



DORDT COLLEGE

The Voice of Dordt College, 2016 to
present

Volume 62

Issue 3 *Spring/Summer* 2017

Article 2

Where Do We Fit?

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Recommended Citation

Dornbierer-Schat, Aleisa () "Where Do We Fit?," *The Voice of Dordt College, 2016 to present*: Vol. 62 : Iss. 3 , Article 2.

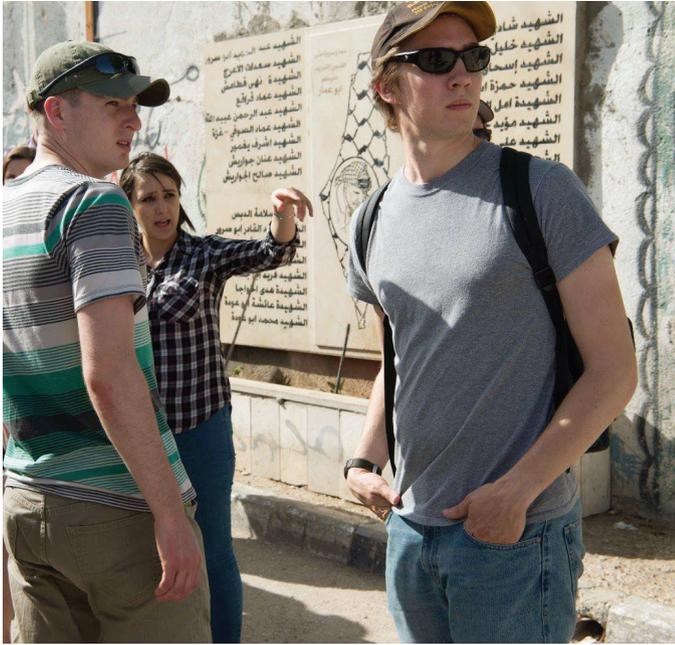
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THIS ISSUE

Editor's Notes



ALEISA DORNBIERER-SCHAT

STUDYING THE HOLY LAND

This May, 15 Dordt College students participated in a two-week immersion course in Israel-Palestine, where along with visits to biblical sites, they studied the current political conflict from a variety of perspectives. Here, students take a walking tour of Bethlehem, in the West Bank, following a visit to the nearby Lajee Center for refugees.

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WHERE DO WE FIT?

I recently returned from two weeks in the Holy Land with a group of Dordt College students on a summer study abroad trip. One of the places we visited was the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, the traditional site of Jesus's death and resurrection.

No quiet church, it is loud and chaotic. For centuries, several Christian traditions have vied for control of the sacred space, and its architecture and iconography reflect its Armenian, Greek Orthodox, and Franciscan custodians (among others). During our visit, we saw tourists and pilgrims, crowding around Jesus's burial stone, kneeling to touch or kiss it. We breathed in incense, elbowed through crowds, and were once shooed to a corner as Orthodox monks swept by in long black robes, bells clanging overhead.



In the collision of Christian traditions evident around us, one of our group stopped to ask (well, shout): "Where are all the Protestants?" Where did we fit in this bustling scene? And what, implied the questioner, did all of this have to do with our small college in Iowa, with its austere chapel auditorium and its reformational identity?

In this issue, we address that question directly, if provisionally, in our feature about the Core Program, the foundational curricular expression of Dordt's mission and vision. But the question is there in every story we tell: What does it mean to be Reformed? And, importantly, how do we acknowledge the contributions of other traditions while also nurturing what's good and valuable in our own? Dr. David Henreckson turns that question toward the matter of Christian cultural engagement in our regular feature from *In All Things*, and Dordt microbiology and business students work out what that means through their partnership with a local business.

Jerusalem is a fitting place to reflect on the significance of Christ's death and resurrection. It is, after all, the climax and fulfillment of a very Jewish story—a story unfolding in history, in which we ourselves are called to be actors. This understanding is at the heart of a reformational perspective, and it's born out in the stories on these pages. To approach education reformationally requires rigorous intellectual engagement. But it is a form of engagement that points us, always, back toward the world, where we are called to be good neighbors, justice seekers, Jesus's hands and feet.

ALEISA DORNBIERER-SCHAT, EDITOR