

STRENGTHENING CONGREGATIONAL LIFE

Church to College



Wednesday, June 21, 2017

Calvin College
Covenant Fine Arts Center
Grand Rapids, Michigan

Check-in

12:15–12:45 p.m. *Covenant Fine Arts Center, Lobby*

Welcome and Plenary

12:45–1:15 p.m. *Covenant Fine Arts Center, Auditorium*

Strengthening Congregational Life by Engaging God's World

Cornelius Plantinga, Jr.

Learning Across the Disciplines

1:30–2:30 p.m.

Session A

2:45–3:45 p.m.

Session B

Sessions led by Calvin College faculty. Choose two:

Sport and the Christian Life: A Kinesiologist's Call to Action

Brian Bolt

Most people, young and old, interact with sport. Sport invades our families, churches, televisions, social media, careers and schools. Among the throngs of participants and spectators are confessing Christians, people who view life as a gift of God's grace and earnestly desire to follow Jesus Christ in their day-to-day lives. The Christian church has a well-documented history of suspicion toward sport. Yet today, sport enjoys a much more favorable reputation among the faithful. Why the change? Is it good or bad? Many do not feel they have the language or permission to reflect theologically on sport or voice nagging questions about day-to-day decisions in sport. In this session, we will explore the place of sport in our humanity, our culture, and God's world.

Faith Formation and Worship:

A Worship Historian's View from the "End of the World"

María Cornou

Worship is a formative practice: through active engagement in liturgy, Christians are formed in a particular understanding of God, of others, and of themselves, and of what it means to live a Christian life in this world. Someday, historians may look at materials from your church (or this grants program!) and ponder the impact of the choices we are making today. While we can't know what will stand out to them, we can gain

healthy perspective by looking with empathy across time and space to learn from the experiences of others. Come ready to travel back in time about 100 years and in space to the beautiful land of Argentina.

**Why the Church Needs History, Especially Now:
A Historian's Vision for Equipping the Church**

Kristin Kobes Du Mez

At a time of increasing cultural and political polarization, the North American church faces enormous challenges in embodying the unity of Christ and living out Christ's mission in this time and place. This session will consider the role that history can play in cultivating knowledge, empathy, humility, and wisdom within the body of Christ. History teaches us many things, perhaps first and foremost: Things haven't always been this way. But history also makes us suspicious of narratives of progress and decline. Things haven't always been better, and things aren't inevitably getting better. History prompts us to ask "How have things gotten to be this way?" If the church wants to effect healthy change, history can offer valuable lessons. We'll explore two case studies—the history of racial inequity in American society, and the history of Christianity and feminism—as we seek to understand how historical knowledge can better equip the church to minister in this moment.

**Cultural Intelligence for the Pastoral Leader:
A Sociologist's Invitation to Life-long Learning**

Christina Edmondson

Come learn how to develop and practice the capacities that build our cultural intelligence (CQ) within the body of Christ. CQ is an essential skill for all those in the worshipping community, especially those in leadership positions. Like cultural competency, cultural intelligence has no fixed end point but instead is a process that offers insights about individual capabilities to cope with multi-cultural situations, to engage in cross-cultural interactions, and to interact faithfully in culturally diverse groups.

**What Difference Does Church Location Make?
A Philosopher's Insights on New Urbanism**

Lee Hardy

The location of your church makes a big difference in shaping Christian life and witness. Although churches address themselves primarily to the life of the spirit, human beings are embodied creatures who live in place-based communities—urban, suburban, and exurban. In this session we will explore the difference the physical location of a church makes for Christian ministry and sense of mission, addressing such topics as church accessibility, transit and parking, congregational diversity, connection to the public realm and support of the "commons," community involvement, niche versus place-based ministries, and the idea of the parish.

When Helping Heals: An Economist and Political Scientist Affirm Global Service

Roland Hoksbergen and Tracy Kuperus

Is it possible to work in international development without hurting those we are helping? Professors Kuperus and Hoksbergen examine this question, reviewing both secular (e.g. *The End of Poverty, Dead Aid*) and Christian scholarship (*When Helping Hurts, Toxic Charity*). In response to a growing skepticism regarding global service, they challenge the perspective that suggests "helping always hurts" with insights that promote realistic, transformational development. In this session, Kuperus and Hoksbergen will share nine lessons they have learned about how to be a healing presence in our efforts to promote the development of communities and persons around the world.

Classics, Ancient and Modern:

A Historian's Recommendations for Thoughtful Christian Living

Young Richard Kim

In the fourth century, Christian intellectuals, many of whom were educated in secular contexts, debated fiercely about the role of classical literature and culture in the life of the Church. Some called for an outright rejection of works by authors like Homer and Plato, while others tried to adapt the Scriptures and other Christian writings, giving them the form of other literary genres, like epic poetry and philosophical dialogue. Still, another perspective maintained that the literature of the classical tradition had intrinsic value and taught Christians important virtues and ideas that could deepen the faith of the community. This workshop will draw on ancient and contemporary literature to affirm this approach and suggest how reading practices can strengthen the life of the congregation.

Congregations and Sermons:

A Biblical Scholar's Vision for Imaginative, Communal Sermon Listening

Won Lee

Most of us consider the Bible more than an anthology or a textual repository for the ancient Israelites' and early Christians' religious traditions. Though we express this in different ways across the spectrum of Christian traditions, we receive the Bible as a sacred text, "useful for teaching, reproof, correction, training in righteousness." In many traditions, sermons emerge, ideally, out of deep engagement with scripture. What difference does this make for those who *listen* to sermons? How do we train our ears, hearts, and minds to listen to God's voice in sermons? This session will explore this by reflecting on different ways that Christians engage the Bible, and by commending engagement that is critical, imaginative, and personally and communally transformative.

Praise or Noisy Gong?: A Musicologist's Vision for Loving Your Neighbor

Benita Wolters-Fredlun

Differences in musical tastes, aesthetics and priorities are notoriously contentious issues for congregations and ministries to navigate. This session will probe the question of why we so often struggle to understand and appreciate the music of our fellow believers, whether they are in the pew beside us or across the world. We'll consider how and why music carries cultural baggage of various kinds, and what it might look like to try to love your neighbor by walking a mile in their musical "shoes."

Learning from Worshiping Communities

5:00–6:30 p.m.

Prince Conference Center, Great Hall

Join this high-energy poster session featuring the year-long, worship-related projects and learning funded by the Calvin Institute of Christian Worship through their Vital Worship Grants Program. Each grant project director will be 'hosting' the grant poster and engaging you in conversation and learning around the project. Hot and cold hors d'oeuvres will be served as a light supper.

Worshiping Together

7:00–8:30 p.m.

Calvin College Chapel

Evening worship will feature reflections on Scripture, congregational singing, a choir led by Calvin College gospel choir director, Nate Glasper, a scripture arts group led by Hannah and Jackson Barker Nikolay, and liturgical movement led by Kathleen Turner.

After worship join us on the Chapel patio for ice cream.