


DE VRIES INSTITUTE FOR GLOBAL FACULTY DEVELOPMENT

Newsletter January 2023



Matt Lundberg
Director

I was talking with a friend recently about whether the Trinity matters for Christian belief, and whether it matters for Christian educational institutions. Isn't it a secondary add-on to what the Bible says? Doesn't it introduce unnecessary complexity into Christian belief in God? Perhaps we'd be okay without it?

My response was to say that I *do* think that the Trinity is important for Christian faith and for Christian educational institutions. While Trinity doctrine can indeed be complicated, the orthodox Christian faith is a trinitarian faith. Here's why: At its heart, Trinity doctrine is a way of making sense of the New Testament narrative of salvation—that the Father sent the Son to become incarnate through the power of the Holy Spirit in order to liberate creation from its groaning under the power of sin and suffering. The main players in that story are all doing divine work, fulfilling the divine promises, so they all belong to the divine identity. That trinitarian story is the story of God, so Christians are baptized into the name of that God—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Trinity doctrine identifies the Christian God. In identifying God as Father, Son, and Spirit, the doctrine of the Trinity tells us something fundamental about the nature of God—namely, that God is an everlasting communion of persons and thus that love and self-giving delight are the deep reality of God. In telling us something fundamental about the nature of God, it also helps us to understand God's intentions for created reality—shared flourishing among God's creatures, including human beings. In other words, Trinity doctrine grounds the promise that Love rather than arbitrary power or domination will have the last word. The God who is Love (see 1 John 4:7-12), being the everlasting communion of Father, Son, and Spirit, will have the last word.

How we understand God and how we see God's intentions for the world are crucial for how we live the academic calling of studying and serving God's world. May this trinitarian vision of God, creation, and our place in creation seep into our academic and pedagogical imaginations as we live out that calling.

Kuyper Prize and Conference

The Kuyper Prize, established in 1998 and named after Dutch theologian Abraham Kuyper, is awarded each year to a scholar, practitioner, or community leader whose outstanding contribution to their work reflects the ideas and values characteristic of the neo-Calvinist vision of religious engagement in matters of social, political, and cultural significance in one or more of the 'spheres' of society. The prize and an annual conference focused on Kuyper's enduring legacy are funded thanks to a generous donation from the late Rimmer and Ruth De Vries.

The 2023 prize winner is Makoto Fujimura, a world-renowned artist, author, speaker, and founder of the [International Arts Movement](#) and the [Fujimura Institute](#). His artistic work expounds on, popularizes, and builds upon Kuyperian theology. He uses the art of *kintsugi*, the Japanese art of repairing broken pottery (often with precious metals), to take what is shattered and make it whole again—not to return the object to its original state, but to represent an even more beautiful restoration of wholeness. [Read more about Fujimura's work and the prize.](#)

Fujimura will be awarded the prize during the 2023 [Kuyper Conference](#) which runs May 9-11, 2023, 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"



Makoto Fujimura

and will include plenary sessions featuring John G. Stackhouse Jr. (Crandall University), Haejin Shim (Academy Kintsugi), and Vincent Bacote (Wheaton College).

Proposals for presentations and roundtable sessions at the 2023 Conference can be submitted to Jordan Ballor at jordan.ballor@calvin.edu by January 15, 2023. More information about the Kuyper Conference is available at the [Kuyper Conference homepage](#).

Ways to take 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 example *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 what the topic could mean for their teaching and research.



There are two main models for taking these courses:

Self-directed. You can sign up at <https://reflecting.faith> 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. Belmont University, for example, has had groups of their faculty complete Reflecting Faith courses with Belmont faculty serving as instructors (after completing a leadership

training process through the de Vries Institute). Other examples are Mountain Top University in Nigeria, groups of African scholars convened by INCHE, and departments at Calvin University in the United States, who have cohorts doing courses together with de Vries Institute staff as instructors.

Participants who complete courses will receive a digital Credly “badge” verifying that they completed the course (which can be connected to social media). Those who complete five courses will earn a certification in Faith and Higher Education.



Follow us on Social Media

Follow the de Vries Institute on [LinkedIn](#) and on [Facebook](#) for regular notifications about upcoming events, Reflecting Faith course development, how you can get involved, and more. Our social media presence is growing, and we would welcome your participation!

Recap of Kuyers/INCHE Conference

In October, the International Network for Christian Higher Education ([INCHE](#)) and Calvin University’s [Kuyers Institute for Christian Teaching and Learning](#) hosted their biennial conference at the Prince Conference Center on the campus of Calvin University.

Christian educators from across the United States, as well as various countries in Europe and Asia, gathered for two packed days of presentations and plenaries on the topic of “Faith and Pedagogy Amid Educational Change.” One of the plenary speakers, Michelle Loyd-Paige from Calvin University, emphasized the importance of Christian institutions having an [intentional “playbook”](#) for their diversity and inclusion efforts. Jan Habl from the University of Hradec Králové spoke eloquently about how Christian faith directs his work of teaching overwhelmingly secular students about the role of virtue in human life. And Marlene Wall shared powerful stories of how her institution, [LCC International University in Lithuania](#), is creating flourishing community in the context of religious difference and the war raging in nearby Ukraine.

It was a compelling 48 hours of learning, networking, and friendship. The de Vries Institute is happy to announce that the 2024 conference will be the Kuyers/INCHE/de Vries conference, as we join as a third sponsor of the conference. Preliminary plans are also in the works for a fall 2023 virtual event focused on faith and pedagogy in STEM disciplines.



Restorative Justice and Academic Dishonesty

In October of 2022, the de Vries Institute for Global Faculty Development hosted restorative justice expert [Ted Lewis](#) for a workshop with Calvin University staff and faculty. Lewis applied the principles of restorative justice (an alternative to more punitive or retributive approaches to justice) to situations of student academic dishonesty.

[Read more.](#)

Reading Group on Science and Faith

Long-time Calvin professor Ralph Stearley has been leading an interdisciplinary reading group focused on the book *The Warfare between Science and Religion: The Idea that Wouldn't Die* (edited by Jeff Hardin, Ronald Numbers, and Ronald Binzley). The chapters of this book explore how moments of tension between religious commitment and the modern natural sciences have often been inflated into the myth of an eternal, irreconcilable conflict between “Religion” and “Science.” Different chapters focus on particular moments in history (e.g., Galileo) or particular groups within the church (e.g., Catholics or Evangelicals) or within the academy (e.g., natural scientists and social scientists) where the “warfare myth” has taken root. In so doing, contributions to this book tell a much more interesting (and evidence-based) story about how science and religious commitment relate to one another.



Reading Recommendations from Faith & Learning Fellows

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 one of our 2022 4th Year "Fellows" to pass along a reading suggestion:

- **Stacia Hoeksema:**
"I'd recommend *On Christian Teaching* by David Smith. It is a book packed with deep wisdom and yet practicality. I have referenced it several times already this semester and find it to be a valuable resource for anyone trying to faithfully integrate faith and learning."

Coffee, Teach, Lunch

One of the challenges we face at Calvin University is that faculty are sometimes unaware of what their faculty colleagues in other departments teach in their classes. If faculty are unaware of what is being taught elsewhere, it is harder to help students make fruitful connections between the various courses they are taking.

To help foster a culture of conversation about our courses across disciplinary lines, the de Vries Institute created a new initiative called **Coffee, Teach, Lunch**. The idea is simple: Two faculty members from different departments each observe one another teach a class session (Teach). We provide them with a beverage (Coffee) to enjoy while observing the class session. Then we provide them with a meal (Lunch) to share together as they talk about what they noticed about one another's classes.

Not only does this familiarize faculty from different departments with the *content* that is taught in other areas of the university, but it also provides important insights about *pedagogy*. In observing one another in the classroom, participants encounter creative ideas that help them to think about how they teach in their own classrooms. In all of this, participants also see how faith commitments energize teaching across the whole of Calvin University.

One of our earliest participants in this program said the following about her colleague:

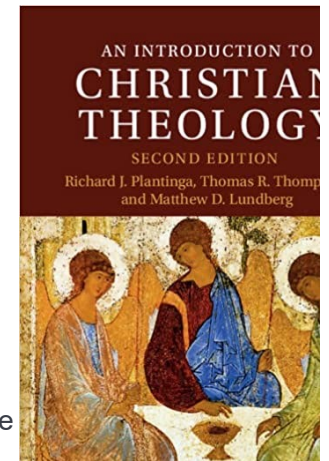
“I really appreciated the opportunity to observe [my colleague’s] class session on integration on faith and research. The prompts and discussion questions were structured to evoke critical thinking and discussions at multiple levels. I particularly appreciated the discussion on ‘research methodology as a Christian researcher’ and contrasting the same with ‘Christian research methodology.’ She was intentional in guiding students to think through the not-so-straightforward concepts associated with the topic. I also appreciated the classroom space – the physical arrangement of the space and how she used the screens and board to guide small group discussions.”

Second Edition of Introduction to Christian Theology

De Vries Institute director Matt Lundberg, along with two Calvin University colleagues, T.R. Thompson and Rick Plantinga, recently published the second edition of their book *An Introduction to Christian Theology* (Cambridge University Press).

One review of the first edition said: “This is the best book currently on the market for introductory classroom use. It surpasses its competitors in clarity, content, and methodology.”

The second edition of the book keeps the same structure of chapters, but was revised for greater clarity and contemporary relevance. More than 80 sidebar boxes and numerous visual aids were also added to the new edition. The new edition is already available in Europe, Africa, Asia, and Australia, and will be available in North America in mid January.



Other Calvin University Centers & Institutes: Calvin Center for Faith & Writing

The Calvin Center for Faith & Writing (CCFW) was established in 2016 to run the biennial *Festival of Faith & Writing* (est. 1990) and to launch other long-dreamed-of initiatives. The CCFW capitalizes on the rich heritage of the long-running Festival, expanding the conversations that often begin there into additional educational opportunities, deeper community engagement, and sustained scholarship for readers of all ages.

The Festival began in the English department at Calvin University, where the CCFW is rooted. Additionally, the CCFW brings together departments & organizations across campus, and aims to be a strong literary partner—both in the West Michigan community and beyond.

Hospitality is at the core of the CCFW's efforts to convene conversations between people from the many diverse communities made and served by religious writing. In all its activities, the CCFW endeavors to create spaces wherein people from many faith traditions are welcomed warmly, listened to with respect and generosity, and inspired to deeper engagement with the common good.

Today, CCFW initiatives include:

- [Festival of Faith & Writing](#)
- [Hudson-Townsend Publishing Institute](#)
- [CCFW Digital Studio](#)
- [Rewrite Radio podcast](#) (free talks from past Festivals)
- [Marginalia short films](#) featuring authors & writing professionals discussing craft and inspiration
- Films about authors, books, and other literary arts projects

Also connected to Calvin's English department, [Scriptoria](#) is a writer's workshop offered each summer (coming next June 19-23, 2023).



CALVIN CENTER FOR
FAITH & WRITING

January Podcast Challenge

The Diversity and Inclusion for All podcast, hosted by Pennylyn Dykstra from Calvin University, is sponsoring a January listening challenge focused on interfaith dialogue. Those who take up the challenge are encouraged to listen to the ten episodes that deal with interfaith engagement or Christian-Muslim dialogue.

- **Interfaith Work**
 - [Interfaith and Racial Justice](#)
 - [Scriptural Reasoning Part I. What is SR?](#)

- [Scriptural Reasoning Part II. Why and How?](#)
- **Muslim-Christian Engagement Mini-Series**
 - [An Introduction to Interfaith Engagement](#)
 - [Allah and God. Same or Different, and How?](#)
 - [Jesus and Mohammed](#)
 - [Islam, Christianity, Culture, and Faith](#)
 - [Overcoming Fear of Islam](#)
 - [Strategies for Muslim-Christian Engagement](#)
 - [Women in Islam](#)

See the [full list of episodes](#), or look for them wherever you get your podcasts.

DVI Team Member Profile: David I. Smith

This month, we highlight David I. Smith, a Calvin professor who dedicates a portion of his time to the de Vries Institute.

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

- I have been at Calvin for 22 years. I began as a professor in the German department, teaching language and literature. A few years later I became the founding director of the [Kuyers Institute for Christian Teaching and Learning](#), and continued to teach German alongside that for almost another decade before moving into the Education department to direct the Graduate Studies in Education program. For the last few years I have been combining work for the Kuyers Institute and the de Vries Institute with teaching some courses in education.

What work do you do for dVI?

- My main role for dVI has been to design and flesh out our online learning platform, [Reflecting Faith](#), and to assist in providing training to Christian faculty at Calvin and around the world. I was heavily



David I. Smith

involved in developing the structure of the Reflecting Faith courses and have been the main author of many of them. I have also led quite a few of them, both online and in person. I am now combining my de Vries Institute and Kuyers Institute work as we begin developing an equivalent resource for elementary and secondary teachers.

Tell us more about your work with the Kuyers Institute

- The Kuyers institute for Christian Teaching and Learning is focused on the relationship between Christian commitments and the ways in which we teach and learn. Teaching and learning are not value-neutral processes. The way we design teaching processes and learning experiences reveals a lot about our basic values, about how we view students, their growth, their relationships to one another, and the wider world. Yet many of us have been conditioned to think of teaching as mostly just practical tips and tricks. The Kuyers Institute engages in research, convenes educators, publishes a journal and other print and online resources, and provides training around the question of what might count as Christian teaching and learning across the full range of subjects and learning contexts.

Can you share one important insight related to faith and learning that you've been contemplating recently?

- I was struck while preparing the recently unveiled Reflecting Faith course on Faith, Community, and Learning by a phrase from the Westminster Confession where it says that we have “communion in one another’s gifts and graces.” This is in the context of describing Christian community as something that does not arise naturally from our friendship patterns, but rather requires an intentional commitment to one another’s inward and outward good. Many educational contexts are very individualistic – each learner is there for their own grade and the others are the teacher’s responsibility. I have been looking for ways to build a more intentional commitment to one another’s good into the structure of my courses.

What about family?

- My immediate family was transplanted to Michigan from the UK when I joined Calvin, and I think each of us has had our own journeys of adjusting to being Americans and finding our way in a new

culture. I enjoy all of my three adult children and admire the work my wife does with Legal Aid of West Michigan.

Contact us

Have a question? Contact dvi@calvin.edu.



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