Tell us about the book project you're working on.

I have been working on a book about "fossils," under contract with InterVarsity Press. The full title is: "Fossils: A Christian Exploration of the History of Life on Earth." It is due to be released in 2024 and will provide a comprehensive look at the fossil record from a Christian perspective, integrating the scientific evidence with our understanding of creation.

The book will cover the history of life from the early Cambrian period to the present, with a focus on the diversity of life and its implications for understanding God's creative work. It will include discussions of various theories, such as evolution, creationism, and intelligent design, and will aim to provide a scientifically informed yet faith-driven perspective.

How long have you been at Calvin and in what roles over the years?

I have been working with Calvin University since 1992, first as a member of Calvin's GEO Dept. and then in various roles within the College of Arts and Sciences. I am currently the Director of Calvin's Center for Applied Paleoanthropology. In this role, I work with students and faculty on research projects, as well as engage with the broader community through outreach events and publications.

Academics doing their work in a way that is mindful of Scripture.

I believe that our academic work should be informed by our faith, and that includes the way we approach our research and teaching. As a practicing Christian, I strive to integrate my faith with my work and to share the message of Jesus with others through my writing and teaching.

Balla recently published a new commentary on Paul's second letter to the Corinthians. This important resource is part of our Reflecting Faith faculty development courses.

Reflecting Faith faculty development courses provide a platform for faculty to engage with Scripture and to learn how to integrate their faith with their academic work. The new commentary on Paul's second letter to the Corinthians is one of many resources available to faculty to help them grow in their understanding of Scripture and its relevance for today.

Along with Dr. Balla, we hope that this fruit of his scholarly labors will be a blessing to the global church—including Christian scholars worldwide. This commentary will provide a thoughtful and engaging exploration of Paul's message, offering insights into how his ideas can be applied in contemporary contexts.

The de Vries Institute is blessed to have an Advisory Council that is comprised of a dynamic group of leaders who provide guidance and support for our work. In addition, we also have a variety of staff and faculty members who contribute to our mission.

We recently asked two of our 2022-23 4th Year "Fellows" to pass along a reading/discussion group for STEM faculty, focused on the doctrine of Creation, the history of earth science, and the scientific understanding of the beginning of life. Our Fellows are engaged in this work because they recognize the importance of fostering a deeper understanding of these topics within the academic community.

One of the central programs of the de Vries Institute on Calvin's campus is a Faith and Work Fellowship. I am involved in this program, which provides opportunities for the junior faculty member. This is a reminder that mentorship takes lots of forms, some of them subtle and not always easy to recognize. I have been a mentor to students and faculty for many years, and I have learned a great deal from my interactions with them.

The Kuyper Conference is an important event for the Calvin business school. This conference brings together business leaders, scholars, and practitioners to explore the intersection of business and Christianity. It is a great opportunity for participants to engage with leading experts and to reflect on the broader implications of our faith for the business world.

I worked full-time for Calvin University from 1992 until 2019 as a member of Calvin's GEO Dept. I have served in various roles within the College of Arts and Sciences, including as the Chair of the GEO Dept. and as the Director of Calvin's Center for Applied Paleoanthropology. In this role, I work with students and faculty on research projects, as well as engage with the broader community through outreach events and publications.

During my free time, I assist with outreach projects of the de Vries Institute. One of these projects is the Calvin University's Global Campus, which is a joint effort between the de Vries Institute and Calvin University to provide education and support to students around the world. In addition, I serve on the INCHE (International Network for Christian Higher Education) Advisory Council, which is an organization devoted to building Christian higher education collaborations around the world. Our work is supported by the Kuyper Fund, which is a legacy gift from the late entrepreneur and philanthropist Kuypercap Partners.