

Robert & Barbara Tollefson

REFORMED LECTURE & DINNER

Monday, Oct. 18, 2010 at 3 and 7 p.m.



The Rev. Jennifer Ayers, assistant professor of Christian ethics at McCormick Theological Seminary in Chicago, will be the guest lecturer Monday, Oct. 18, at the Robert and Barbara Tollefson Reformed Lecture and Dinner at Buena Vista University, Storm Lake, Iowa. The theme for this year's lectures is "Waiting for a Glacier to Move: A Reformed Reading of Social Witness Practice."

Dr. Tollefson was a long-time professor of philosophy and religion at BVU. He and his wife, Barbara, played an important role in many student's lives during their years at BVU. Through the gift of their children, Rebecca, Elizabeth, Priscilla, and Jeff, the community of Buena Vista University, Prospect Hill Presbytery, many friends joined together in establishing the lecture series in their honor. This lecture is an annual event on Buena Vista University campus and is an opportunity for the community to hear from renowned scholars in the reformed field of study.

A dinner is scheduled between the lectures at 5:30 p.m. Those who would like to attend the lectures and dinner are asked to contact the Rev. Ken Meissner, university chaplain, at meissnerk@bvu.edu or 712.749.2111.

http://www.bvu.edu/living_at_bvu/student_services/spiritual_life/reformed_theology_lectureship.dot

Series Title: **Waiting for a Glacier to Move:
A Reformed Reading of Social Witness Practice**

Lecture 1: *Seeking the Good in Public Life: Social Witness as a Christian Practice*

Many Christians are actively engaged in political and social issues. How does this engagement relate to Christian life? If we understand faithful public engagement as the Christian practice of social witness, we open a whole new set of interesting questions about Christian engagement with public issues. Incorporating theology, the arts, sociology and philosophy, this lecture develops a definition of social witness as a "prophetic practice" requiring critical analysis, humility, theological reflection, and hope for the future. With these components, we can strengthen, evaluate, and identify implicit benefits of the ongoing practice of social witness.

Lecture 2: *"With an Urgency Born of this Hope...": A Theology for Social Witness*

The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)'s Confession of 1967 affirms, "With an urgency born of this hope, the church applies itself to present tasks and strives for a better world." This compelling claim depicts the church's action and striving as fueled by hope, an image that connotes the nourishment of social action by the awareness of the presence of God's kingdom "as a ferment in the world." This lecture posits that a strong theological orientation in social witness can equip practitioners to flourish even when faced with disappointment and fatigue. More specifically, this lecture draws on reformed and process theology, as well as music and film, to describe how our work for social change can be strengthened and enriched by deep awareness of the dynamic relationship between the categories of sin and hope.