Calvin's Oceanography course, and taught field geology at our May program at the Two Moose Lodge in SW Montana. I also taught during several summer sessions for the Au Sable Institute and for Wheaton College's Science Station in the Black Hills of South Dakota. Since retiring in 2019, I have continued to serve Calvin by teaching our course in paleontology, as well as assisting in some of our upper-level geology laboratories.



Ralph Stearley

What work do you do for the de Vries Institute?

- Beginning in the Autumn term of 2021, I have served the DVI by acting as convener for a reading/discussion group for STEM faculty, focused on the doctrine of Creation, the history of science, and the scientific vocation. Originally conceived as a program strictly involving new STEM faculty, the project quickly morphed into one integrating STEM faculty from a wide range of disciplines and generational cohorts. The discussions are valuable and the relationships which are fostered are priceless.

Tell us about the book project you're working on.

- I have been working on a book about "fossils," under contract with InterVarsity Press. The full title is: *Fossils: A Revelation of Beauty in the History of Creation*. The book is planned to be lavishly illustrated with color photographs, and designed to help defuse the perceived conflict between mainstream paleontology and proponents of young-Earth creationism. The overall tone will be positive and not polemical. In some ways this book will be a sequel to the volume that David Young and I coauthored in 2008: *The Bible, Rocks and Time*, also published by IVP. Lord willing, I will complete the book this calendar year.

What occupies you during your free time?

- During my free time, I assist with outreach projects of the [Dice Mineralogical Museum](#), serve on committees and prayer groups in my church congregation, and also serve as president of a local chapter of a national organization of Christians in the sciences, the [American Scientific Affiliation](#). I also see my children and grandchildren often, as all live in the greater Grand Rapids area. Several writing projects, including papers on fossil fishes, are hanging fire waiting for the book project to be completed.

## Contact us

Have a question? Contact [dvi@calvin.edu](mailto:dvi@calvin.edu).

