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1998 - Bringing Biblical Narratives to Life

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### Calvin Seminary inFocus Article

The Eleventh Symposium on Worship and the Arts

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# in FOCUS

Volume 15, Number 2

Winter 1998

## Symposium on Worship Attracts 400



In a worship service, the Wheaton CRC youth group dramatizes the story of Jesus calming the storm.

“Bringing Biblical Narratives to Life” was the theme of the eleventh Calvin Symposium on Worship and the Arts, held January 9 and 10 at Calvin College and Calvin Theological Seminary. The symposium welcomed 400 registrants from 11 states and provinces and from 13 denominations.

Worship planners, pastors, musicians, dramatists, artists, and youth leaders came together to explore how worship can foster a creative encounter with the biblical text, and—by the Spirit’s power—bring it to life in creative and engaging ways.

A wide variety of sectionals were offered on Friday and Saturday. Sectionals included preaching from the Gospel of Mark with Donald Juel from Princeton Seminary; creative

and thoughtful use of language in prayers and hymns led by Carl Daw, executive director of the Hymn Society; the rich, colorful art of storytelling through serigraphs by John August Swanson; and workshops with Anton Armstrong and John Ferguson in choral and organ music, both from St. Olaf College. Tom Long and his drama troupe, Friends of the Groom, performed and led workshops on Christian drama and storytelling.

A highlight of this year’s symposium was a track of sessions for youth leaders led by Jane Vogel and Mary Sytsma and the involvement of 13 members of the Wheaton, Illinois CRC youth group.

Dr. John D. Witvliet, director of the Calvin Institute on

Christian Worship, presented a plenary session on “Planning and Leading Worship as a Pastoral Task.” The symposium climaxed with a hymn festival with scripture interwoven with songs from around the world, moving worshipers through the drama of redemptive history. These two sessions are available on tape from the seminary’s audio visual department.

The new Calvin Institute of Christian Worship, housed on campus in partnership with Calvin Theological Seminary and the Christian Reformed Church, along with the symposium



on worship and the arts committee, planned and presented this year’s symposium. Students of Calvin College and Calvin Seminary attended free of charge.

## Chili Cook-Off

Students and faculty entered their best efforts in a chili competition in January. Awards were given in five categories. Doug Prium won for best red chili, A.K. Altuna for best white chili, Tim Howerzyl for best bread, Ruth De Haan for best presentation, and Bill Sytsma for best Scriptural basis! The food was fine, especially on a cold day. The \$132 collected was donated to Guiding Light Mission.



Keith Tanis displays his best recipe!

# President's Page



## Survey Confirms Seminary

One hundred percent of Christian Reformed Church members surveyed responded "very important" or "somewhat important" to three questions about the characteristics of successful pastors.

*A dynamic preacher who delivers biblical, relevant sermons (87% very, 13% somewhat)*

*A caring pastor who responds quickly to needs of members (86% very, 14% somewhat)*

*A careful student of Scripture who reads widely and thinks clearly (86% very, 14% somewhat)*

Other characteristics with high ratings were the next four.

*A personable individual who mixes easily with church members (73% very, 26% somewhat, 1% not important)*

*An eager evangelist who regularly presents the gospel to non-Christians (52% very, 46% somewhat, 2% not important)*

*A leader who opens up opportunities and new options (41% very, 52% somewhat, 5% not important)*

*An accepting person who frequently interacts with nonCRC pastors (36% very, 55% somewhat, 7% not important)*

The last three characteristics were substantially less important to church members.

*An efficient administrator who keeps the church running smoothly (23% very, 49% somewhat, 28% not important)*

*An effective teacher who always leads several church school classes (18% very, 55% somewhat, 26% not important)*

*A denominational leader who serves on boards and committees (11% very, 53% somewhat, 34% not important)*

### Conclusion.

Church members obviously know what they want in a pastor. They are unanimous on the importance of the first three and strongly united (combined scores over 90%) on the next four. Only on the last three do more members say these are "not important" than say that they are "very important."

Calvin Seminary's training correlates well with results to these questions. It accents what the church most wants in its pastors, although it gives attention to all these matters.

### Other questions.

The survey also measured thirteen tasks for seminary professors. Highest scores were for the importance of "training ministers for CRC ordination" (87% very, 9% somewhat). Lowest scores were for the importance of "offering training seminars for elders and deacons" (23% very, 57% somewhat), although the combined scores for this question still were 80%.

Ninety-five percent believe the denomination should provide training for its pastors, and 91% agree that Calvin Seminary provides an essential service for the denomination.

Over 50% (55%) think they do not receive enough information about the seminary to respond to questions about it reliably.

The survey is conducted once every five years by the agencies of the church. Responses about the seminary were affirming, and they assist significantly in encouraging and directing the faculty in its work.

## in Focus

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