

## Newsletter July 2022



Matt Lundberg  
Director

Recently in my spare time I have done a lot of digging. Our house has a deck on it that needs posts in different places than where they are currently. And posts, if they are to do what they're supposed to do—and to stand the test of time—need adequate concrete footings. In the state of Michigan in the United States, due to how cold it often gets in the winter, that means going more than a meter into the ground. Hence the digging I've been doing lately. Given the clay and rock I've found in my efforts, there have been times when I've been tempted to dig more shallowly than is required by the construction code.

You can probably see that this is headed in the direction of an extended metaphor. Adequate structures require solid foundations to support them. And those foundations often require significant digging. The same basic principle holds for Christian higher education. To bring the light of Christ thoughtfully and appropriately into every aspect of higher education is no simple task. It is all too tempting to content ourselves with meager foundations, perhaps in the hope that our good intentions and sincere love of God will give enough support to our work.

Good intentions and love for God are required, of course, as is the leading of the Spirit. But hard work—strenuous academic and spiritual digging—is also required to develop foundations that will support a genuinely Christian approach to the demands of higher education, with all of its complex activities: disciplinary methods, teaching, research and publishing, institutional service, etc. Since none of that is simple, it is no surprise that the task of bringing Christian faith to bear on it all is also far from simple.

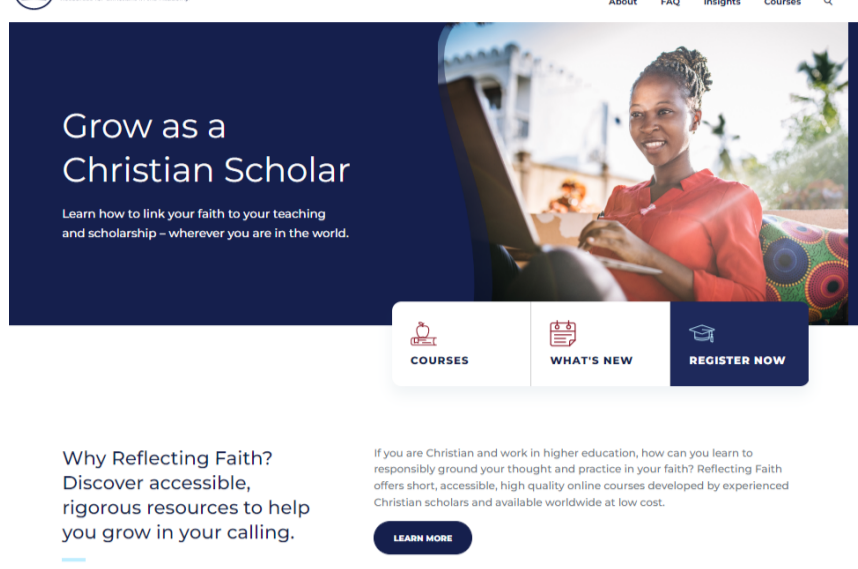
Thus the digging. We Christians involved in the academic life need to dig into the biblical text and the wisdom of the Christian tradition. We need burrow into some philosophy and theology. We need to cut through the rocky earth of our existing practices in order to envision new and more vital ways to integrate our faith commitments with the work expected of us in academic institutions.

All of this is hard work. There are lots of ways to go about it. We at the de Vries Institute strive to provide resources that help with the digging, including our [Reflecting Faith platform](#) of online faculty development courses. But the most important thing is that we all, as those committed to Christ and called to serve God's world through our academic labors, practice the ongoing work of digging toward foundations that will support the project of faith-infused learning.

## Launch of New Reflecting Faith Website

Back in May 2022, the de Vries Institute launched a new website for our faculty development platform, [Reflecting Faith: Resources for Christians in the Academy](#). We are grateful to the excellent team at <https://kmotiondesign.com/> for their top-notch work developing the site.

The site offers information about the various Reflecting Faith courses and explains the pedagogy and theology that have shaped the development of this resource. We will continue to add to the site over the course of time, as we hope it will demonstrate the transformative potential of these courses in helping scholars around the world to integrate Christian faith and their work as scholars in powerful ways.



## New Reflecting Faith Courses

Two brand new *Reflecting Faith* courses are running for the first time from June 27 to July 15, 2022, with Christian scholars from 16 countries around the world participating. David I. Smith is serving as the instructor for "Faith, Community, and Learning," and Matt Lundberg is serving as the instructor for "Humanity in God's Image." We pray that the courses will be a helpful contribution to the ongoing formation of participants as Christian scholars, and we expect that their feedback will help us to improve the courses.

In addition to those two new courses, two other new courses are nearing completion: "The Disruptive Effects of Sin" and "Faith and Online Pedagogy" will soon be added to the Reflecting Faith catalogue.

Check <http://reflecting.faith> for a list of upcoming course offerings or to inquire about possible use of these resources for cohorts of faculty at your institution.

## Self-paced Courses Offered from August to September

While past Reflecting Faith course offerings have been instructor-led, we will be launching three self-paced courses in August, allowing participants the freedom to complete the courses over a two month period at their own pace and for a reduced registration fee of \$100 per course. Self-paced course offerings will be:

- The World as God's Creation**  
 For Christians, a fundamental distinction in being is between Creator (the triune God) and creation (everything else). Apart from theology, then, the various academic disciplines can be said to deal mainly with creation. Christian faith confesses that the creation, which our academic disciplines study, depends upon the power and love of God the creator. The doctrine of creation is therefore about much more than arguments about how old the earth is – it is about the kind of world that we live in and learn about. That is the focus of this course, which clarifies the core theological notion of the world as creation and considers the light it sheds upon the work of higher education.
- Educating for Shalom**  
 This course examines a biblical vision of flourishing that has caught the imagination of a range of Christian writers on higher education. Shalom is the Hebrew word often translated as "peace," yet it means more than an absence of conflict. It implies a vision of well-being that encompasses wholeness in our relationship to God, to creation, to neighbor, and to ourselves. To dwell in shalom is to enjoy peace, but also God's favor, well-being in the world, and community with others. In this course, we will focus on the concept of "shalom" and how it has been used as a lens for thinking in Christian ways about the goals and practices of higher education.
- Hospitality to Strangers**  
 Hospitality, especially hospitality to the stranger and the marginalized, is a recurring theme in Scripture and a significant component in the New Testament's picture of ethics, community, and Christian maturity. Scholars have in recent years used hospitality as a for thinking about a range of topics, including civic and religious diversity, incarceration, education, community, intercultural learning, and disability. This module explores these connections: how can the theme of hospitality to strangers serve as a vehicle for connecting faith and learning in higher education?

Register online at [reflecting.faith](http://reflecting.faith).

## Reflecting Faith beyond Calvin University

We are always delighted when *individual* scholars sign up for Reflecting Faith courses. We are increasingly also convinced that there is great power in *institutional* use of these resources.

This past spring, de Vries Institute coordinator David Smith (who also directs Calvin's [Kuyers Institute](#)) trained 12 members of the Belmont University faculty as Reflecting Faith leaders. In the future, these Belmont professors will serve as leaders for cohorts of Belmont faculty who take these courses in order to strengthen the way they connect Christian faith with their work in teaching and scholarship. This will help to shape the culture and conversation at Belmont.

Two Indonesian scholars, Oh Yen Nie and Sarinah Lo are currently being trained as Reflecting Faith leaders. Starting next year, they will lead a cohort of faculty from a variety of Indonesian institutions in taking a series of six RF courses, at the end of which participants will earn a certification in Faith Integration in Higher Education.

A cohort of scholars from three African universities recruited by [INCHE](#) participated in two courses this past semester. And currently cohorts of faculty from African Christian University in Zambia and Uganda Christian University are participating in their own sections of Reflecting Faith courses.

## Summer Student Researchers

The de Vries Institute is privileged to have two Calvin University student researchers working for us this summer. Both of them entering their final year of study at Calvin, Anaslusia Watson and Tianrong Lin are doing research related to an array of future new Reflecting Faith course topics as part of Calvin's [McGregor Undergraduate Research Program](#).

In addition to regular colloquia under the leadership of Calvin geography professor [Mark Bjelland](#), Lin and Watson are working on the topics of justice, kingdom of God, sabbath, vocation, wonder and gratitude, and the pastoral role of the Christian teacher. These are all areas in which we plan to develop Reflecting Faith course modules in the future.

We are grateful for the stellar work of these two impressive students, who are also delightful human beings!



## Summer Workshops

De Vries Institute staff have developed an intensive one day in-person workshop version of some of the Reflecting Faith topics. In late June, David Smith led a group of Calvin University faculty members from a variety of departments in a workshop on Community and Higher Education (see picture). Later this summer, Matt Lundberg will be leading a workshop on the theology of the "image of God" and how it informs academic work across the disciplines.

If you are interested in discussing the possibility of one of the de Vries Institute staff members leading one of these day-long workshops at your institution, contact us at [dvi@calvin.edu](mailto:dvi@calvin.edu).

## New Book on Faith and Engineering Design

Calvin University computer science professor [Derek Schuurman](#), along with former Calvin engineering professor [Steve VanderLeest](#) and Ethan Brue of Dordt University, recently published *A Christian Field Guide to Technology for Engineers and Designers* (InterVarsity Press, 2022). This book explores the relevance of the biblical story and Christian principles for the work involved in developing and applying technology. In the process, the authors offer their readers a wealth of practical insights.

The de Vries Institute will be sponsoring a reading group for Calvin University engineering and computer science faculty as they explore the book together this coming fall semester.

Explore the authors' website here: <https://cs.calvin.edu/activities/books/fieldguide/>



Derek Schuurman

## "Faith Seeking Creativity" Summer Seminar

In May of 2022, ten Calvin University faculty participated in an intensive week-long interdisciplinary seminar on Christian faith in relation to art and creativity that was sponsored by the de Vries Institute. Under the leadership of Calvin English professor and poet [Lew Klatt](#) and Calvin art professor and ceramicist [Anna Greidanus](#), this group inquired about how Christian convictions give rise to the creative drive, and how the life of faith should guide our making and enjoyment of art. The group included faculty from a range of disciplines—arts, humanities, professional programs, and natural sciences. The textual backbone of the seminar was a critical examination of Makoto Fujimura's recent book *Art + Faith: A Theology of Making*. Participants also engaged in their own making of art (e.g., ceramics, drawing), and encountered a variety of forms of artwork and philosophical and theological perspectives along the way.

One participant said "It was so good for me to get to know other faculty with whom I've only had a passing (at best) acquaintance. It was great for me to think interdisciplinarily about my own areas of research and scholarship. And my teaching will be enhanced by bringing in some of the pedagogical and content insights I gained from this week."

The de Vries Institute is grateful to Professors Greidanus and Klatt for their expert work developing and conducting the seminar.

## Reading Recommendations from Faith & Learning Fellows

One of the central programs of the de Vries Institute on Calvin's campus is a two installment 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 4th Year "Fellows" to pass along some reading suggestions:

- Laura Westrate (Biochemistry) wrote: "One of my favorite books that I read over the past year was *A New Heaven and a New Earth* by J. Richard Middleton, which I found to be a wonderfully distilled discussion of the redemption of creation and our call to join in the renewal of this planet not only in the physical means by which we interact with nature but also in the way we structure and participate in various aspects of human culture and society."
- Laura Sutherland (Nursing) wrote: "I would recommend the book *God and the Pandemic: A Christian Reflection on the Coronavirus and Its Aftermath* by N.T. Wright. As a nurse, I worked during the pandemic. I appreciated Wright's analysis of human responses to the pandemic and how they differs from biblically based perspectives, including how the Bible can guide our response to the pandemic, and how God is at work in the world."

We will pass along further reading suggestions from other Faith & Learning Fellows in upcoming editions of our newsletter.

## Other Calvin Centers & Institutes: The Calvin Institute of Christian Worship

Institutionally affiliated with both Calvin University and Calvin Theological Seminary, the [Calvin Institute of Christian Worship](#) (CICW) is an interdisciplinary study and ministry center that promotes the scholarly study of the theology, history, and practice of Christian worship and the renewal of worship in worshipping communities across North America and beyond.

Two of CICW's key initiatives are:

- A [Grants program](#) for scholars and congregations in the U.S. and Canada aimed at deepening and revitalizing the study and practice of Christian worship.
- An annual [Symposium on Christian Worship](#) that gathers leaders and participants from around the world to explore Christian worship.

The CICW, in partnership with Calvin's Global Campus, is also launching a graduate level certificate in Intercultural Competency. Starting with its first cohort in the fall, this program is completely online and asynchronous, consisting of five 2-credit master's level courses, each course running for eight weeks. [Learn more about this program.](#)

CICW's website is a treasure trove of resources related to Christian worship in a global perspective. Explore it here: <http://worship.calvin.edu>.

## DVI Team Member Profile: Laurie Lemmen

Laurie Lemmen is a project manager for the de Vries Institute, although the institute only gets a third of her time, better she also serves on Calvin's Global Campus team. We asked her a few questions to get to know her better.

**How long have you been at Calvin, and what roles have you held over the years?**  
I've worked at Calvin since 2002, starting in the Education department, then spending the bulk of my years with the [Career Center](#) before transitioning to the [Global Campus](#) and de Vries Institute teams. My roles have varied from administrative assistant, assessment and certification, internship coordinator, marketing and communications, and managing the Calvin LifeWork program.

**Describe the work you do for Calvin now**  
My work touches on Calvin's efforts to reach new learning communities with our mission: equipping students to think deeply, act justly, and live wholeheartedly as Christ's agent of renewal. For DVI, this work mainly involves instructional design for Reflecting Faith courses, a skill I gained while creating learning modules for [Calvin LifeWork](#).

**What do you like best about your job?**  
The variety of projects I get to work on makes my job fun - from writing newsletters and editing websites to strategizing about new programs and establishing processes, no day ever looks the same. Working alongside fabulous teammates also brings me joy in my job.

**What do you like to do in your free time?**  
With three active kids and a fur baby, "free time" feels like a thing of the past, but I love spending time in nature walking, hiking and enjoying the beauty of West Michigan.



Laurie Lemmen  
project manager

## Contact us

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

