

## January 2024 Newsletter



Matt Lundberg  
Director

This is the time of year when many traditions within the Christian church celebrate Epiphany.

Epiphany is associated with the visit of the Magi or wise men to young Jesus, as recorded in the gospel of Matthew (2:1-18). The Magi come from far beyond Israel. They represent an early recognition of how this child, the Jewish Messiah, will bring God's salvation to the Gentiles, in fulfillment of the promise to Abram that all the nations of the earth would be blessed through his descendants (see Genesis 12:1-3).

If we hop over to the gospel of Luke for a moment, we see Simeon taking the infant Jesus and saying that he has now seen God's salvation, which will be a "light for revelation to the Gentiles and for glory to your people Israel" (2:32). His statement helps us to see why Epiphany is also a season that uses the imagery of *light*. In the incarnate Jesus, who is God-with-us in surprising and humble form, God's light shines into the darkness of the world's ignorance, need, pain, confusion, and sin. Through Jesus we can see what otherwise we could not.

Christian higher education is in the business of shining light upon and into the world. Jesus is the light who reveals the deeper truth about God and the world. So it is ultimately through his light that we will be able to see the deeper truth of the disciplines that we use to explore the truth of the world. There may be times when the light of Christ shines only indirectly and obliquely on what we do (e.g., a chemistry lab, the format of an ethnographic study, the brush technique used in painting on canvas). But the Christian conviction is that it is only through Christ's light that we see light (Psalm 36:9). In ways direct and often indirect, in conventional ways and sometimes quite creative ways, as reflective individuals and in community with one another, our call as scholars of faith is to relate whatever we learn in the world to the one who is the Light of the world (John 8:12).

## Reflecting Faith Institutional Cohorts

Reflecting Faith courses provide high quality, easy-to-access professional development for Christian scholars on a variety of important topics related to faith integration in higher education. Many institutions find value in cohorts of their faculty experiencing a course together. When taken by groups of faculty members from an institution, Reflecting Faith courses can enhance the depth of faith integration happening in classrooms and research while strengthening institutional culture and enriching campus conversation.

We offer several models for cohort-based institutional use:

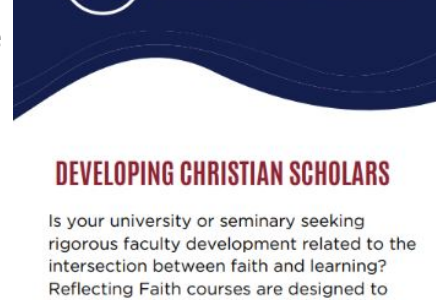
- **Online courses run by instructors provided by the de Vries Institute.**  
Our leaders walk your faculty through each step in the course, setting the pace, encouraging fruitful interaction among participants, responding to the work of participants, and providing feedback along the way.
- **Online or hybrid courses run by instructors from your institution.**  
With help of training and a leader's guide, cohorts can be run by trusted instructors from your own institution, which often promotes buy-in from your faculty.
- **Workshop versions of courses conducted by de Vries Institute staff.**  
Some institutions prefer synchronous approaches to faculty development, so we offer workshops on the topics of Reflecting Faith courses. The format can vary according to your needs—in-person or online, single day or multiple-day, or hybrid.

Hear what others are saying about using Reflecting Faith courses with cohorts from their universities:

*"There is simply nothing else available for Christian faculty development that even begins to approach what Reflecting Faith offers. It builds community among faculty, helps them engage with Scripture and Christian thinking in fresh ways, and encourages them to take what they learn and apply it thoughtfully to how they teach. It has been enthusiastically embraced across our university as the very best way to do Christ-centered faculty development."* Dr. Todd L. Lake, V.P. for Faith-Based Engagement & Church Relations at Belmont University

*"Taking a Reflecting Faith course has made me to think deeply how to connect faith in my course. To teach from a Christian perspective has been my passion, yet through the reading, discussion, and testimonies of fellow practitioners through the Reflecting Faith course have deepened and widened my understanding and practices. There is always something to learn and challenge our current practices to be more intentional in what we do as a Christian lecturer. The course setting is interactive even though delivered online. Also, since I joined the course with my colleagues, we can continue the discussion even when we have finished the course."* Oh Yen Nie, Dean of Teachers College at Pelita Harapan University, Indonesia

The cost for using Reflecting Faith as a professional faculty development resource is negotiated based on needs and institutional resources. Contact de Vries Institute director [Matt Lundberg](#) to discuss options. Learn more about [cohort registration](#).



### DEVELOPING CHRISTIAN SCHOLARS

Is your university or seminary seeking rigorous faculty development related to the intersection between faith and learning? Reflecting Faith courses are designed to meet this need.

### REGISTERING COHORTS

Courses can be taken by individuals or groups to enhance the depth of faith integration in teaching and research. Having groups at the same university study together strengthens institutional culture and enriches campus conversation.



## Calvin Adjunct Faculty Take

## Reflecting Faith Courses



This fall, we offered two Reflecting Faith courses to adjunct faculty on Calvin University's campus. These part-time faculty members enjoyed the opportunity to think deeply about how they can meaningfully integrate faith in the higher education setting. They also appreciated getting to know colleagues across the campus.

As Cara Brooks, an adjunct faculty in public health, shared:

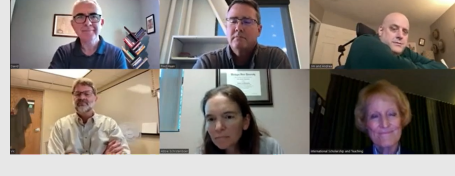
*"This course was a great experience for me as a remote adjunct - it felt like well-conducted staff development and meeting some of my colleagues all at once. I also was really pleased with how deep we went into the topic! I learned so much, and the resources brought in - from scripture, to traditional and then more contemporary readings, to video interviews with faculty - made for a really well-rounded curriculum. In the comments shared between classmates, I encountered further resources I have incorporated into one of my courses and I feel my encounters with my students will be positively impacted by what I took away from the class. I have a better understanding of how I can help to cultivate and encourage the best in them and how I am called to approach teaching as an image bearer, held to a high standard set by God, tasked with educating and stewarding other image bearers."*

We look forward to continuing investing in Calvin's adjunct faculty, this spring through a course on Hospitality to the Stranger. We would be delighted to discuss how you might be able to implement a similar experience for your adjunct faculty.

## Faith and STEM Teaching Event

In October, the de Vries Institute joined with the Kuyers Institute and the International Network for Christian Higher Education to organize an online workshop focused on how Christian faith can inform teaching in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM). A number of panelists from Trinity Christian College and Calvin University shared their ideas and pedagogical experiments with registrants from around the world.

[Read an article](#) about the event written by the newest de Vries Institute staff member, Calvin University student Isabelle Fang.



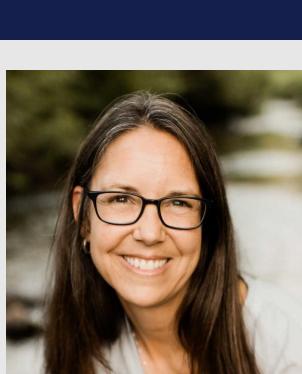
## Integrated Education in a Reductionist Age - Call for Presentations

Mark your calendars for October 10-12. The de Vries Institute is working with the International Network for Christian Higher Education and the Kuyers Institute for Christian Teaching and Learning to plan an academic conference on the theme of ["Integrated Education in a Reductionist Age."](#) The overarching goal of the conference is to explore ways that Christian education can resist the fragmentation of our age (e.g., little bits of knowledge wrenched from frameworks of meaning, technological advance without ethical guidance, social media bereft of genuine community, university education reduced to a mere means for greater earning power, etc.). How can we design forms of higher education that address the big picture of life and engage students as whole persons?

The plenary speakers will be:

- Katie Kresser (Seattle Pacific University)
- Justin Ariel Bailey (Dordt University)
- Matthew Kaemingk (Fuller Theological Seminary)

We invite proposals for presentations and panels. See [more information](#).



Julie Wildschut

## Reading Recommendations

One of the core 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 professors participate in a program of mentorship, guided reading, cohort discussion, and independent reading and writing.

We recently asked one of our 2023-24 4th Year participants to share a reading suggestion from her time in the program:

- **Julie Wildschut** - Assistant Professor, Engineering Department, Project Engineer, Plaster Creek Stewards  
*"My book suggestion would be J. Richard Middleton's [A New Heaven and a New Earth: Reclaiming Biblical Eschatology](#). In some ways it is a typical creation, fall, redemption, restoration patterned book, but it includes so many biblical references, support, and counter arguments for this framework and was especially helpful in providing language for the cultural/creation mandate and Reformed eschatology."*

## Other Calvin University Centers & Institutes: Clean Water Institute

Nearly a billion people around the world have no access to clean drinking water.

Every year, 3.6 million die as a result—most of them children. The [Clean Water Institute](#) (CWI) does more than just respond to this critical global need; it also empowers Calvin University students from a wide range of disciplines to expand their perspective and enact renewal in every corner of God's kingdom.



Calvin's Clean Water Institute's mission is to unleash discerning students and researchers to improve the availability to clean water around the globe. Its vision is a world saturated with impactful Christians who are wise stewards of water.

CWI is committed to an attainable goal. "It's relatively easy to find water and treat water; the hard part is maintaining water treatment and making it sustainable. That's what makes the multidisciplinary efforts of CWI so valuable," says David Wunder, the founding director of the Clean Water Institute. Current director Douglas Vander Griend observes that "there's always a technical aspect" to water treatment projects. But he points out that expertise in business, social work, and international relations is also needed when working to provide water solutions.

By supporting projects, research, and learning dedicated to real, lasting solutions for water safety, CWI is not only addressing individual situations, but generating a steady stream of competent, inspired young people to address water problems. Drawing on students and ideas from all different disciplines – engineering, public health, global development, social work – the institute works for transformation not just in the communities it serves, but in the students and faculty involved as well.

## De Vries Institute Staff Highlight: Isabelle Fang

Our team is small but mighty. Meet our newest member, Isabelle Fang, a Calvin University student who recently joined dVI.

### How long have you been at Calvin? What activities are you involved in?

I have been at Calvin for one semester now, pursuing a major in Computer Science. Outside of the classroom, I am engaged in RHET (Residence Hall Executive Team) in BHT (Bolt-Heyns-Timmer Residence Hall), collaborating to implement community-building events for the hall. Additionally, I've taken on a role as a tutor for ESL in my high school, helping other students in their learning process of English.

### What is your role for the de Vries Institute?

My student assistant role with the de Vries Institute involves providing clerical support, writing articles, doing research, and helping with social media.

### Why are you glad to be at a Christian university?

Being part of a Christian university has provided me with a unique perspective different from other universities. I enjoy the integration of faith and learning, creating a faithful approach to understanding the world and our neighbors. Additionally, I hope to find my calling from God, and his will for me as a goal.

### Tell us about your life before Calvin.

I was born and raised in China. My brother and I are both pursuing our college education here in the United States. It's been an exciting journey for both of us exploring a new cultural experience and connecting learning and faith without limits. Growing up in China has instilled in me an understanding of diverse perspectives and the interconnectedness of our world.

Welcome, Isabelle! We're glad to have you on board.



Isabelle Fang

## Stay Informed by Following Us on Social Media

Wish you had known that we offered a course for a group of faculty across the globe in January? Want to be the first to find out about conference dates? Want to gain helpful tips taken from Reflecting Faith courses?

Follow us on social media to get updates and information between newsletters!

- [LinkedIn](#)
- [Facebook](#)

We look forward to staying in touch with you regularly through these pages.

## Contact us

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

