

RELEASE

The Formative Practices of Civic Hospitality: Grant Announcement

In partnership with the Issachar Fund, the Kuyers Institute for Christian Teaching and Learning and the Henry Institute for the Study of Christianity and Politics at Calvin University (Grand Rapids, Michigan) are pleased to announce a \$189,679 grant to strengthen civic formation in Christian schools.

Faithful discipleship entails responsible citizenship. Like any other feature of discipleship, faithful citizenship requires Christian formation. Yet, Christian educators in the field of civics lack resources, both intellectual and tangible, to meet that formative challenge. We will address that problem by (1) developing the concept of hospitality as a virtue of faithful citizenship, (2) crafting model pedagogical interventions that embed hospitality and related Christian virtues into civic learning, and (3) making these interventions widely available to civics teachers.

The project will benefit teachers and scholars alike. The most prominent resource will be a website for teachers that includes several teaching-and-learning sequences connected to multiple units and lessons. With help from teachers themselves, we will also produce supporting resources for teacher professional development and social-media content. At two international conferences, scholars will consider the contribution of Christian teaching and learning to virtuous participation in the public square.

This work has special urgency in this time of eroding public trust, rising polarization, and widespread populist backlash against established institutions. Christians have not been immune from these challenges to public life, and indeed people acting in the name of Christ have often seemed to sow seeds of distrust and social alienation. But Christian traditions also provide rich formative resources for addressing these challenges to public life, including habits of patience and generosity that create public space for deliberation – what we call “civic hospitality.” We see an opportunity at this key moment of political division to help civic educators draw from faith-based practices and to introduce those practices into their teaching of government, history, and other civics-oriented areas.

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