



Contact

ISSN 1521-9631 Vol. 35 No. 1

INSIDE

Network News

2

Handong Global University Enriches Cooperation with INCHE India

Africa Region

5

Asia-Oceania Region

6

Latin America Region

7

Europe Region

8



North America Region

9

On September 1-7, a remarkable and immediate follow-up occurred after the June 2023 INCHE Asia Oceania conference in Korea. Mr. Sungmin Kim, Director of the Office of International Affairs for Handong Global University, visited several INCHE India members in the cities of Chennai, Madurai, Coimbatore, and Vellore, India. He also talked with additional Christian colleges in India that actively are considering INCHE membership.

Special Book Feature

10

The culmination of the week was signing a formal Memorandum of Understanding between Handong Global University and India's Christian colleges that are affiliated with INCHE. This ceremony occurred in the principal's office of CSI Bishop Appasamy College of Arts and Sciences, a long-standing INCHE member since the 1980s.

Resources and Books

14

Those present for the signing ceremony included: Dr. Jemimah Winston, the Principal of Bishop Appasamy College; Dr. Daniel Ezhilarasu, INCHE India coordinator, The Rt. Rev. Timothy Ravinder, Bishop for the CSI Coimbatore Diocese and Chairman of the Christian colleges in the Coimbatore Diocese; Mr. Sungmin Kim, Director of Office of International Affairs for Handong Global University, and Mr. Henry Maris, Principal of Nazareth College of Arts and Sciences. The week was ably supported by Henry Maris as a primary organizer of this extensive itinerary. As the week ended, Daniel Ezhilarasu noted, "The good Lord is active in all our efforts. Hallelujah!"

For a list of the colleges that have signed the INCHE India MOU with Handong Global University, see Network News on page 4.

INCHE Strategic Plan:

Priorities for the Years Ahead

From May 2021 through May 2023, the INCHE Board of Directors with INCHE regional coordinators considered the International Network for Christian Higher Education's future. The Board reviewed INCHE origins, goals, leadership, and resources. Then, they decided on strategic priorities through 2026. This is the first of a few articles that describe the INCHE Strategic Plan. This newsletter issue focuses on INCHE history, strengths, challenges, and core strategies through 2026. Subsequent newsletters will describe priorities for each of the INCHE five global regions.

History

In 1975, this network arose from an international conference organized by South African Christian philosophers. Gradually, it matured from its aspirations in the 1970s and 1980s. By the mid-1990s, it had become functional, promising, and more systemic. Network leaders wrote substantial articles about Christian higher education and published books that originated in network conferences. Network growth was considerable in the late 1990s and early 2000s. During 2011-2012, due to financial difficulties and a leadership transition, network development was on hold for a brief time. In 2012, Dr. Mwenda Ntarangwi, a Calvin University professor of sociology/anthropology, began to refresh the network in effective and efficient ways. In September 2017, the current director began. In January 2019, the network name was changed from the International Association for the Promotion of Christian Higher Education (IAPCHE) to the International Network for Christian Higher Education (INCHE).



Strengths and Opportunities

The INCHE Board of Directors noted:

- ORIGINS: By beginning in Africa almost fifty years ago, concerns about neo-colonialism are blunted while global trust and goodwill were developing.
- BOARD: A worldwide INCHE board of directors, in place for at least two decades, keeps the network apprised of many worldwide trends and concerns.
- IDENTITY: The ecumenical and evangelical identity of INCHE keeps growing. The network benefits from many Christian expressions while appreciating its roots in Re-

formed Christian theological traditions.

- AGES: Network members span four generations of leaders that blend knowledge, wisdom, and connections with fresh energy and recent experience.
- QUALITY: The network engages high quality Christian scholars who articulate how Christian faith should be integrated in many fields of learning and practice.
- SCOPE: INCHE has members on six continents. There are few networks with such global breadth.
- EXPERTISE: Network leaders to how to create conferences, webinars, newsletters, publications, grant initiatives, and partnerships that encourage membership.
- CONNECTIONS: A network hub office at Calvin University provides connections with many Christian scholars, particularly through university centers/institutes and Calvin Theological Seminary.
- COLLABORATION: INCHE works with other networks to support a rich set of Christian higher education opportunities.
- OPPORTUNITY: National governments in many Majority World nations have limited resources to support public higher education for a growing number of youth. Instead, they provide incentives and support for private colleges and universities. This is an opportunity for Christian higher education.
- TECHNOLOGY: Technology is creating new options for global engagement. Such tools improve communication across varied languages and allow professional development for Christian educators with less travel cost and time. Periodic face-to-face engagement remains essential but can be balanced with digital engagement.

Challenges

- POPULATIONS: In some regions Protestant churches are decreasing in numbers and influence, as is the percentage of youth. These factors reduce young adult populations interested in Christian higher education.
- COMPLEXITY: Within INCHE regions, there is an immense variety of languages, cultures, and academic standards that add complexity to our work.
- REGULATIONS: National standards and regulations control curricula for many Christian universities and shape their admission policies. This affects how Christian faith is woven into teaching and learning.
- DIGITAL RESOURCES: Digital capacity across the world varies greatly due to differences in national priorities and resources. This affects digitally-based professional development access.

INCHE NETWORK NEWS

- SCHOLARLY RESOURCES:** Support for Christian scholarship is uneven. Some faculty scholars have little time for research and writing; and they must expend great energy to publish their ideas. Regional journals may discriminate against the inclusion of Christian articles; and most online Christian scholarship is produced from the west.
- TURNOVER:** Senior leadership turnover in Christian universities is a challenge. When administrative and faculty leaders are appointed for limited terms, appreciation for and knowledge of INCHE can be lost in transitions.



Regionalization: A Core Strategy for the Years Ahead

Supporting and building the underlying health in each of the five INCHE regions is essential. It is with and for our regional members that action must occur. They need on-the-ground strategies that provide tangible benefits. Given great diversity, there is no one-size-fits-all strategy for worldwide work. Instead, strategies must fit specifics for each region; and within them, they must fit particular contexts and cultures. INCHE must **enhance regional leadership and designate regional champions.**

Champions may work across or within a worldwide region. The expectation is that designated regional champions will support at least two dedicated encounters, in person or online, in their region per year. The INCHE hub office will expand social media support for regional champions. With resource constraints, there can be no direct salary support except in the form of honoraria or consulting fees when warranted. Yet the INCHE hub office will support the costs of materials and travel for such champions when they are pre-authorized. If a region, together with its institutional members, would choose to provide additional funds to support a part-time paid coordinator, this is possible by agreement and with related surcharges among regional institutional members.

The INCHE hub office will support, train, and encourage our regional champions. They will have access to educational development benefits via webinars, conferences, and other professional development initiatives that build our core competencies in international engagement, teaching across cultures, and education that is distinctly Christian. Regional champions will be eligible to partici-

pate in global INCHE events for which registration and travel are supported.

Network-wide Goals



In addition to regional champions, INCHE will weave regions into a cohesive whole across geographic and cultural boundaries. The core mission statement of INCHE states that the network exists to serve "Jesus as Lord by fostering the development of Christian higher education worldwide."

Given our worldwide network goals, INCHE will:

- ENABLE** members to grow in the depth of their Christian understanding of and commitment to Biblical and theological frameworks.
- REFRAME** practices in teaching, learning, and scholarship so that Christian educators realize how these specific endeavors are shaped by our faith.
- ENHANCE** knowledge and wisdom about how we cultivate the organizational cultures of Christian universities, colleges, and institutes for honest, charitable, and joyful service in the church, the academy, and society.
- INSPIRE** our educational communities to develop members that engage their contexts with Christian respect for people of multiple faith traditions, with a passion for social equity and justice, with a love of God's creation, and with a spirit of reconciliation.
- GROW** our knowledge and skill as Christian leaders in higher education, so that good leadership deepens institutional stewardship and effectiveness.

The overall strategy of INCHE is professional growth and development for faculty and administrative leaders in Christian universities and colleges that is distinctly Christian. We will do this by developing regional champions while retaining a focus on shared worldwide goals.

INCHE NETWORK NEWS

INCHE Welcomes a New Affiliate Member



Recently, the *International Association for Biblical Education* based in Jagdalpur, India joined INCHE as a new affiliate member. This association provides support and accountability via accreditation for its members, most of whom are in Africa and

Asia. They have developed a circle of fellowship and encouragement with the foundations of Christian faith in our Trinitarian God as well as the death and resurrection of Jesus as our Savior. The association is a registered non-profit under the Indian Trust Act in their region; and it is distinct from an organization by the same name based in the United States.

The association's overall goal is to support Jesus' Great Commission by strengthening theological institutions. Their objectives are to furnish a spiritual fellowship and mutual helpfulness among members, assist in offering Biblical education that affects students wholistically, and organize seminars, conferences and leadership development training that helps Biblical institutions for higher education maintain high academic standards.

INCHE welcomes the International Association for Biblical Education based in Jagdalpur to affiliate membership.



Meet INCHE's New Administrative Assistant

Who is on the other end of your emails? Who is reminding you to pay your dues? Who is updating your conference information on the website? Who is formatting the very newsletter you are reading? Meet Heather Altena, who started in August as INCHE's new administrative assistant.

A graduate of Calvin University, Heather recently moved back to the Grand Rapids area after thirty years away on the west coasts of Canada and the US and most recently Chicago. She has been working in Christian education for all of that time, and still teaches secondary school English in the afternoons.

She is excited to be part of what God is doing in higher education around the world and looks forward to interacting with and learning from INCHE members.

INCHE Membership Dues for 2023-2024

INCHE membership dues are essential to support our network; and each year INCHE requests dues for the membership year that runs from October of the current year to October of the next year. So, soon we will request each institutional, associate, and affiliate member to pay dues as approved by the INCHE Board of Directors.

The INCHE Board has four factors that guide membership dues: global inflation rates; the relative economic strength of a region; student enrollment levels; and dues equity among INCHE members. All these factors are considered in setting annual INCHE dues.

By early October 2023, the network office will request that institutions and organizations provide their annual 2023-2024 dues payment in November 2023. Each member will receive an email communication with an attached invoice. Further details about dues payment options will be included with that email.

Looking ahead, in mid-January 2024 individual INCHE members will be reminded to provide their annual dues contribution for the new calendar year.

Each year, INCHE membership dues provide about 80% of the network's annual operating budget. Thank you in advance for your contributions!

Colleges sign the INCHE India MOU with Handong Global University (from p. 1)



Appasamy College of Education, Coimbatore
Bishop Appasamy College of Arts and Sciences, Coimbatore

Bishop Heber College, Trichy

Bishop Solomon Doraiswamy College, Karur

CSI College of Commerce, Dharwad

CSI College of Engineering, Ketti, Coimbatore

CSI Engineering College, Thuthukudi

CSI Nursing College, Pasumalai, Madurai

Kittel Arts College, Dharwad

Kittel Science Degree College, Dharwad

Lady Doak College, Madurai

Nazareth College of Arts and Sciences, Chennai

Nazareth College of Education, Chennai

Nazareth Margoschis College, Thuthukudi

Pope's College, Sawyerpuram, Thuthukudi

The American College, Madurai

Voorhees College, Vellore

AFRICA REGION

Bowen University Leaders Confer with Calvin University



During July 2023 three Bowen University leaders from Nigeria visited with Calvin University leaders in Michigan. They included Vice Chancellor Joshua Ogunwole, Pro Chancellor & Governing Council Chair, Deaconess Joan Olatoyosi, and Dr. Israel Akanji, President of the Nigerian Baptist Convention and Visitor to Bowen University. This Bowen University team spent several days cultivating relationships with Calvin University leaders. They were interested in faculty development initiatives that enrich a commitment to the university's Christian mission as well as programs in areas such as engineering, nursing, and the sciences. This connection originally developed through a nursing research collaboration between Adejoke Ayoola, now Dean of the Calvin University School of Health, and Dr. Adenike Olaogun, Dean of the Nursing School at Bowen University. Through visits supported by a Carnegie Teaching and Learning grant, these two women leaders visited each other's universities. This led to Bowen University's membership in INCHE and then to this July's visit to Calvin University.

At a delightful dinner hosted by Dr. Wiebe Boer, this President of Calvin University and Dr. Akanji discovered that they had attended high schools in Jos, Nigeria that were sports rivals. As other Calvin University leaders mingled with these Bowen University guests, President Boer and Dr. Akanji also added exchanges in Hausa to the evening's festivities.

Bowen University has more than 5000 students; and it is the largest Baptist university in Nigeria. During more than four years of INCHE membership, this university has participated in INCHE conferences and professional development initiatives. It was a joy to meet the university's leaders in person while they compared notes about academic programs and institutional mission with Calvin University.

Daystar University is Hosted by Calvin Seminary and Calvin University

In August 2023, three Daystar University leaders from Kenya visited Calvin Theological Seminary and Calvin University for several days. This became an opportunity for mutual explorations of emerging Daystar University strategies in the areas of Christian missions and theology, nursing, and prison education. The interest in prison education became a higher priority when Vice Chancellor Laban Ayiro visited the Calvin Prison Program earlier in the year. He encouraged the August visiting team to engage in additional conversations about Christian education for prison-bounded populations.

The August team included Dr. Faith Nguru, Deputy Vice-Chancellor for Academics, Research, and Student Life; Dr. Bernard Boyo, Professor of Theology; and Dr. Susan Njuguna, Dean of the Nursing School. This team rekindled relationships with Dr. Margaret Mwenda, chief operating officer of Calvin Seminary and Calvin University faculty leaders, relationships developed through student and faculty exchanges over many years.

The Daystar University team also visited Minneapolis, Minnesota U.S.A. to receive gift books for their university donated by Dr. Donald and Mrs. Faye Smith, two founders of Daystar University. In 1973, the Smiths had offered a five-week International Institute for Christian Communication. That institute was a catalyst for Daystar's founding. By 1977, Wheaton College (Illinois, USA) had a partnership with Daystar to support an accredited M.A. in communications, producing the first B.A. degree graduates in 1984. The Smith's legacy now has grown into a university with more than 5000 students on two campuses.



ASIA-OCEANIA REGION

INCHE India Members Enhance Research and Publication Skills

From September 28-30, INCHE India universities and colleges will equip fellow INCHE scholars with solid foundations for research, scientific writing, and manuscript publishing. This is directed by INCHE member Madras Christian College, whose leaders have made research integrity and skills a capacity building initiative in their own context. A consortium of faculty across academic disciplines regularly organises both online and offline webinars and faculty development programs for faculty scholars to foster high quality research. Now through the pending workshop, they will share their expertise.

In planning for this workshop, the CSI College of Engineering in Ketti, Nilgris offered to host the occasion on their campus. In excellent cooperation with the church, Rt. Rev. Timothy Ravinder, the Bishop for their Coimbatore region, supported this effort. He had become familiar with INCHE while attending the Asia-Oceania conference at Handong Global University.

Through the program, faculty members will :

- understand the nuances and ethics of scientific writing and research.
- utilize a new awareness of and access to research databases and metrics.
- develop a manuscript to be refined for publication.
- identify quality indexed journals by staying away from predatory and cloned journals.
- understand manuscript submission to an indexed journal.

Each workshop lecture will include overall insights along with hands-on one-on-one training in the various nuances of scientific writing and publishing. On completion of the workshop, researchers will have in-depth knowledge about writing a manuscript and will be able to identify an indexed journal for publication.

Through the work of Dr. Daniel Ezhilarasu, INCHE India Coordinator, cooperation between the diocesan bishop, CSI College of Engineering, and Madras Christian College came together well to make this important workshop a possibility. INCHE India members are sharing their expertise and resources with each other to strengthen Christian higher education. The research and scholarship arising from India's Christian colleges will become more established because of this effort. To register for this workshop in India, INCHE members should contact Dr. Ezhilarasu.

Two Korean Universities Deepen International Christian Ties

Baekseok University and Handong Global University, two private Christian universities in South Korea and INCHE members, have each signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with Calvin University. These relationships date back nearly two decades in collaborations to foster Christian higher education in Korea. The MOUs encourage further cooperation in the exchange of scholars and students, sharing information and academic materials, cultural exchanges, short-term academic programs, and joint research programs. (Based on 6-27-23 Calvin news story [here](#).)



Baekseok University, south of Seoul, has approximately 15,000 students. Since 1976, the university has cultivated global leaders with skills, wisdom, and character, rooted in a Christian worldview and Reformed theology. Rev. Chang Jong-hyun, founder and president of Baekseok University, notes: "Education involves the process of transforming an individual into a person of integrity and faith, known as 'saram-dawoon saram.' Moral and ethical education alone is insufficient to achieve this transformation. Only through the Word of God can education truly transform individuals and invigorate their spiritual lives," said. "We are thrilled to embark on this journey through the MOU, as it presents new opportunities to strengthen and expand our partnership with Calvin University. We anticipate that this agreement will enhance greater engagement and exchange in both educational and spiritual realms among students and faculty of Baekseok and Calvin University."

Handong Global University with students and faculty from more than 50 nations, located in Pohang, South Korea, was founded to educate global leaders who change the world through integrity, neighborly love, and a spirit of service in Christ. Dosung Choi, Handong Global University president, said "Cooperation among Christian universities will hold great significance in the future, and the partnership of Calvin University and HGU will serve as an important model."

LATIN-AMERICA REGION

La VIII Consulta Latinoamericana: ¡Regístrese pronto!

Este 3 de noviembre de 2023 se realizará la octava consulta de INCHE América Latina, en modalidad virtual. El tema a explorar en este encuentro en español es "Incidencia pública del protestantismo en clave global: una mirada latinoamericana desde la educación superior".

Regístrese aquí: <https://shorturl.at/kvBG1> para invertir en este día de aprendizaje de diversos eruditos cristianos. La cuota de inscripción a la conferencia es de \$20 USD.

Los objetivos de esta consulta son:

[1]. Establecer un diálogo Norte-Sur dentro de la educación superior cristiana sobre las proyecciones del protestantismo en la esfera pública y sus consecuencias sociales, locales e internacionales.

[2]. Analizar la proyección de las iglesias protestantes en la esfera pública y sus consecuencias, especialmente en los campos de la política, la economía, los derechos humanos y la seguridad ciudadana.

[3]. Valorar el papel de las redes internacionales religiosas y eclesiales, así como de la Educación Superior Cristiana [CHE], para el compromiso y el liderazgo de los laicos en el ámbito público.

Los principales oradores invitados son el Dr. Rudolf Von Sinner, de Brasil, en representación del Sur, y el Dr. David Koysis, de Canadá, en representación del Norte. Puede encontrar más información sobre los oradores plenarios en la [página del evento INCHE](#).

Una amplia variedad de académicos en América Latina y América del Norte contribuirán a cuatro paneles. Los oradores y los temas se describen completamente en <https://inche.one/panels-and-speakers-la-2023>. Reserve su lugar para esta importante oportunidad de crecer como pensador cristiano.



The VIII Latin American Consultation: Register soon!

On November 3, 2023, the eighth consultation of INCHE Latin America will be held, in virtual mode. The theme to be explored in this Spanish language gathering is "Public Incidence of Protestantism in a global key: a Latin American view from higher education".

Register [here](#) to invest in this day of learning from multiple Christian scholars. The conference registration fee is \$20 USD.

Through this occasion INCHE Latin America will:

[1]. Establish a North-South dialogue within Christian higher education regarding the projections of Protestantism in the public sphere and its social, local, and international consequences.

[2]. Analyze the projection of Protestant churches in the public sphere and its consequences, especially in the fields of politics, the economy, human rights, and citizen security.

[3]. Value the role of international faith-based and ecclesial networks, as well as Christian Higher Education [CHE], for lay engagement and leadership in the public arena.

The main guest speakers are Dr. Rudolf Von Sinner, from Brazil, representing the South, and Dr. David Koysis, from Canada, representing the North. More information on the plenary speakers can be found at the [INCHE Event Page](#).

A wide variety of scholars in both Latin and North America will contribute to four panels. Speakers and topics are described fully at <https://inche.one/panels-and-speakers-la-2023>. Reserve your place for this important opportunity to grow as a Christian thinker.

EUROPE REGION

J. Selye University Emphasizes International Cooperation

Internationalization plays an essential role for INCHE member, J. Selye University, to develop international cooperation, research, and education. Founded twenty years ago by the Slovakian government, this university is the only independent legal entity in Slovakia to provide academic study to ethnic minority Hungarians in their language. The mission is to offer high quality study at B.A., M.A., and PhD levels and to boost research while respecting universal ethical norms and ensuring freedom of thought. A goal is increasing educational qualifications of the Hungarian minority population to reduce unemployment and for social and economic development.

To strengthen and support this, J. Selye University has sought membership in several international organizations. The academic staff and researchers at J. Selye University are represented in the following six international professional organizations:

European University Association. With 850 members in 47 countries, this network influences EU higher education policies while supporting European university partnerships.

Danube Rectors Conference. About 70 universities in the Danube Region focus on the development of tertiary education. .

European University Information System-EUNIS. This system provides space for Slovak universities to cooperate in information systems and their applications.

European Association of Erasmus Coordinators (EAEC). More than 140 members enable information and experience among the European ERASMUS+ programme coordinators. They support the mobility of EU students as well as that of academic and administrative staff.

Magna Carte Universitatum. This network supports academic freedom and institutional autonomy as guidelines for good governance and university self-understanding.

INCHE. INCHE is their sixth network for international cooperation in Europe. It supports many of the goals listed above: enhanced research and innovation; governmental cooperation; attention to information systems; coordinated mobility for students and educational leaders; and



the principles of academic freedom and institutional autonomy. We do so because our world belongs to God where we are charged to explore the wonders and potential of creation; are called to serve humanity through higher educational standards; and are invested in sustainable development.

INCHE applauds the international vision of J. Selye University and is pleased to be listed as one of their six important partners for internationalization.

Romanian University President Connects to Calvin University Business Faculty

In August, Dr. Sebastian Vaduva and his wife Lois visited with INCHE and with Calvin University School of Business leaders. Dr. Vaduva is the President of Emanuel University in Oradea, Romania, a Romanian language university with Baptist origins. Initially, INCHE director Shirley Roels met Dr. Vaduva shortly before the INCHE Europe conference in April 2022.

Dr. Vaduva, a Romanian American, has an M.B.A. degree and a Ph.D. in Entrepreneurial Public Management. Over several years, he has been building Emanuel University programs while experimenting with online courses about Christian business management and entrepreneurship. Lois Vaduva, has been teaching and building an advanced music therapy curriculum for the university. Both are deeply committed to Christian higher education.

During the Calvin University visit, Dr. Vaduva explored potential opportunities for his Emanuel University faculty members to contribute to international Christian business scholarship. Recently, he has begun a journal titled *The Journal of Ethics in Entrepreneurship and Technology* while he explores other relevant channels for Christian scholarship.

INCHE looks forward to further collaboration with Dr. Sebastian and Lois Vaduva.



NORTH-AMERICA REGION

Registration is Open for the Baylor University Symposium!



The Baylor University Institute of Faith and Learning, an INCHE member, has opened registration for its October 25-27 symposium on faith and culture. This year's symposium theme is "Called Together in an Age of Discord."

During three days, participants will hear from research scholars as plenary speakers on this topic and participate in concurrent presentation sessions. A description of this robust set of confirmed speakers and the conference schedule is available on [Baylor University's website](#). Together, participants will seek ways in which people of faith can counter a discordant society.

Registration is available [here](#). Because of heightened hotel room demand in Waco during the symposium week, participants are encouraged to register and make lodging arrangements as soon as possible.

Global Studies Leadership Transition at Wheaton College

Wheaton College has announced a significant transition in the leadership of its global studies programs. With the completion of the 2022-2023 academic year, Dr. Laura Montgomery, Dean of Global Studies and Experiential Learning for more than a decade, retired from this post. For continued support of Wheaton's global studies programs, Deborah Kim has been appointed as the Executive Director of Global Programs and Studies.

Deborah Kim joined Wheaton College in 2015 as director of study abroad. Kim, a Wheaton College alumna who had studied history, supported the college expansion of global study opportunities and will now sustain this effort. She has many years of experience in study abroad programs, including her year teaching English in South Korea and as Director of Student Programs for the Council for Christian Colleges & Universities. Kim hopes that students view study abroad, not as tourists, but as part of the whole package of their education.



Nagel Institute Welcomes New Director

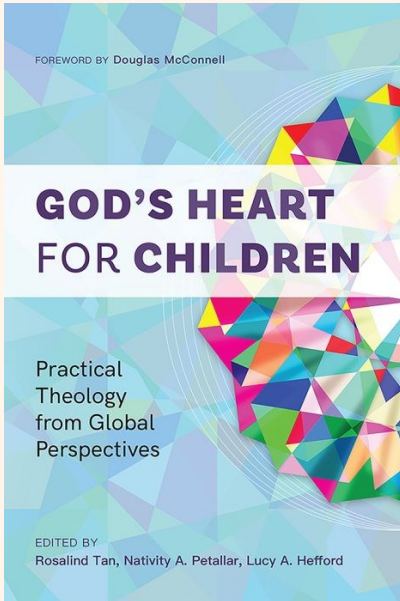
Dr. Damaris Parsitau has arrived as the incoming director of the Nagel Institute for the Study of World Christianity, an educational research institute of Calvin University. Dr. Parsitau is the President of the African Association for the Study of Religion in Africa and its Diaspora (AASR). She has been a reading and senior lecturer of religion and gender studies at Egerton University in Kenya, and a visiting professor at many universities in Africa and beyond. Most recently, she served as the Country Director and CEO of the British Institute in Eastern Africa, Kenya, directing research programs, managing institution operations, and providing leadership to staff and researchers.



Dr. Parsitau has over 25 years of experience in teaching, research, and leadership in academia and policy institutions in Africa and beyond. She has conducted numerous research projects and published over 70 book chapters and peer-reviewed journal articles. Her interests include World/African Christianity, Evangelical and Pentecostal Christianity, and intersections with women's leadership, gender politics, and civil engagement. She is a thought leader in Girls' Education policy and publishes opinion pieces, blogs, and briefs dedicated to strengthening education and fostering effective policy. She has also been a leadership coach, mentor, social justice educator, and gender equality advocate.

On October 5, the Nagel Institute will welcome her formally to this leadership post with a day of celebration and networking.

SPECIAL BOOK FEATURE



God's Heart for Children: Practical Theology from Global Perspectives

Edited by Rosalind Tan, Nativity A. Petallar, Lucy A. Hefford

Langham Global Library, May, 2022

From [Langham Publishing](#): In the New Testament, Jesus is explicit in communicating God's heart for children. Yet what does it look like for that heart to encounter the contextual realities of life in the twenty-first century?

This book explores the theological implications and practical realities of ministry with children in a globalized world. Affirming eight core beliefs regarding the place of children in creation – that they are created with dignity and intended to be placed in families, cared for in community, advocated by society, secured in hope, affirmed in God's church, included in God's mission, and engaged in creation care – this book traces the impact of such far-reaching issues as displacement, climate change, human trafficking, persecution, and gender discrimination on childhood development. Written by over twenty contributors from around the world, each section roots its premise in contextual theology, examines the implications for praxis, provides a case study, and includes questions for discussion and reflection.

About the Editors

NATIVITY A. PETALLAR has worked with children in both church and academic settings for more than twenty years. She has a DTh in Christian education and practical ministry from Asia Baptist Graduate Theological Seminary and currently serves as the associate dean of PhD studies at the Asia-Pacific Nazarene Theological Seminary, Taytay, Philippines.



LUCY A. HEFFORD is an educator with experience in intercultural ministry and development. She has an MTh from the University of Oxford, UK, and is a PhD candidate at Fuller Theological Seminary, California, USA, where she is researching child participation in theologizing. She also serves as a researcher of theology and practice for the Viva Network, a Christian NGO working with children internationally.



ROSALIND TAN is a project consultant, trainer, lecturer, and researcher who is actively involved in community development, spearheading preschools for indigenous children in rural and urban settings. She has a PhD in education from AGST Alliance, where she serves as education director.



SPECIAL FEATURE

Shirley Roels: This book is a sequel to the book, *Understanding God's Heart for Children: Toward a Biblical Framework*, that was published in 2007. What prompted you, as co-editors, to develop this new book published in 2022? In what ways does it connect to the 2007 book? And in what ways is it meant to complement that publication?

Lucy Hefford: As I said at the UK book launch last year, our prayer for this publication is that it will be a rich and valuable resource in itself, but also a rallying cry. We, the worldwide church, the body of Christ, must do better at listening to children and at having contextually relevant theologies of children. That way, *God's Heart for Children*, like the front cover of the book, can be captured and reflected by people of all nationalities, with all the different colours and insights they bring.



SR: Your book has eight themes, one per section. How did these eight themes become the “spine” for your entire book?

LH: The first seven themes (that children are created with dignity and intended to be placed in families, cared for in community, advocated by society, secured in hope, affirmed in God's church, included in God's mission) follow the same pattern as the 'Understanding God's Heart for Children' framework.¹ We decided to add the final theme, 'engaged in creation care' because of the reality that children are the most at risk people group to the effects of climate chaos. This will be the topic of our [free webinar on 14th November 2023](#) for which INCHE members are warmly invited to [sign up](#).

SR: Each of the eight book sections explores an important Christian theme regarding global children. Each section discusses a critical issue, Biblical and theological reflections on that issue, and a case study of current practices by Christians that addresses the issue. Why did you organize each section in this way?



LH: The decision to structure 'God's Heart for Children' in this way was in an effort to let the little children lead us. (A reference to Isaiah 11:6; 'And a little child shall lead them'). This methodology/ structure begins with the realities and experiences of children, and then moves through contextual theological reflections to practical case studies. At every point, we wanted the realities of children to be central, to be honored and to be the catalyst for reflection.

An excerpt from *God's Heart for Children: Practical Theology from Global Perspectives* edited by **Rosalind Tan** (Malaysia), **Nativity A. Petallar** (Philippines), and **Lucy A. Hefford** (Oxford). [Langham Publishing](#)

A child is valued and treasured by all in the African context, and community responsibility in caregiving is envisioned. According to John Mbiti, an individual does not and cannot exist alone, but corporately. Traditionally, a child is secluded for a period of time after birth and later exposed to the community. During this introduction to the community, the baby's hair is shaved as a sign of purification, separation, and newness. The child's integration into the community is marked with a celebration as a sign of joy which involves feasting, dancing, rejoicing, and congratulating the mother and family. This celebration is a sign of joy but also a renewal of the life of the community. These activities acknowledge that a child is valued by the community and is officially integrated into the community. The child belongs to the community and is to be nurtured in this context.

Since a child is dependent on the community for care and nurture, the community must make, create, or produce the individual, for the individual depends on the corporate group. The centrality of the community in making an individual cannot be understated. Mbiti argues that existence of a person is dependent on the community, and the individual can only say, "I am, because we are; and since we are therefore I am." In Mbiti's visualization the existence of human beings, in this case children, is fully dependent on the community where they exist. The functionality of the community is dependent on the members within it and vice versa. Harmony of individuals within the environment is therefore critical, but individuals must also enhance the harmony of the environment or community within which they live. I see this harmony from a biblical lens and thus worthy to embrace. The creation account in Genesis 1 describes the goodness of creation and the harmony within it. It is recorded, "God saw all that he had made, and it was very good" (Gen 1:31). Clearly, God made everything good, and as human beings we must strive to achieve the goodness of creation but also enhance our responsibility for stewarding this creation (Gen 1:28).

SPECIAL FEATURE

SR: As examples, can you describe one or two of your Christian themes, how you expand them Biblically and theologically, how they connect to specific practices?

LH: The chapter on "Placed in Families," begins with a discussion on "Global Critical Issue," and highlights a global dilemma of children who are without homes

("outside the door"). The section ends with a call to bring in these children who are mostly living on the streets and be counted as family. Section Two is a



biblical and theological reflection of what it means for children to be placed in families. The section discusses Filipino contextual theology and then proposes the "Kinsman-Redeemer" model for responding to this need. Section Three is a case study of how a faith-based organization intervened to bring the children off the streets and into homes. Hence, there is a flow in reading from macro to micro, from a global concern to a biblical-theological reflection, and then an action. The three sections form a comprehensive narrative.

SR: Christian families, churches, and communities can find themselves at odds with the United Nations' Millennium Development goals. Yet the U.N.'s focus on the well-being of children regarding hunger, poverty, primary education, and health care is a match with Christian concerns. Is there more that can be done to foster a productive partnership between Christian circles and worldwide entities such as the United Nations? Which Christian groups are positioned to work on this partnership?

LH: Patrick McDonald, Viva's Founder, called *God's Heart for Children* a "timely and critical" book when he gave the keynote address at our launch. Referring to the words of Jesus in Matthew 16: 24, Patrick put it so well when he said: "I pray that the publication of this book marks an accelerating point for a movement of those who seek to 'forget themselves' to instead put service and concern for children at the heart of their lives. This is timely for all of us....We can motivate churches to build programmes of outreach. We can help vulnerable families to parent well. We can form the networks of churches able to take a seat at city hall.

And we can endeavor to have some sense of understanding of what the collective challenge facing children is in our communities – and then do something about it. My prayer is that we see from this book a growing body of trained, focused and connected Christian workers who know their business and pursue it with competence, commitment and deep-rooted compassion. We must first and last pursue God for all we are worth."



SR: One of your authors wrote that he is heartened by the rising focus over the past ten to fifteen years on children's

An excerpt from *God's Heart for Children: Practical Theology from Global Perspectives* edited by Rosalind Tan (Malaysia), Natividad A. Petallar (Philippines), and Lucy A. Hefford (Oxford).

The nondualistic cultures and outlook of Asian people have what it takes to develop an approach that addresses the concerns related to the posture of "stewardship." In the Philippines, for example, is a remarkable spirit of hospitality and generosity among the people – celebrated traits that are rooted deeply in a relational sense of being instead of a more individualistic sense of identity. This spirit is mirrored well linguistically in the Filipinos rich vocabulary of *kapwa*, a word that can be roughly translated in English as "fellow" or "neighbor." For Filipinos, the language of *kapwa* opens the possibility of rerooting their creation care theology in the understanding that the rest of the created order are not simply "things" or "resources" to be harnessed or marveled at or much less managed. Instead, they are neighbors with dignity, rights, and well-being that have to be respected. They are "fellow" creatures of God (*kapwa nilikha*) that people need to learn to live with in peaceful coexistence.

Aldrin Peñamora, a Filipino theologian and social ethicist, remarks that it is only within a humble posture such as this that humanity can recover full identity: "Our authentic humanity can only emerge if we identify ourselves as part of the community of creation before the Creator." This perspective from the Philippines suggests a theology of planetary *neighborology* as an alternative framing for creation care – wherein human beings, bees, rivers, and trees form a community of love and support for one another. But this is only one of many possible perspectives that the next generation can be encouraged to pursue and unravel toward the enrichment of the global conversation on a more "relational" theology of creation care.

SPECIAL FEATURE

needs among Christian churches and networks. Churches have developed solid theological grounding, resource toolkits, and innovative approaches for responding to children's needs. At the same time, there are many weighty concerns about the plight of children, worldwide, due to increasing pressures from the COVID-19 pandemic, sexual exploitation, child labor, rapid urbanization, and active discrimination against Christian children. Describe a few local initiatives that you have documented as effective faith-based ones for generating improvements in the lives of children.

LH: Yes, there are weighty concerns but there is also an awareness within the faith communities to advocate and intervene in these situations. While we see evil prevailing; we are reminded that God is alive and working to redeem his creation. In the book, GHFC, we documented case studies from different countries to show that there is an active movement of advocacy to address the children's needs. Of course, more could be done. Many faith-based NGOs operate in closed countries as humanitarian aid (e.g., food, health, and education). There are also community-based ministries that indirectly contribute to the children's well-being (e.g., clean water, housing, medical, tree planting, and other creation care initiatives).



SR: A central thesis of your book is that current children are part of the church today and can participate in the ongoing mission of God as children. Already, they are members in the priesthood of all believers. Children do not need to become adults to be valuable in God's mission. How does such a perspective change our engagement with children?

LH: Childhood is developmental; the children who are "now and not yet" allure us to ministry practices that affirm them as a unique people group. Children are able in their age-appropriate ways and through their own voices to contribute to the mission of the church, and ultimately to the *missio Dei*. There are testimonies from the Bible and in real time where God uses children to lead the church or to speak prophetically. In a South East Asia country, God used a group of young people to start the Barrio Revival (1973, 1975, 1978, 1984). It is the

responsibility of the faith communities to watch over their children's development and mentor them to be the Daniels and Esthers of today.



SR: You note the need for knowledgeable and skilled contributors to the lives of children. What should educators in Christian universities and colleges emphasize as they prepare their students for callings and service to address the needs and gifts of children? What areas of knowledge are deeply needed but seem insufficiently developed at this time?

I would point to Rosalind Tan's article, reflecting on God's Heart for the "Children Outside the Door", recently published on the [Lausanne Movement website](#).

Greater knowledge and skills to be able to address the needs of children who are 'outside the door' is needed, not least for children who find themselves 'on the move' (refugees, those displaced by war or disaster). Being trauma informed is also essential. The expertise and training that [Trauma Free World](#) offer to this end is highly commendable.



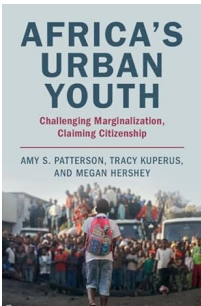
FIND OUT MORE

A [FREE, downloadable devotional resource](#), based on the book *God's Heart for Children* is accessible [here](#).

VIVA also has a [website](#) about this book at: <https://www.viva.org/ghfc/>

There is a series of [FREE webinars](#) to which people can sign up, one related to each chapter of the book: <https://www.viva.org/ghfcwebinars>. Past webinars have short videos that describe the webinar's central themes. They may be useful classroom resources.

RESOURCES & BOOKS



Africa's Urban Youth: Challenging Marginalization, Claiming Citizenship
By Amy S. Patterson, Tracy Kuperus, and Megan Hershey

Cambridge University Press, August, 2023

Making up 65 percent of Africa's population, young people between the ages of 18 and 35 play a key role in politics, yet

they live in an environment of rapid urbanization, high unemployment rates and poor state services. Drawing from extensive fieldwork in Ghana, Uganda and Tanzania, this book investigates how Africa's urban youth cultivate a sense of citizenship in this challenging environment, and what it means to them to be a 'good citizen'. In interviews and focus group discussions, African youth, activists, and community leaders vividly explain how income, religion, and gender intertwine with their sense of citizenship and belonging. Though Africa's urban youth face economic and political marginalization as well as generational tensions, they craft a creative citizenship identity that is rooted in their relationships and obligations both to each other and the state. Privileging above all the voice and agency of Africa's young people, this is a vital, systematic examination of youth and youth citizenship in urban environments across Africa.

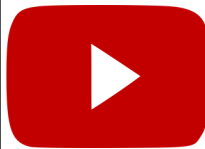


Christian Scholars Review: A Focus on Vocation

The July 2023 issue of the journal *Christian Scholars Review* (Vol. III:4) is a special issue focused on Christian understandings of vocation. Guest editor, Dr. David Cunningham, directs the Network for Vocation in Undergraduate Education for the Council of Independent Colleges. In this issue, articles by multiple vocation scholars include the following:

- Vocation: An Idea Whose Time Has Come (Again)
- Liberation From and For: The Vocation of the Educated Person
- Understanding Work as a Calling: Contributions from Psychological Science
- Lay Vocation before the Reformation: Faith, Reason, and Friendship in the Middle Ages (and Today)
- Embrace, Humility, and Belonging in the Undergraduate Science Curriculum
- The Taylor Paper: God and Vocation in Christian Higher Education

The issue also includes reviews of eight recent books about theological perspectives on vocation and their implications for practices, particularly with current students. This journal often is available through university library subscriptions.



Video: INCHE Asia Oceania Conference Hosted by Handong Global University

This 4-5 minute video provides an excellent edited summary regarding the experience of INCHE members during the INCHE Asia Oceania conference during June 2023. The staff of Handong Global University prepared this video summary of the occasion and describes hopes for what will extend beyond it. All INCHE members will benefit from this video. <https://youtu.be/8ThHpsa7LuQ>.



KuyperCon 2023 Plenary Videos

The plenary session videos of the May 2023 Kuyper Conference at Redeemer University have been posted:

John Stackhouse Jr.: "[Where Have You Gone, Abraham Kuyper? Public Theology for Different Publics](#)"

Haejin Shim Fujimura:

["Beauty + Justice: A Path into New Creation"](#)

Vincent Bacote:

["Sealing Cracks: A Neo-Kuyperian Healing Process"](#)

Reformation Legacy Award:

["Honouring Dr. Albert M. Wolters"](#)

Kuyper Prize: Makoto Fujimura,

["Kintsugi Grace — Prismatic Art beyond the Rainbow"](#)

KuyperCon 2024 Save the Dates: April 2-4, 2024

In 2024 the Kuyper Conference will again be hosted by Calvin University and Calvin Theological Seminary and return to the Prince Conference Center in Grand Rapids, Michigan. The Kuyper Conference will run from April 2-4, 2024 and in conjunction with the Henry Symposium on Religion & Public Life, which will run from April 4-6, 2024.

New Journal: *Neocalviniana*



As announced at Kuyper Conference 2023, a new peer-reviewed, open-access online journal has been launched as a successor to the Kuyper Center Review and the Bavinck Review. Information about the [editorial staff](#) and a [call for papers](#) for the journal, *Neocalviniana*, is available at the [journal's website](#).

RESOURCES & BOOKS



Inspiration for Training and Sending Christian Teachers Worldwide

TeachBeyond, a network for transformational education services based in the U.K., has a series of *Stories of Transformation* on its website. These short stories with pictures may be inspiration to teacher education students who seek a calling to internationally-based Christian education. For access to these short vignettes from TeachBeyond experiences, go to: <https://teachbeyond.org/news>.



Social Research Methods: For Students and Scholars of Theology and Religious Studies By Joshua Iyadurai, PhD

Marina Centre for Interdisciplinary
Studies in Religion (MCISR), June, 2023

This book demystifies designing and conducting qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods research with scientific rigor. *Social Research Methods*, benefits researchers from theology and religious studies in designing interdisciplinary research and interacting with social sciences and other disciplines to study contextually relevant issues by focusing on lived religion, lived theology, lived experience, and real-world problems.

Joshua Iyadurai skillfully guides researchers with a step-by-step guide on the practical nuances of choosing a topic, engaging literature, selecting a paradigm, collecting and analyzing data, interpreting the findings, and writing a research proposal and a dissertation/thesis/article for qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods research. A separate chapter on supervising and examining social research helps students and professors to understand each other's role in field-based studies.

Social Research Methods is an indispensable resource for researchers from theology and religious studies and a valuable practical guide for researchers from social sciences and humanities.



Video Lecture Series: What Lies Ahead for Ukraine and Russia after the War?

Thoughtful commentators have described the Russian-Ukrainian war as a pivotal moment in contemporary history. This four-session course, titled "What Lies Ahead for Ukraine and Russia after the War?" and led by Dr. John A. Bernbaum, was held in Spring 2023 at Calvin University's CALL (Calvin Academy for Lifelong Learning) Program.

Over the course of four weeks in March/April 2023, Dr. Bernbaum shared insights and analysis about the origins of the war, why Putin decided to invade Ukraine, and what the Ukrainians will be able to achieve by their fierce resistance. This compelling and comprehensive seminar series reviewed developments on the battlefield, shared updates on the home front in both countries, and assessed the role of civil society in Ukraine and Russia. In addition, Dr. Bernbaum reviewed the impact of religious communities in this time of struggle and how they impacted the war and may shape its future resolution.

Session #1: "What Is This War All About?"

Session #2: "The Impact of the War on the Home Fronts in Ukraine and Russia"

Session #3: "How Will the War Shape These Two Nations?" - March 28, 2023

Session #4: "How Has the War Affected Europe's Future and Ours?" - April 4, 2023

All lectures can be found here: <https://calvin.edu/academics/call/lectures/>



Evangelical Review of Theology: higher education issue

The World Evangelical Alliance's *Evangelical Review of Theology* is a free, open-access journal. The August 2023 issue of this periodical focuses on higher education. Leaders from the World Evangelical Alliance and other prominent Christians address issues of contemporary educational concern for the global body of Christ. The August issue includes Manifesto II

that was presented by the International Council for Evangelical Theological Education (ICETE) in Turkey during their November 2022 meeting. You can find the current August issue of this journal [here](#).

NOTE: Reviews are taken directly from the publishers' promotional materials

Contact

Contact is the official newsletter of the International Network of Christian Higher Education (INCHE). It is published quarterly as a way of informing its members about news from across the many world regions in which INCHE operates. If you have any news items you would like to share with INCHE's members worldwide, please contact INCHE at:

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ABOUT INCHE

INCHE is a network of institutions and individuals worldwide committed to advancing Christian education through training, capacity building, scholarship, and networking in ways that reflect both the universal (shared view of Christ's centrality in our identity and work) and the local (attending to the specific realities and practices of where and who we serve).

INCHE's Mission is to develop a network that facilitates contact and mutual assistance, acts as a catalyst for research and training, and encourages biblical and contextual responses to the critical issues in contemporary society, so as to help people serve the Lord Jesus Christ in an integral way.



**Have news you would like to share
with other INCHE members?**

Members may email articles to office@inche.one. We suggest articles contain 400 words or less.