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Defining the Phenomenon of Teaching Christianly at a Christian College: A Study Conducted at Dordt College

Barb Hoekstra
Dordt College, barb.hoekstra@dordt.edu

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Abstract

Despite the high value that Christian colleges place on teaching, there is scant literature on teaching christianly in higher education. Pedagogy that promotes Christian beliefs resides in the K-12 literature. Using the work of Van Brummelen (1988) and Van Dyk (2000) originally developed for teaching christianly at the K-12 level, a conceptual framework was developed. This study investigated what it means to teach christianly at a small Christian college. A qualitative, phenomenological approach was used to explore teachers' perceptions and beliefs about teaching christianly in higher education. A criterion sampling strategy was used in selecting 10 participants who had the following characteristics: experienced the phenomenon of teaching christianly, exhibited a commitment to teaching christianly, and considered to be outstanding Christian teachers by the college administration and the researcher. The semi-structured interviews were based on the following four foci: (a) who students are and why teachers teach christianly, (b) the aim of teaching christianly in higher education, (c) the impact of Dordt College's mission on how its teachers teach, and (d) how teachers at Dordt College have learned to teach christianly. The process of horizonalization resulted in the emergence of four themes, which provided insight into how participants perceived, explained, and iv made meaning of teaching christianly. The four emergent themes were (a) students as image bearers of God, (b) the call to teach christianly, (c) teaching christianly, and (d) the mission mindedness of Dordt College. Participants determined that persons who teach christianly view their students as fellow image bearers of God and view themselves as having been called by God to teach christianly which includes educating students for serviceable insight, worldview clarification and/or transformation, and discipleship. The characteristics and teaching methodologies used by teachers who teach christianly may be quite similar to those held by most good teachers with the difference lying in motivation, aims, and outcomes. Teachers at Dordt College have learned in varying degrees how to teach christianly, but need assistance in learning more. The conceptual framework of Van Brummelen and Van Dyk has relevance for teachers who desire to teach christianly at a Christian college.

Keywords

church related colleges, Dordt College, Christian education, teaching

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Comments

- A dissertation submitted to the graduate faculty of the University of South Dakota in partial fulfillment for the degree of DOCTOR OF EDUCATION
- Dr. Karen Card, Committee Chairperson

DEFINING THE PHENOMENON OF TEACHING CHRISTIANLY AT A CHRISTIAN COLLEGE: A STUDY CONDUCTED AT DORDT COLLEGE

by

Barbara Hoekstra

B.A., Trinity Christian College, 1989

M.A., Western Michigan University, 1997

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ABSTRACT

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Dissertation directed by Dr. Karen Card

Despite the high value that Christian colleges place on teaching, there is scant literature on teaching christianly in higher education. Pedagogy that promotes Christian beliefs resides in the K-12 literature. Using the work of Van Brummelen (1988) and Van Dyk (2000) originally developed for teaching christianly at the K-12 level, a conceptual framework was developed. This study investigated what it means to teach christianly at a small Christian college.

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This abstract of approximately 350 words is approved as to form and content. I recommend the publication.

Signed _____
Professor in Charge

DOCTORAL COMMITTEE

The members of the committee appointed to examine the dissertation of Barbara Hoekstra find it satisfactory and recommend that it be approved.

_____
Dr. Karen Card

_____
Dr. Mejai Bola Mike Avoseh

_____
Dr. Doreen Gosmire

_____
Dr. Patricia Kornelis

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CHAPTER 1

Introduction

An institution's mission statement helps people involved with the institution to make sense of that institution, and the mission statement also helps guide the institution as well as helps it make decisions. Generally, mission statements contain a summary of the institution's core values. Religiously affiliated colleges often have distinctive mission statements that set them apart from other colleges and universities. Most Christian-affiliated institutions typically emphasize Christian values and place a high value on teaching (Diamond, 2002). Therefore, based on their mission statements, Christian colleges should be concerned with teaching christianly.

There has been a renewed interest in the practice of teaching in colleges and universities, even to the point of expanding what it means to "do scholarship" in higher education (Mc Keachie, 1990). Teaching and learning have received more focus in the literature. One can find models of student learning such as andragogy, self-directed learning, transformational learning, and experiential learning (Merriam & Cafarella, 1999) as well as models of effective teaching (Lowman, 1996; Magolda, 1999). There are well-researched strategies to improve undergraduate teaching and learning (Angelo, 1993; Chickering & Gamson, 1987, 1991, 1999; Engelkemeyer & Brown, 1998) and research on outstanding teaching (Hativa, Barak, & Simhi, 2001; Young & Shaw, 1999).

Palmer (1998) has added to the body of research on teaching and learning and more aligned with his research are the purposes of this study.

Palmer (1998) wrote that “teaching is the intentional act of creating these conditions [that help students learn]” and good teaching requires that we understand the inner sources of both the intent and the act. Teaching christianly is primarily about “understanding the inner sources of the intent and the act of teaching” (p. 6).

There is, however, very little literature on a Christian approach to pedagogy or teaching christianly in higher education. The multifarious nature of teaching has been well-depicted in the K-12 level literature, but not in higher education literature (Saroyan, Amundsen, McAlpine, Weston, Winer, & Gandell, 2004). Palmer (1998) suggested that we have much to learn from K-12 teachers: “Teachers at all levels of education have more in common than we think, and we should not be so glib about what level we call higher” (p. 6). Two authors, Dr. Harro Van Brummelen at Trinity Western University in Langley, British Columbia, and Dr. John Van Dyk at Dordt College in Sioux Center, Iowa, have focused on teaching christianly at the K-12 levels. Their work may be helpful for Christian higher education in this largely neglected area.

A combined conceptual framework for teaching christianly at the K-12 level was developed from Van Brummelen’s (1988) and Van Dyk’s (2000) work; the framework described the aims, components, and phases involved in teaching christianly. Basic for both authors is the premise that all people are God’s image bearers, and therefore teaching is inherently a religious activity. Their central aim in teaching christianly is to “educate [students] for a life of responsible discipleship” (Van Brummelen, 1988, p. 2), and to equip “students for

knowledgeable and competent discipleship" (Van Dyk, 2000, p. 38). To accomplish this, Christian teachers should be "personally committed to Jesus Christ" and "model Christian love and the fruits of the Spirit" (Van Brummelen, 1988, pp. 25-26). Additionally, Christian teachers, who desire to teach christianly, must truly want to subject their entire teaching practice to the will of God (Van Dyk, 2000).

Van Dyk (2000) makes an important distinction between what is teaching christianly and that which nears teaching christianly, but falls short. He calls the practices that fall short "diverse conceptions." The diverse conceptions he describes are as follows:

1. Adding a devotional dimension.
2. Modeling Christian behavior.
3. Evangelizing students.
4. Providing a Christian perspective on subject matter.
5. Doing (off-campus) service projects.
6. Enforcing tough classroom discipline and academic rigor.
7. Imprinting Biblical truth on impressionable minds.
8. Imitating Jesus, the master teacher.

According to Van Dyk (2000), none of these approaches are necessarily wrong, but they are "reductionistic" in that "they tend to equate an aspect of teaching christianly with the whole of teaching christianly" (p. 27). It may be helpful to identify these approaches or "diverse conceptions" as *Christian teaching* and

teaching christianly as a more comprehensive, all-encompassing Christian approach to pedagogy, which is the topic of this study.

The authors, Van Brummelen (1988) and Van Dyk (2000), identify several components and phases that are important for teaching christianly. They contend that Christian teachers must (a) guide students, (b) unfold content, (c) structure learning, and (d) enable students to develop and use their gifts (Van Brummelen, 1988). The phases of learning included in Van Brummelen's and Van Dyk's conceptual framework can be used to facilitate student learning at the class level, the course level, or even the program level. These phases of effective learning are (a) setting the stage, (b) disclosure, (c) reformulation, and (d) transcendence (Van Brummelen, 1988).

The context for this study was Dordt College. Dordt is a religiously affiliated college located in Sioux Center, Iowa, population 6,000. Dordt College was founded in 1955 as an independent Christian college closely related to the Christian Reformed Church in North America. It currently has more than 1,300 students from over 25 states, 15 foreign countries, and six Canadian provinces. These students come to Dordt because of their interest in biblical, Christ-centered higher education. Nearly 90% of Dordt College students live in campus residence halls or off-campus college-related apartments.

The college is dedicated to promoting student learning for lifelong Christian service (*Educational Task*, 1979). This task is carried out through a coherent curriculum which is organized under four headings based on a Reformed Christian perspective. These four headings are referred to as the *Four*

Coordinates: (a) religious orientation, (b) creational structure, (c) creational development, and (d) contemporary response (*Educational Framework*, 1993).

Statement of the Problem

There is a void in the literature regarding teaching christianly in higher education and there are no models to reference for teaching christianly at Christian colleges and universities (personal communication with Van Dyk, May 14, 2004). Dr. Nicholas Woltersdorf, professor at Yale Divinity School and author of several books on Christian higher education, reports the same concern (personal communication, August 28, 2004). Migliazzo (2002), author and professor, states "there exists no text dedicated to practical pedagogy that might serve as a resource for faculty members taking up residence in a church-related college or university" (pp. xxxv-xxxvi). The absence of literature on teaching christianly can be particularly problematic for religious institutions of higher education; therefore, this study has looked at teaching christianly at Dordt College.

The purpose of this study was to investigate what it means to teach christianly at a small, residential, Christian college. Specifically, this study used a phenomenological approach to explore teachers' perceptions and beliefs about teaching christianly in higher education. The principal research question was "What does it mean to teach christianly at a Christian college?" Sub-questions that guided this study included the following:

1. What does it mean to teach christianly at a Christian college?
2. What is the aim of teaching christianly in higher education?

3. How does the mission of Dordt College impact how its teachers teach?

4. What personal characteristics are essential for Christian teachers?

5. What help have teachers given or received in regard to the practice of teaching christianly?

Significance of the Study

Most of what we know about teaching christianly comes from K-12 education. This study has contributed to the literature on teaching christianly in higher education which benefits teachers and administrators at Dordt College as well as teachers and administrators in other Reformed Christian colleges. This study gives a better understanding of what it means to teach at a Christian college and has helped to determine how teachers develop in the area of teaching christianly.

Definition of Terms

Terms that had specific application within this study were used for the purpose of generalizing or for uniformity or clarity. The researcher adapted the definitions of the following terms within this study.

Discipleship as it is referred to in this dissertation is the act of grasping the vision of Jesus Christ and living in view of that. Responsible discipleship, according to Van Brummelen (1989), “requires a life of personal faith in Christ, a willingness to build Christian relationship in the community, and the ability and disposition to participate in our culture in a Christian way” (p. 8).

Teachers, the term used in this study for faculty members, are educators who have been appointed to serve Christ in their specific tasks. They have the principal responsibility for the development and transmission of insight. Through research and teaching they are called to carry out the central educational task of the college (adapted from *The Educational Task of Dordt College*, 1979).

Image of God is a term often used at Dordt College. According to Hielema (in press), we are in God's image when "we reflect the glory of God: by living as children of the Father, partners of one another, ruling over creation with inner integrity and wholeness" (p. 89).

Learning "enables people to function as knowledgeable and competent disciples of the Lord, exercising Kingdom tasks by hearing the will of the Lord and implementing it wherever they find themselves" (Van Dyk, 2000, p. 69). It "is meaningful only when it leads to the awareness that God has claim on our lives, a claim that impels us to action" (Van Brummelen, 1988, p. 43).

A *Reformed Christian perspective* holds that the Scriptures are the Word of God and are God's infallibly and authoritatively inspired revelation. The Bible makes known the way of salvation in Jesus Christ, calls for a life of obedience to the Lord, and offers the key to understanding, interpreting, and finding purpose in life (adapted from the *2004-2005 Dordt College Catalog*).

Serviceable Insight is described in *The Educational Task of Dordt College* (1979). The documents states:

> The knowledge, competencies, and commitments gained through the educational process aim to prepare students to live thankful lives before

> the Lord; to serve others with integrity, in common everyday activities as well as in specific locations: and to unfold and care for the creation. (p. 6)

Teaching christianly is a comprehensive Christian approach to pedagogy in which every facet of teaching is done to the glory of God. It is also a calling or ministry with the purpose of preparing students for works of service (adapted from Van Brummelen, 1989; Van Dyk, 2000).

Limitations and Delimitations

1. Due to the unique sample available for the study, results may not be generalizable beyond Dordt College from which the sample was drawn.
2. This study relied upon the truthful, candid responses of the subjects involved.
3. This study was limited to the use of one institution of higher education at one point in time.

Assumptions

1. In this study, it was assumed that faculty members share the religious beliefs of the college and have a Christian perspective on their discipline. Faculty members were hired, in part, because of their Christian beliefs and perspective.
2. In this study, I assumed that faculty members were indeed teaching christianly.

Organization of the Study

Chapter 1 has presented the introduction, statement of the problem, research questions, significance of the study, definition of terms, limitations and

delimitations, and assumptions of the study. Chapter 2 contains the review of related literature and research relevant to the problem being investigated. The methodology and procedures used to gather data for the study are presented in Chapter 3. The results of analysis and findings to emerge from the study are contained in Chapter 4. Chapter 5 contains a summary of the study and findings, conclusions drawn from the findings, discussion, and recommendations for further study.

CHAPTER 2

Review of Related Literature

The purpose of this chapter is to review relevant literature on college teaching and learning. This chapter will set the stage for this study of the phenomenon of teaching christianly in higher education and will give the study its context in teaching and learning. This chapter includes (a) a brief look at the evolution of college teaching and learning, (b) a lengthier look at four current models of student learning, (c) a description of students' and teachers' beliefs about teaching and learning, (d) a look at three current models of effective teaching, (e) four descriptions of current strategies that improve undergraduate teaching and learning, (f) a review of two recent studies on outstanding teaching, (g) a description of a Christian model of teaching, and finally, (h) a brief look at teaching and learning at Dordt College which places this study in its milieu.

The Evolution of College Teaching and Learning

By looking at history, one can get a sense of where current teaching and learning beliefs and practices originate. In *Teaching and Learning in the College Classroom,* Furhmann and Grasha (1983) painted a picture of teaching and learning from the seventeenth century through the twentieth century. They described the role of the college teacher in the Colonial Period (seventeenth and eighteenth centuries) as being paternalistic. Teaching methods during this time consisted primarily of recitation, lecture, debate, and speech. Over time, recitation gave way to lecturing as the most common teaching method because books were not plentiful. Higher education was for the sons of the elite, for

promoting the Christian religion, training young men for the ministry, instilling moral standards, and disciplining the mental faculties.

During the nineteenth century, many American scholars visited Germany to study various science disciplines. This exposure impacted American college curricula, and teaching methodologies began to expand. A new emphasis on science brought with it demonstrations and laboratory methods as well as a fresh relationship between teaching and research. Teaching methods during this time consisted of mainly lectures along with demonstrations and laboratory methods. Specialization in the curriculum began to emerge and students were, for the first time, seen as having knowledge to share and as having an ability to be independent learners. Furhmann and Grasha (1983) reported that during this time, “colleges began seriously to question themselves;” those colleges had “some anxiety that learning was simply not taken particularly seriously” (p. 9).

According to Furhmann and Grasha (1983), the twentieth century was revolutionary. During this time, three philosophies of higher education developed: the utilitarian or vocational view, the scientific or intellectual view, and the liberal or general education view. These three, somewhat oppositional views, still prevail on college campuses in varying combinations dependent upon the type of institution. “Teaching can, [sic] and is, viewed from all three perspectives, with the result being a wide variety of approaches from which modern faculty can select” (Furhmann & Grasha, 1983, p. 16).

Learning Theories

As philosophical views evolved into the twentieth century, attempts were made to develop teaching methods and practices. These attempts were based on learning theories such as behavioral, cognitive, and humanistic. According to Merriam and Caffarella (1999), the behaviorists describe learning as change in observable behavior. The behaviorist's work has impacted educational methodologies by placing an emphasis on the student's environment, the student's problem-solving and decision-making ability, and the student's use of mental images to enhance learning (Furhmann & Grasha, 1983). The cognitivist's tradition rose out of the behaviorist, therefore there is some overlap with these two theories. They share an interest in problem solving and decision making; however the cognitivists focused more on internal mental processes rather than external change (Furhmann & Grasha, 1983).

The humanists emphasize human nature, human potential, and human emotions. "The humanistic view recognizes that learning is something that students must do for themselves. Teachers must not merely transmit, but must involve and engage students in the activities of discovery and meaning making" (Furhmann & Grasha, 1983, p. 11). Student-centered education has its roots in humanistic learning theories.

Building on the behavioral, cognitive, and humanistic learning theories, social learning theory later came to the forefront placing its focus on the social context of the learning. Finally, constructivism arrived suggesting that learners construct their own knowledge from their experiences, which may be either

individual or social experiences. Furhmann and Grasha (1983) contended that teachers should base their teaching on theories and principles of learning. Throughout this chapter, several theories of learning and theories of instruction are reviewed.

There has been a great deal of research conducted over the years based on the above philosophical traditions and learning theories. McKeachie (1990) gives a historical description of the focus areas of research on college teaching. His list includes topics such as class size, lecture versus discussion, student-centered discussion, independent study, and peer learning. The list also includes evaluation of teaching, teaching and technology, and the impact of cognitive psychology. In the past, there has been a question of whether education constitutes a scientific field. McKeachie (1990) argues that all of this research adds up to meeting the criteria for a scientific field.

An emphasis on research on teaching and learning continues to grow into the twenty-first century and can be seen in the new definition of scholarship as coined by Ernest Boyer in his work *Scholarship Reconsidered: Priorities of the Professorate* (1990). Boyer proposes that the definition of scholarship be broadened beyond (a) discovery or published research, to include (b) integration, (c) application, and (d) teaching. (Braxton, Luckey, & Helland, 2002).

Scholarship of Teaching

Although the book *Scholarship Reconsidered: Priorities of the Professorate* was written in 1990, it continues to kindle conversations throughout higher education today. McKeachie (1999) summarized Boyer when he stated

that “teachers who keep up with current developments, who devise better ways to help students learn, or who do research on methods of teaching are also scholars” (p. 5). Additionally, Nicholls paraphrases Boyer when he stated “Boyer suggests that the scholarship of teaching has integrity of its own, but is deeply embedded in the other three forms [of scholarship]” (2004, p. 32).

One of the debates spawned by Boyer’s new scholarship definition is the difference between scholarly teaching and the scholarship *of* teaching (Cambridge, 1999). Teachers who are involved in scholarly teaching are teachers who wish to improve their teaching and therefore pursue ways to do this. Teachers who are involved in the scholarship of teaching not only “improve the teaching and learning in their own classroom but also improve teaching and learning beyond their local setting by adding knowledge to—and even beyond—their disciplinary field” (p. 2). They wish to improve their own teaching as well as other’s by adding to the body of knowledge on teaching and learning.

Shift from Teaching to Learning

In the midst of this emphasis on teaching, two authors, Robert Barr and John Tagg, suggested the need for a paradigm shift from teaching to learning. They suggested that colleges are responsible for producing learning, not just supplying instruction. Barr and Tagg (1995) described this shift as a move from the “instructional delivery system,” where “faculty are conceived primarily as disciplinary experts who impart knowledge by lecturing,” to the “learning paradigm,” which “conceives of faculty as primarily the designers of learning environments” where they “study and apply best methods for producing learning

and student success" (p. 697). The shift from teaching to learning, combined with today's emphasis on assessment, will lead to evaluation of the teaching process based on student learning.

The advancement of education into a scientific field, the scholarship of teaching, and the teaching to learning paradigm are important movements in higher education. In order for these movements to take root, Diamond, author of *Field Guide to Academic Leadership*, suggested that academic leaders must endorse these movements by standing behind their faculty. This can be accomplished by creating climates on campuses that support teaching efforts. (Diamond, 2002).

Four Models of Student Learning

In this section, brief descriptions are given on (a) andragogy from the humanistic tradition, (b) self-directed learning from the constructivist tradition, (c) transformational learning from the humanist and constructivist traditions, and (d) experiential learning from the humanist and constructivist traditions. Ramsden (1992) argued that the best way to improve teaching is to study students' learning, thus the emphasis here on learning theory. This section will be followed by a discussion of how some researchers understand students' and teachers' beliefs about teaching and learning.

Andragogy

Depending on the literature reviewed, andragogy is categorized as both an adult model of learning (Fry, Ketteridge, & Marshall, 1999; Light & Cox, 2001) and an adult model of instruction (Merriam & Caffarella, 1999). Merriam and

Caffarella (1999) wrote that Malcolm Knowles is closely associated with the model and the model "is considered to be the best known learner-centered or learner-directed model of instruction" (p. 37). Merriam and Caffarella (1999) also suggested that it is similar to other models in that it diagnoses learning needs, formulates objectives, designs a pattern of learning experiences, and evaluates results. According to Merriam and Caffarella (1999), the "one key difference" is that "the learner is viewed as a mutual partner" (p.37) in the learning process. There are five main assumptions of andragogy (Knowles, 1984).

1. As people grow and mature, they become more and more self-directed in their learning.
2. Adults have amassed experiences that can be a rich resource for learning.
3. Adults become ready to learn when they experience a need to know something.
4. Adults tend to be increasingly problem-centered, whereas children tend to be more subject-centered.
5. For adults, the most potent motivators are internal.

Originally, andragogy was contrasted with pedagogy. Knowles (1980) defined andragogy as "the art and science of helping adults learn" and defined pedagogy as "the art and science of helping children learn" (p. 43). Currently these two theories represent "a continuum ranging from teacher-directed to student-directed learning and that both approaches are appropriate with children and adults, depending on the situation" (Merriam and Cafarella, 1999, p. 275) A

pedagogical approach may produce better results than an andragogical approach, even with adult learners. (Light & Cox, 2001). Merriam and Caffarella (1999) reported that Pratt has devised the most helpful framework for combining these two ways of designing learning activities by proposing "four ways of looking at learning situations based on the direction and support needed by the learner" (pp. 37-38). The four ways are:

> (a) Learners need both direction and support, (b) learners need direction, (c) learners need support but are reasonably self-directed, and (d) learners are at least moderately capable of providing their own direction and support. (p. 38).

What separates these four views is the variable of the learner's competence in determining what to learn and which process to use in carrying out the learning.

Self-directed Learning

Another adult-related model is self-directed learning. As mentioned above, one of Knowles' five assumptions of andragogy is that as people mature they become self-directed learners. Merriam and Caffarella (1999) define self-directed learning "as a process of learning, in which people take the primary initiative for planning, carrying out, and evaluating their own learning experiences" (p. 293). But this model is not for adults alone. Merriam and Caffarella (1999) have pointed out that "many public schools and colleges and universities have used this concept to describe one of the major goals of their institutions: to enable their students to be lifelong, self-directed learners" (p. 288). The three major goals of the self-directed learning model are as follows: (a) to

augment the ability of self-directed learning, (b) to foster transformational learning, and (c) to promote emancipatory learning and social action as part of self-directed learning.

There are three different types of self-directed learning models. These models were spawned from Tough (1971) who provided the first inclusive description of self-directed learning as a form of study. The three types of models are called linear, interactive, and instructional. Grow (1994), author of the instructional model of self-directed learning, described four helpful stages. These distinct stages are helpful because they outline how teachers can assist students in becoming more self-directed in their learning. Stage 1 learners have low self-direction and need an authority figure (a teacher) to tell them what to do. Stage 2 learners have moderate self-direction and are motivated and confident but largely ignorant of the subject matter to be learned. Stage 3 learners have intermediate self-direction and have both skill and basic knowledge and view themselves as being both ready and able to explore a specific subject area with a good guide. Stage 4 learners have high self-direction and are both willing and able to plan, execute, and evaluate their own learning with or without the help of an expert (Grow, 1994).

Transformational Learning

Andragogy and self-directed learning are important models, with transformative or transformational learning theory becoming increasingly significant since the late 1980's. Mezirow first expressed this theory in 1978. Merriam and Caffarella (1999) wrote that Mezirow suggested that

"transformational learning theory is about change—dramatic, fundamental change in the way we see ourselves and the world in which we live" (p. 318). Transformational learning focused more on the cognitive process of learning rather than on adult learner characteristics as andragogy and self-directed learning do.

According to Mezirow (1991), the process of transformation is set off by a "disorienting dilemma." This is followed by (a) self-examination, (b) critical assessment of assumptions, (c) realization that other people have gone through a similar process, (d) exploration of options for forming new roles, (e) relationships or actions (plan of action), and (f) reintegration back into one's life based on a new transformed perspective. The three key concepts in transformational learning as described by Merriam and Caffarella (1999) are the centrality of life experience, the character of critical reflection, and the correlation between transformational learning and development. The educator's role in transformational learning is an unresolved issue. Proponents of this theory ask two recurring, controversial questions: (a) What right do educators have to tamper with the worldview of the learner? (b) How exactly do educators assist in such learning?

Experiential Learning

Similar to transformational learning, experiential learning also stresses the importance of experience in learning. This experience may come from life, education, or work. (Fry, Ketteridge, & Marshall, 1999) In his classic book, *Experiential Learning*, Kolb (1984), the father of experiential learning, suggested

that, “learning is the process whereby knowledge is created through the transformation of experience” (p. 38). Kolb (1984), who based much of his work on Dewey, Piaget, and Lewin, is well known for his four-stage cycle. In this cycle, concrete experience forms the basis for reflection and observation, which allows for the formation of abstract concepts and generalizations. Finally, the concepts are tested in new situations through experimentation.

Fry, Ketteridge, and Marshall (1999) have suggested that “understanding is not a fixed or unchangeable element of thought but is formed and re-formed through experience” (p. 14). They have also suggested that “the experiential cycle does not simply involve doing, but also reflecting, processing, thinking, and furthering understanding” (p. 15). Wolf and Kolb (1984) posited that learners will develop preferences for different modes of learning or different parts of the cycle, so to speak. However, they also suggested that it is important for learners to move through the entire learning cycle for the most complete learning to happen.

Svinicki and Dixon (1987) have taken the Kolb Model and modified it for classroom use. This is an example of a model of learning evolving into a model for instruction. The authors suggested that “certain [learning] activities support different phases of this cycle” and that “by constructing learning sequences that lead students through the full cycle, an instructor should be able to foster a more complete learning” (p. 579). Some examples of activities and their corresponding roles are as follows: concrete experience (laboratories, observations, fieldwork), reflective observation (logs, journal, discussion), abstract conceptualization (lecture, papers, model building), and finally, active experimentation (simulations,

case study, projects). Svinicki and Dixon also emphasized that the learning cycle can be used for one course or extended across the curriculum.

Using this model, student activity levels will range from active participant to more passive receiver (Svinicki & Dixon, 1987), and the teacher's role in supporting experiential learning can be as coach, facilitator, mentor, supervisor, and tutor (Fry, Ketteridge, & Marshall, 1999).

Students' and Teachers' Beliefs about Teaching and Learning

Students have conceptions about learning as well as approaches to learning. These student conceptions and approaches do not always align with their teachers' conceptions of and approaches to teaching. There is a tension or conflict when students' and teachers' beliefs about learning and teaching are mismatched.

Student Conceptions of Learning

Researchers (Marton, dall'Alba & Beaty, 1993; Marton & Ramsden, 1987; Saljo, 1979) have discovered that college students have six general conceptions of learning. The conceptions form a hierarchy with the third conception incorporating the first and second, and the sixth incorporating all five previous conceptions. The first three conceptions are described as quantitative and the last three as qualitative (Chalmers & Fuller, 1994). The six conceptions are (a) a quantitative increase in knowledge, (b) memorizing and reproduction, (c) applying knowledge, (d) making sense of abstract meaning, (e) interpreting and understanding reality in a different way, and (f) changing as a person.

Student Approaches to Learning

Researchers suggest that there is an important relationship between students' approaches to learning and the quality of learning outcomes (Biggs, 1987; Entwistle & Ramsden, 1983; Marton & Saljo, 1976). Among these researchers there is agreement on the existence of two basic approaches to learning—deep and surface. A third has recently been added—strategic or achieving (Entwistle, 1997). The three types of learning can be summarized in the following way. Students who apply a deep approach to learning seek to gain the greatest amount of meaning from their studying. They will actively relate ideas to their own prior knowledge and experience, and they will look for patterns and underlying principles in the material. Students who apply a surface approach to learning seek to meet the course requirements. They will use rote memorization and study without reflecting on either the purpose of the material or the strategies necessary to understand it. Students who apply a strategic or achieving approach to learning wish to achieve the highest grade possible. They put consistent effort into studying and are sure to do what is necessary to get the job done well. They are particularly alert to the requirements and preferences of the teacher. The strategic or achieving approach may be evidenced in a student who often uses a deep approach but uses some surface approaches to make the grade (Andrews, Garrison, & Magnusson, 1996; Fry, Ketteridge, & Marshall, 1999; Light & Cox, 2001).

Teacher Conceptions of Teaching

As was illustrated in the research by Andrews, Garrison, and Magnusson (1996), teachers also hold beliefs about the nature of their teaching. Samuelowicz and Bain (1992) identified five conceptions. These conceptions are (a) imparting information; (b) transmission of knowledge and attitudes to knowledge, within the framework of an academic discipline; (c) facilitating understanding; (d) activity aimed at changing students' conceptions or understanding of the world; and (e) supporting student learning. These conceptions, according to the researchers, are not considered hierarchical but rather ordered on a continuum. The first three are of a quantitative nature and the last two are of a qualitative nature.

Mismatched Teaching and Learning Approaches and Conceptions

The views that students and teachers hold about learning and teaching are reported to affect views of roles in learning and teaching. Chalmers and Fuller (1994) have pointed out the conflict that occurs when a teacher's conception of teaching is transmission and a student's conception of learning is changing as a person. This tension or conflict can further be illustrated in a study conducted by Andrews, Garrison, and Magnusson (1996). The researchers found that teachers typically choose a deep approach to teaching while their students may or may not have applied the same deep approach. Often, assessment practices and large workload led students to apply a more surface approach to learning even when the teacher espoused a deep approach to teaching. Researchers also found that third-year students were much more likely

to apply a deep approach than were their first-year classmates. The authors Andrews, Garrison, and Magnusson (1996) suggest that excellent teachers are sure to align their practices with their beliefs, thereby facilitating meaningful learning. Effective teachers are also aware of the congruence or incongruence of their beliefs about learning with their students' application of deep or surface learning.

Three Models of Effective Teaching

In this next section on effective teaching, the following models will be considered: Lowman's (1996) two-dimensional model of effective college teaching; feminist pedagogy, as described primarily by Tisdel (1995); and Baxter Magolda's (1999) constructive-developmental pedagogy.

Lowman's Two-dimensional Model of Effective College Teaching

Lowman (1984, 1996) suggests that two relatively independent skills (dimensions) determine a college teacher's quality of instruction. Dimension I, Intellectual Excitement, has two components—"the clarity of an instructor's communications and their positive emotional impact on students" (p. 10), or the "what" and the "way" of the presentation. Dimension II is Interpersonal Rapport. Hativa, Barak, and Simhi (2002) reference Lowman's work and summarize Dimension II in a helpful way. They suggested that it is "relating to students in ways that communicate positive regard and motivate them to work hard to meet academic challenges" (p. 723). Put another way, Lowman's model emphasizes the importance of clear, selective content organization and well-honed interpersonal skills. Lowman (1996) conjectured that Dimension II is more

controversial than Dimension I because teachers are not in agreement on the importance of students' personal reactions. According to Lowman (1996), students favor a warm, open, student-centered teacher over a cold and distant one, but are not willing to sacrifice comprehensible and stimulating teaching.

This model proves to be particularly helpful when Dimensions I and II are combined in matrix form. Dimension I makes up the x-axis and Dimension II makes up the y-axis. As Lowman describes, these combined dimensions:

> Form nine combinations or cells, each representing a unique style of instruction associated with different probabilities that students will learn to their fullest potential from instructors following that style. The nine styles are numbered in ascending order of overall effectiveness, with cell 1 the least effective and cell 9 the most effective. (p. 19)

See Figure 1 (Lowman, 1996)

Dimension 1	Dimension 2: Interpersonal Rapport		
Intellectual Excitement	***Low***: Cold, distant, highly controlling, unpredictable	***Moderate****:* Relatively warm, approachable, and democratic; predictable	***High****:* Warm, open, predictable, and highly student-centered
High: Extremely clear and exciting	*Cell 6****:*** ***Intellectual Authorities*** Outstanding for some students and classes but not for others	*Cell 8:* ***Masterful Lecturers*** Especially skilled at large introductory classes	*Cell 9:* ***Complete Masters*** Excellent for any student and situation
Moderate: Reasonably clear and interesting	*Cell 3:* ***Adequates*** Minimally adequate for many students in lecture classes	*Cell 5:* ***Competents*** Effective for most students and classes	*Cell 7:* ***Masterful Facilitators*** Especially skilled at smaller, more advanced classes
Low: Vague and dull	*Cell 1:* ***Inadequates*** Unable to present material or motivate students well	*Cell 2:* ***Marginals*** Unable to present material well but will be liked by some students	*Cell 4:* ***Socratics*** Outstanding for some students and situations but not for most

Figure 1. Lowman's Two-Dimensional Model of Effective College Teaching (adapted from Lowman, 1996)

Teachers in cells 1-3 are not very competent teachers, teachers in cells 4-6 have unusual combinations of skills, and teachers in cells 7-9 are excellent college teachers. Lowman suggested that "every competent teacher must have at least moderate skill in each dimension, but there is considerable room for variation" (p. 21).

Feminist Pedagogy Combined with Multicultural Education

Feminist pedagogy focuses on the concerns of women in the matter of teaching and learning. Models of instruction often have theory-based beginnings; feminist pedagogy has risen out of a variety of feminist theories.

According to Merriam and Caffarella (1999), feminist pedagogy “focuses on the experiences, and in particular the oppression of women in the context of education” (p. 359).

There are basically two major types of feminist pedagogical models—liberation models and gender models (Maher, 1987). Merriam and Caffarella have made the following distinctions between the two models. “Liberatory feminist educators attempt to recover women’s voices, experiences, and viewpoints and use these to make systems of privilege, power, and oppression visible.” In the gender model, “the focus is on how female identity has been socially constructed to be one of nurturer and how the individual woman can find her voice, becoming emancipated in the personal psychological sense” (pp. 359-360).

Tisdel (1995) has combined the two models and created what she calls a poststructural feminist pedagogy model. Tisdel gives the following ten suggestions for creating inclusive adult learning environments for women as well as other underrepresented populations.

1. Integrate affective and experiential knowledge with theoretical concepts.

2. Pay attention to the power relations inherent in knowledge production.

3. Be aware that participants are positioned differently in relationship to each other and to the knowledge being acquired.

4. Acknowledge the power disparity between the teacher and the students.

5. Identify all stakeholders and their positionality in the educational program.

6. Consider the levels of inclusivity and the levels of contexts involved in the educational activity.

7. Consider how curricular choices implicitly or explicitly contribute to challenging structured power relations.

8. Adopt emancipatory teaching strategies.

9. Be conscious of the ways in which unconscious behavior contributes to challenging or reproducing unequal power relations.

10. Build a community based on both openness and intellectual rigor to create a democratic classroom.

Baxter Magolda's Constructive-Developmental Pedagogy

As Magolda described in her 1999 work *Creating Contexts for Learning and Self-Authorship: Constructive-Developmental Pedagogy*, pedagogy

> Incorporates two major concepts (a) that students construct knowledge by organizing and making meaning of their experiences, and (b) that this construction takes place in the context of their evolving assumptions about knowledge itself and students' role in creating it. (p. 6)

Teaching according to Magolda is "a matter of understanding and welcoming students' ways of making meaning and simultaneously engaging them in a journey toward more complex ways of making meaning" (p. 6). In addition to

subject mastery, Magolda hopes that students will reach self-authorship, which defined by Kegan is:

> The ability to reflect upon one's beliefs, organize one's thoughts and feelings in the context of, but separate from, the thoughts and feelings of others, and literally make up one's own mind. (Magolda, 1999, p. 6)

To cultivate self-authorship, teachers need to (a) validate students as knowers, (b) situate learning in students' own experiences, and (c) define learning as the process of mentally constructed meaning making.

Current Strategies that Improve Undergraduate Teaching and Learning

Much of what is known about teaching and learning can be found in many of the models of teaching and learning mentioned earlier in the chapter. From the research culminating in these models and from research on effective teaching, four highly esteemed and extensively referenced descriptions of effective teacher characteristics and practices have been formed. Interestingly, each of these publications was written in an effort to improve undergraduate education. The first three descriptions focus on faculty and students, while the fourth description broadens to include student services as well.

The first description is Chickering and Gamson's (1987, 1991, 1999) *Seven Principles of Good Practice in Undergraduate Education*. Angelo (1993) wrote a second, similar list of fourteen research-based principles for improving higher learning, titled *A Teacher's Dozen*. The third description is based on an engagement theory by Haworth and Conrad (1997). This theory is introduced and described in the book *Emblems of Quality: Developing and Sustaining High*

Quality Programs. The Joint Task Force on Student Learning, created by the American Association of Higher Education, the American College Personnel Association, and the National Association of Student Personnel Administrators created a fourth document articulating ten principles of learning complete with suggested actions and initiatives (Engelkemeyer & Brown, 1998).

Chickering and Gamson's Principles for Good Practice

The seven principles are considered by Diamond (2002) to be "the single best-known description of teaching practices that promote student learning" (p. 158). Chickering and Gamson (1987) note these principles were compiled in an effort to offer students and faculty a focus for their work in improving undergraduate education. A special note is made about how these principles "address the teacher's how, not the subject matter's what" (p. 544). Chickering and Gamson's (1987) seven principles suggest that good practice in undergraduate education:

1. Encourages contact between students and faculty.
2. Develops reciprocity and cooperation among students.
3. Encourages active learning.
4. Gives prompt feedback.
5. Emphasizes time on task.
6. Communicates high expectations.
7. Respects diverse talents and ways of learning.

Angelo's Fourteen Principles for Improving Higher Learning

With this well-researched list of 14 principles, Angelo (1993) sought to encourage faculty members to talk about teaching, to assess their current teaching, and to adapt their teaching to match the guiding principles they espouse. These principles, according to Angelo (1993), were based on three assumptions: (a) teachers need to know how humans, primarily their students, learn; (b) there are current, research-based principles that faculty can apply to their teaching; (c) teaching is so complex that faculty members will have to determine how these principles fit or do not fit their particular teaching circumstance. The principles are as follows:

1. Active learning is more effective than passive learning.
2. Learning is more effective and efficient when learners have explicit, reasonable, positive goals, and when their goals fit well with teachers' goals.
3. High expectations encourage high achievement.
4. Motivation to learn is alterable; the task, the environment, the teacher, and the learner can positively or negatively affect it.
5. Learning requires focused attention and awareness of the importance of what is to be learned.
6. To be remembered, new information must be meaningfully connected to prior knowledge, and it must first be remembered in order to be learned.
7. Unlearning what is already known is often more difficult than learning new information.

8. Information that is organized in personally meaningful ways is more likely to be remembered, learned, and used.

9. To be more effective, teachers need to balance levels of intellectual challenge and instructional support.

10. Mastering a complex skill or body of knowledge takes great amounts of time and effort.

11. Learning to transfer, to apply previous knowledge and skills to new contexts, requires a great deal of directed practice.

12. The ways in which learners are assessed and evaluated powerfully affect the ways they study and learn.

13. Interaction between teachers and learners is one of the most powerful factors in promoting learning; interaction among learners is another.

14. Learners need feedback on their learning, early and often, to learn well; to become independent learners, they need to become self-assessing and self-correcting.

Haworth and Conrad's Engagement Theory of Academic Program Quality

Haworth and Conrad's (1997) theory proposes that members in high-quality programs "invest in five separate clusters of program attributes, each of which contributes to enriching learning experiences for students that positively affect students' growth and development" (Haworth & Conrad, 1997, p. xiii). The five clusters are (a) diverse and engaged participants, (b) participatory cultures, (c) interactive teaching and learning, (d) connected program requirements, and (e) adequate resources (Haworth & Conrad, 1997).

Of particular interest are the attributes related to the third cluster in the theory, the interactive teaching and learning cluster. This cluster has five attributes. These attributes are:

1. Ongoing critical dialogue among program participants.
2. Integration of theory and practice and self with subject.
3. Regular mentoring of students by faculty.
4. Cooperative peer learning carried out by students as well as faculty.
5. Regular use of formal and informal out-of-class experiences.

Joint Task Force on Student Learning—Ten Principles

The ten principles are about learning and are based on research and practice. The principles work best when academics and student affairs personnel collaborate; it is more likely that better learning will happen for students when there is collaboration. The members of the Joint Task Force suggested, “all who participate in the educational mission of institutions of higher education—students, faculty, and staff—share responsibility for pursuing learning improvements” (Englekemeyer & Brown, 1998, p. 5). The ten principles are as follows:

1. Learning is fundamentally about making and maintaining connections.
2. Learning is enhanced by taking place in the context of compelling situations.
3. Learning is an active search for meaning by the learner.

4. Learning is developmental involving the whole person.

5. Learning is done by individuals tied to others as social beings.

6. Learning is strongly affected by the educational climate.

7. Learning requires frequent feedback.

8. Much learning takes place informally and incidentally.

9. Learning is grounded in particular contexts and individual experiences.

10. Learning involves the ability of individuals to monitor their own learning.

Outstanding Teaching by Outstanding Teachers

Colleges and universities are paying increased attention to quality teaching (Ovando, 1989). This increased attention is happening in America as well as in other parts of the world. Two relatively recent studies, one taking place in Tel Aviv and the other in the United States, have both looked at effective college teaching. One study asked outstanding teachers about exemplary teaching (Hativa, Barak, & Simhi; 2001) and sought student input through student ratings of instructors (Young & Shaw, 1999).

Hativa, Barak, and Simhi's (2001) study showed that effective teachers excelled in varying degrees in four dimensions of effective teaching. These four dimensions are: (a) lesson organization, (b) lesson clarity, (c) making a lesson interesting/engaging, and (d) classroom climate. The researchers came to the conclusion that effective teachers achieve success in many different ways and do not necessarily need to excel well in all four dimensions of teaching. They

suggest that “it is sufficient to excel in some of these dimensions and to function quite well on the others; one can even function poorly on one of these.” Additionally, they concluded “that there is no particular comprehensive set of classroom strategies that is necessary for becoming an exemplary teacher” (p. 725), although they suggested that the four dimensions of teaching mentioned above are of high importance.

The research carried out by Hativa, Barak, and Simhi (2001) was based in part on the work of Young and Shaw (1999). Using a 25-item instrument, the researchers asked a large sample of students to rate one of their current or former college teachers. Based on various analyses, the researchers concluded that there were six main dimensions of effective teaching. These dimensions are (a) effective communication, (b) a comfortable learning atmosphere, (c) concern for student learning, (d) student motivation, (e) course organization, and (f) value of the course. Similar to Hativa, Barak, and Simhi’s (2001) findings, Young and Shaw (1999) found “effective teachers can compensate for deficiencies in one or two areas by demonstrating outstanding skills in other areas” (p. 683). It is interesting to note that others have expressed the same sentiment; McKeachie (1997) notes, “effective teachers come in all shapes and sizes” (p. 1218).

A Conceptual Framework for Teaching Christianly

This next section describes a Christian conceptual framework for teaching as developed from the work of Harro Van Brummelen and John Van Dyk. Van Brummelen is the author of *Walking with God in the Classroom* (1988) and Van Dyk (2000) is the author of *The Craft of Christian Teaching*. Both men are

college professors teaching in education departments at Christian colleges—Van Brummelen at Trinity Western University, Langley, British Columbia, Canada and Van Dyk at Dordt College, Sioux Center, Iowa. What follows is a combined conceptual framework using the information from the books previously mentioned.

It must be noted that both authors have written their books first and foremost for K-12 teachers. Nonetheless, the combined conceptual framework was chosen because it has application for all teachers in K-12 education as well as higher education and because no other model for Christian teaching in higher education is currently available.

The goal in this section is not to dismiss the models, theories, and best practices mentioned in the first part of this chapter; rather it is to identify an alternative for Christian teachers teaching in Christian colleges and universities. This alternative, a conceptual framework from Van Brummelen (1988) and Van Dyk (2000), has been founded on much of the information/research presented in the first section of Chapter 2. Where applicable, references are made back to this information/research to illustrate connections. The following topics are discussed in this section: the religious nature of teaching, the aim of teaching christianly, the characteristics of a Christian teacher, the components of teaching christianly, the image of the student, and the phases of learning.

The Religious Nature of Teaching

Van Brummelen (1988) and Van Dyk (2000) both suggested that teaching is a religious craft and that all of life is essentially religious with education being

no exception. “All of our activities are (a) driven by faith commitments, (b) headed in a certain direction, and (c) performed in (worshipful) service” (Van Dyk, 2000, p. 37). All teaching is driven by what people believe is important or valuable whether they are Christian, Jew, Muslim, etc. Where this conceptual framework is different from other models, theories, and practices mentioned earlier is in its religious underpinnings based on the Bible, and the Kingdom of God--the central theme of Jesus Christ’s teaching (Van Brummelen, 1988; Van Dyk, 2000). Van Dyk summarized this view: “genuine Christian teaching, this is the teaching that emerges from a philosophy of education grounded in a holistic life-encompassing worldview” (pp. 86-87). This view informs the aim of teaching christianly described in the next section.

The Aim of Teaching Christianly

Van Brummelen (1988) and Van Dyk (2000) are unified on the aim of teaching christianly. Van Brummelen suggested that the aim is to “educate [students] for a life of responsible discipleship” (p.2) and Van Dyk suggested that the aim is to equip “students for knowledgeable and competent discipleship” (p.38). Discipleship, as described by Van Brummelen (1989), is the act of grasping the vision of Jesus Christ and living in view of that.

Van Brummelen developed his thought further when he wrote, “to educate means to lead forth, shaping attitudes and dispositions, and giving form to ideas” (p. 5); and “teaching and learning aims to discover God’s laws and apply them in obedient response to God” (p. 7). In order to achieve this aim of “responsible

discipleship," Van Brummelen (1988) posited that educators must pursue the following four goals:

1. To unfold the basis, framework and implications of a Christian vision of life.

2. To foster the development of concepts, abilities, and creativity that (a) proclaim the marvel and potential of God's creation, even in its fallen state, and (b) enable students to walk in God's way by using their God-given talents in service to God and their neighbors.

3. To let students experience the meaning of living out a Christian worldview, in order that they may be able and willing to (a) make personal and communal decisions from a Biblical perspective, and (b) develop values and practice dispositions in harmony with Christian principles.

4. To encourage students to commit themselves to Jesus Christ and to a Christian way of life, willing to serve God and their neighbors. (Van Brummelen, 1988, pp. 8-10).

The Characteristics of a Christian Teacher

Van Brummelen (1988) suggested that Christian teachers should exhibit the following characteristics, (a) "be personally committed to Jesus Christ" (p. 25) and (b) "model Christian love and the fruits of the Spirit" (p. 26). Van Dyk (2000) agreed with these two characteristics and also emphasized the importance of having "skills of leadership, management, and various competencies . . . such as knowledge of subject matter and ability to prepare and implement effective lessons" (p. 115). These characteristics, Van Brummelen and Van Dyk

suggested, are critical for helping students achieve the aim of “responsible discipleship.”

The Components of Teaching Christianly

Although the above characteristics are important, they don’t necessarily guarantee a quality Christian teacher. Van Brummelen (1988) and Van Dyk (2000) suggested that teachers need additional competencies or components. Van Dyk (2000) posited that there are basically three components of Christian teaching—guiding, unfolding, and enabling. Where Van Dyk (2000) placed structuring with the first component—guiding, Van Brummelen (1988) gave it its own separate fourth component.

Guiding. Guiding, according to Van Dyk (2000) is the “direction setting aspect” (p. 99) of teaching. Van Dyk preferred guiding to leading as guiding “allows for [student] self-directedness and responsibility” (p. 99). Van Dyk’s view is similar to Magolda’s (1999) model of self-directed learning or constructive-cevelopmental pedagogy. He suggested that guiding involves modeling, motivation, discipline, devotions, encouragement, and facilitating/structuring.

Unfolding. Van Dyk (2000) begins his explanation of unfolding by defining the term in the following way: “to open up to the children what as yet they do not know or cannot do” (p.104). Unfolding requires a curriculum and requires a “Christian perspective on subject matter” (p. 105). Van Brummelen suggests that unfolding is much more than “imparting knowledge.” It is a “message of (1) unity and diversity in creation, (2) life’s meaning and potential, and (3) power of sin and redemption” (p. 30). Van Dyk explains, “it [unfolding] is the type of teaching

in which both teacher and students communally engage in unfolding activities . . . both teacher and students open up the curricular content" (pp. 104-105). He concludes the section by stating that it is not enough to open up the curriculum; teachers need to do what they can to allow students occasions "to put the perspective into practice" (p. 106). Unfolding has close ties to Kolb's (1984) experiential learning and Magolda's (1999) constructive-developmental pedagogy.

Structuring. Structuring has to do with teaching strategies and lesson organization which are developmentally and experientially appropriate (Van Dyk, 2000). Van Dyk explained "when you structure the classroom for learning, you are setting the stage for students to head in a certain direction and nudging them along" (p. 104). He further suggested that teachers ask themselves the following questions:

> Do my teaching strategies—no matter what the grade level or subject matter—move my class along towards the overarching goal? Or are they short-sighted, aimed only at immediate learning outcomes, and detached from concerns about the meaning of teaching christianly? (p. 104)

Critical to structuring in a way the two authors suggested is community—Christian learning communities in classrooms (Van Brummelen, 1988; Van Dyk, 2000). The structuring described here is comparable to Lowman's (1996) Dimension I—intellectual excitement. Lowman reports the importance of designing and presenting interesting and engaging lessons.

Enabling. According to the authors (Van Brummelen, 1988; Van Dyk, 2000), enabling is an outcome of successful structuring and unfolding. Van Brummelen (1988) suggested "it embraces exercising abilities and developing dispositions on the basis of scriptural norms and principles" and it encourages "students to use their gifts in service to God through service to their fellow creatures" (p. 31). Van Brummelen (1988) and Van Dyk (2000) both encouraged teachers to gradually, as the growth of the student permits, lessen their own structuring and unfolding and encourage students to take greater control of their own enabling. Emphasis is placed on encouraging students to begin to take ownership of the content and direction of their learning.

In addition to these four components of teaching christianly, both authors write of the importance of learning in community. Van Dyk (2000), who gives community the most emphasis, strongly urged teachers to build community amongst their students and describes in detail how this can be accomplished. This emphasis on community is similar to what Chickering and Gamson (1987) and Engelkemeyer and Brown (1998), authors of the Joint Task Force on Student Learning, suggested in their strategies for improving undergraduate teaching and learning.

Image of the Student

A Christian model of learning and/or teaching takes into account *who* the student is. Van Brummelen posits the following about students:

1. Students are holistic, integrated beings whose religious heart governs all dimensions of life. Teachers must take into account that all dimensions of students' lives are interrelated and affect each other.

2. Students are made in the image and likeness of God. This means that students are accountable and responsible for their actions, and accountable for living according to God's will.

3. Teachers should build on students' strengths and enable students to understand their particular gifts and develop these gifts.

4. Students must gradually be given more and more responsibility for their learning and then be held accountable for their decisions.

5. Teachers must help direct students in the way they should go. This direction is best given after teachers have worked at establishing an atmosphere of security, lack of fear, and mutual respect for others' dignity and property. (pp. 38-42).

While Van Brummelen suggests "that all dimensions of students' lives are interrelated and affect each other," Engelkemeyer and Brown (1998) comparably suggest that "learning is fundamentally about making and maintaining connections." Additionally, Van Brummelen (1988) and Van Dyk (2000), as well as Engelkemeyer and Brown, also describe learning as maturation involving the whole student.

Phases of Learning

The aim of teaching christianly is to guide students to responsive discipleship to God; learning must ultimately lead to this discipleship.

Responsible or responsive discipleship according to Van Brummelen (1988), “requires a life of personal faith in Christ, a willingness to build Christian relationship in the community, and the ability and disposition to participate in our culture in a Christian way” (p. 8). Van Brummelen (1988) suggested “effective learning usually involves four more-or-less distinct phases: (a) setting the stage, (b) disclosure, (c) reformulation, and (d) transcendence” (p. 50). These four stages are based on the important point made in the Components of Teaching Christianly section, that teaching involves guidance through unfolding, structuring, and enabling. In this section, the four phases of learning as described by Van Brummelen (1988) are explained and depicted in Figure 2 (Van Brummelen, 1988). This model is considered to be participatory in nature; therefore each phase includes activities for teachers and for students.

Phase 1: Providing the Setting. Setting the stage is a time when students see the personal relevance of the learning that is to take place. As Van Brummelen (1988) wrote, “It makes use of the students’ experiential knowledge” and “is a time for exploring, asking questions, for delight in immediate response” (p. 50). In this phase, teachers are called to do the following:

> (a) Provide settings, (b) pose problems, (c) draw out experiential knowledge, (d) motivate, and (e) guide reflection. (p. 52)

Students are called to:

> (a) Reflect on experiential knowledge, (b) explore and search for relationships, and (c) draw interim conclusions. (p. 52)

Angelo (1993) and Engelkemeyer and Brown (1998) also described the importance of connecting new knowledge to prior knowledge. This emphasis on connections can be seen in their lists included earlier in this chapter. Experiential learning and knowledge are also emphasized here in a way similar to that posited by Fry, Ketteridge, and Marshall (1999) and Kolb (1984),

Phase 2: Disclosure. Similar to Lowman (1996), Van Brummelen advised that "precise, well-organized instruction" must follow the first phase of learning" and "this [second] phase emphasizes careful conceptual development" (1988, p. 53). Van Dyk supported Van Brummelen's advice by offering that otherwise the "lesson degenerates to nothing but an exercise in 'pooled ignorance'" (p. 195). In this phase, teachers are called to do the following:

> (a) Present, (b) explain, (c) analyze, (d) disclose, and (e) demonstrate. (p. 52)

Students are called to:

> (a) Collect information, (b) integrate, (c) conceptualize, (d) draw inferences and conclusions, and (e) build theories. (p. 52)

Phase 3: Reformulation. At this phase, according to Van Dyk (2000), the objective is to be sure that everyone understands the new concepts and has learned the new skills. Van Brummelen (1988) suggested students "must demonstrate that the [new] concepts are integrated into their conceptual schema" (p. 54). In this phase, teachers are called to do the following:

> (a) Question, (b) provide reinforcement and practice activities, (c) coach, and (d) check. (p. 53)

Students are called to:

> (a) Reformulate and explain, (b) apply concepts and theories to concrete situations, (c) solve simple problems, and (d) manipulate. (p. 53)

In this phase, students must practice incorporating the new concepts and new skills. Angelo (1993) also referred to this need for practice in his *Teacher's Dozen*.

Phase 4: Transcendence. Van Brummelen (1988) wrote,

> During this phase students respond to what they have learned. They apply concepts and principles in their own unique ways . . . They develop personally meaningful products and choose responses that effect their own lives. They commit themselves to certain courses of action and values. Students now offer to others the results of their learning and thinking in various forms. Especially in this phase, students can experience how humans can live in obedient response to God, and accept the mandate of God's Kingdom for themselves. (pp. 56-57)

Van Dyk (2000) considered this last phase to be the most important. It is where students are encouraged to incorporate the newly-learned material back into their lives. This emphasis on transcendence is analogous to Mezirow's (1991) transformational learning, which is based in part on Paulo Freire's (Merriam & Cafarella, 1999) work. Freire's work also inspired Van Dyk's (2000) work.

In order to implement this final phase well, Van Dyk (2000) suggested that teachers ask the following questions about their students:

> What difference in their lives will the new learning make? How will the new learning equip them to carry out their tasks more effectively and christianly? What specific redemptive action steps can they design? Are they willing to commit themselves to implementing, in a healing way, as agents of reconciliation, the material they have learned? (p. 195)

These questions help teachers determine if their actions match their beliefs about teaching. Samuelowicz and Bain (1992) identified five conceptions teachers have about their teaching; this stage focuses on the fourth of these conceptions—changing students' conceptions or understanding of the world. In this phase, teachers are called to do the following:

> (a) Provide opportunities and choices, (b) stimulate, (c) encourage, and (d) assess. (p. 52)

Students are called to:

> (a) Make personal products, (b) choose and commit, (c) solve challenging problems, and (d) improvise and invent. (p. 52)

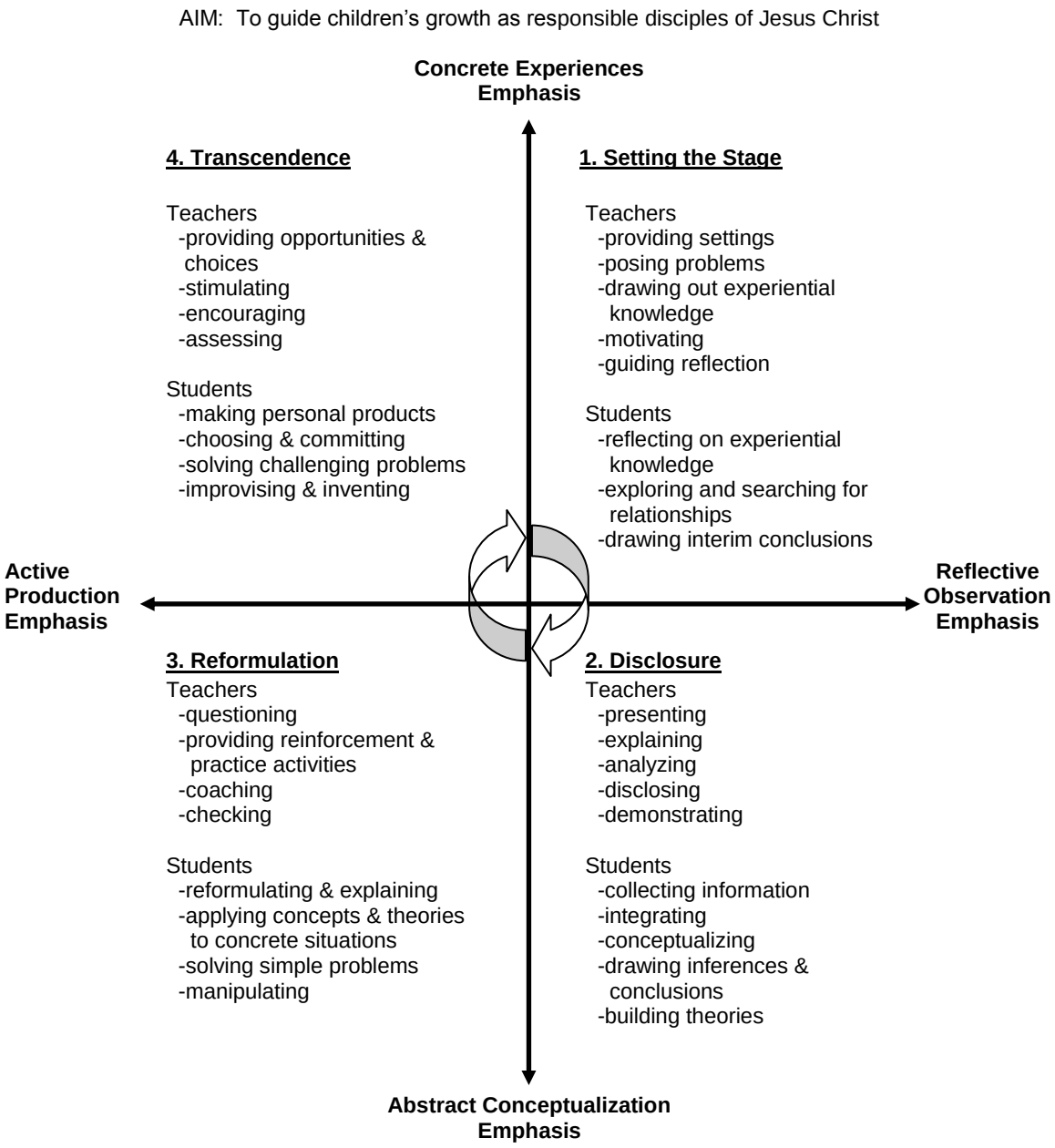

Figure 2. Van Brummelen's Four Phases of Learning (adapted from Van Brummelen, 1988)

The four phases, described here, are quite similar to Kolb's (1984) four-stage model (See Figure 3.) A comparison of Figure 2 (Van Brummelen, 1988) and Figure 3 (Svinicki and Dixon, 1987) reveals this similarity.

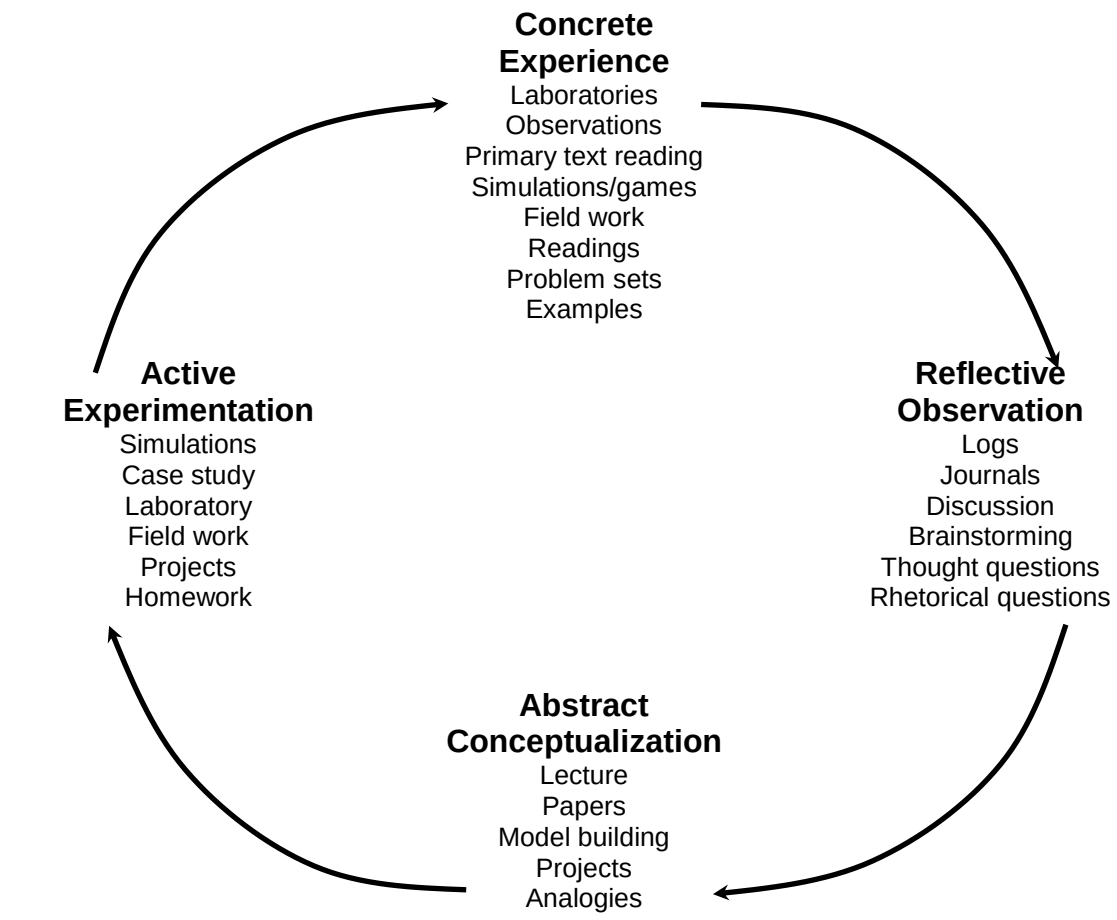

Figure 3. Kolb's Experiential Learning Cycle (adapted from Svinicki and Dixon, 1987)

Conceptual Framework Summary

It is helpful to end this description of a conceptual framework for teaching christianly by describing three metaphors Van Brummelen (1988) and Van Dyk

(2000) used to illustrate what it means to teach christianly. Van Brummelen (1988) suggested, “Teaching is a journey, a journey to which the Master [God] calls you” (p. 180). He filled out the metaphor a bit further when he wrote, “teachers and learners are on a pilgrimage together, a pilgrimage that focuses on the Kingdom of God” (p. 181). Magolda (1999) also used a “journey” metaphor in a description of her constructive-developmental pedegogy. Van Dyk (2000) used two metaphors: the craftsperson and the guide. A craftsperson knows or should know the universal elements to his craft, but she also is aware of the “personal, intuitive elements, the personality and gifts of the individual teacher which make every teacher unique” (p. 79). Van Dyk’s (2000) guide metaphor fits quite closely with Van Brummelen’s (1988) and Magolda’s (1999) teaching-as-a-journey metaphor. This section of the model concludes well with Van Dyk’s comments on this metaphor:

> Guiding, if it is to be guiding, is purposeful. It must have direction. You cannot really be an authentically Christian teacher, I believe, if you do not frequently ask: Are we on the right path? Are we heading towards the destination? Are we continuously aiming at knowledgeable and competent discipleship? (p. 81)

Teaching and Learning at Dordt College

The authors of the combined model, Van Brummelen (1988) and Van Dyk (2000), share the same religious beliefs and affiliations as Dordt College. Van Dyk (2000) wrote the following in the preface of *The Craft of Christian Teaching*: “The religious orientation of this book reflects the biblical perspective of Dordt

College as a whole" (p. xii). This next section is a summary of what Dordt College holds to be true about teaching and learning.

The basis for education at Dordt College is a religious, faith commitment which insists on obedience to biblical principles in all of life and promotes lifelong Christian service for students. Five documents were used in this section of teaching and learning at Dordt College. These documents are the *2004-2005 Dordt College Catalog (2004)*, *Dordt College Strategic Plan* (2004), *Deepening the Colors* (Hielema, in press), *The Educational Task of Dordt College* (1979) (see Appendix A), and *The Educational Framework of Dordt College* (1993) (see Appendix B). *Deepening the Colors* (Hielema, in press) is a brief text used for a freshmen general-education course. It is written by a Dordt professor who teaches Theology as well as co-coordinates the general education course for which the book was written. *The Educational Task of Dordt College* (1979) is considered by the college to be the statement of purpose for the college and "now serves as the biblically-based, confessional foundation for the entire academic enterprise at Dordt College" (p. 1). *The Educational Framework of Dordt College* (1993) "clarifies what the curriculum should be and how it should be structured to fulfill the mission of the college" (p. 1). The mission statement of the college, updated and approved January, 2004, reads as follows:

> As an institution of higher education committed to the Reformed Christian perspective, the mission of Dordt College is to equip students, alumni, and the broader community to work effectively toward Christ-centered renewal in all aspects of contemporary life. We carry out our academic task by:

1. Developing a biblical understanding of creation and culture.
2. Discerning the pervasive effects of sin throughout the world.
3. Celebrating and proclaiming the redemptive rule of Christ over all of life and all of creation.
4. Nurturing a commitment for challenging the forces that distort God's good creation and all of human activity.
5. Offering academic programs, maintaining institutional practices, and conducting social activities in a visionary, integrated, biblically informed manner.
6. Fostering a climate in which discipleship becomes a practiced way of life both on and off campus. (p. 3)

The Educational Task or Aim of Teaching at Dordt College

The educational task of Dordt College as summarized in the *Educational Framework* (1993) is "to provide insight and develop talents that will sustain lifelong responsible service in God's kingdom" (p. 6) and "to prepare students to live thankful lives before the Lord; to serve others with integrity, in common everyday activities as well as in specific vocations; and to unfold and care for the creation" (p. 6). *The Educational Task* (1979) states "The Dordt graduate must have both a theoretical understanding of a situation and the practical ability and skill to be reformingly busy in response to God's call to service" (p. 6). These statements all refer to a term used at Dordt College—"serviceable insight." Serviceable insight is the aim of teaching and learning at Dordt and is quite

comparable to Van Brummelen's (1988) "responsible discipleship" and Van Dyk's (2000) "knowledgeable and competent discipleship."

The Image of the Student and Role of the Faculty

The authors of *The Educational Task* describe humans as religious creatures, created in God's image, and called to loving obedience. *The Educational Task* also states "The religious character of humankind is manifested through the heart, which is the integrating center of human existence" (p. 3). It is this religious heart which is the focus of teaching at Dordt. This point corresponds closely with what Van Brummelen (1988) and Van Dyk (2000) have stated.

Hielema (in press), in *Deepening the Colors*, describes what it means for anyone to live as God's image on earth. He suggests that the image, which we are all of the time, "describes our relationship to God, to our fellow image-bearers, to the whole of creation, and to ourselves (our inner integrity and wholeness)" (p. 79). We are in God's image when "we reflect the glory of God: by living as children of the Father, partners of one another, ruling over creation with inner integrity and wholeness" (p. 89).

To be involved in the educational process at Dordt College is to be called to a task. According to *The Educational Task (1979)* document, "to occupy a position at the college means to be placed in a God-ordained office requiring educational service in self-effacing love and obedience to the Lord" (p. 7). Faculty, "have the primary responsibilities for the development and transmission of insight . . . who through research and teaching, are called to carry out the

central task of Dordt College" (p. 7). Teaching is considered a high calling at Dordt College and one that is not to be taken lightly.

Being a student is also considered a high calling, and students are also called to participate in the educational task of the college. The *Task (1979)* states, "As office-bearers they [students] are required to advance the educational enterprise by acquiring, contributing to, and serving as the agents for the transmission of insight from its theoretical beginnings to concrete application" (p. 7). The curriculum, as described in the next section, is the central vehicle for students and faculty to implement their tasks.

Curricular Focus of Dordt College

The Educational Framework of Dordt College (1993) makes explicit what should be included in the curriculum and how it should be structured in order to realize the mission of Dordt. This section will include a brief description of Dordt's curricular content, design, and goals.

Curricular Content and Goals. The curricular content section of *The Educational Framework* (1993) document, as well as the curricular goals section, is organized under four headings, most often referred to as the *Four Coordinates*: (a) religious orientation, (b) creational structure, (c) creational development, and (d) contemporary response. The *Framework* document (1993) suggests,

> Each part of the curriculum should be infused with Christian perspective, should reveal how God has structured that field of investigation for the benefit of His creatures, should show how that area of creation has unfolded over time and how human beings have responded to God's law

> there, and should prepare students to fulfill their contemporary responsibilities relative to the insights it provides. (p. 1)

Each of these four sections is necessary. They cannot be studied in complete isolation and should always culminate in the fourth coordinate of *contemporary response*. The curricular goals and student outcomes are clearly described in *The Educational Framework* (1993) (see Appendix A).

Curricular Design. The document where Dordt most specifically discusses Christian teaching, or "pedagogy for effective learning," is in *The Educational Framework* (1993). The document suggests,

> The curriculum should be organized to employ instructional styles and strategies (a) that suit the subject matter being studied, (b) that recognize the different stages of late adolescent development and help students progress in their learning, (c) that employ learning experiences to match the various ways students learn, (d) that foster communal scholarship, (e) that capitalize upon and broaden faculty members' strengths, (f) that encourage student reflection and response, and (g) that connect learning with real-life situations. (p. 8)

Additionally, the document suggests that the curriculum should be organized in such a way that courses are sequenced well according to students' prior learning experiences and maturation levels.

Dordt's documents give a comprehensive description of the college's mission, purpose, and curriculum but it gives very little description of how teachers should carry this out in their teaching. There is a brief list in the

curricular design section of the *Framework* document (1993) about teaching, but it leaves decisions on how to develop and exercise such intentional instructional activities up to the teachers without offering much guidance. This has potential to be problematic for the institution's faculty and more importantly the institution's students.

Summary

This chapter is a brief review of literature and related research on (a) models of learning and effective teaching, (b) students' and teachers' beliefs about teaching and learning, (c) strategies that improve undergraduate teaching and learning, (d) outstanding teaching by outstanding teachers, (e) a combined conceptual framework of teaching christianly, and (f) teaching and learning at Dordt College. This review supported the need for continuing research in the area of teaching christianly in higher education. A K-12 conceptual framework was chosen as one was not available in higher education. It is hoped that this study will contribute to the research in this area by assisting faculty members and administrators in their understanding of the phenomenon of teaching christianly and in their personal development of the practice of teaching christianly.

CHAPTER 3

Methodology

The methodology and procedures for determining what it means to teach christianly are presented in this chapter. The chapter includes a review of selected literature and research, a discussion of the following items: qualitative design, the role of the researcher, study participants, data collection methods, data analysis, and verification of interpretation.

For clarity and consistency in the writing of the dissertation, the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association (5th ed.) (2001)* will be used as a guide.

Research Problem and Research Questions

The purpose of this study was to investigate what it means to teach christianly at Dordt College. The researcher used a phenomenological approach to explore teachers' perceptions and beliefs of teaching christianly in higher education (Moustakas, 1994). The principal research question was "What does it mean to teach christianly at Dordt College?" Sub-questions that guided this study were:

1. What does it mean to teach christianly at Dordt College?
2. What is the aim of teaching christianly in higher education?
3. How does the mission of Dordt College impact how its teachers teach?
4. What personal characteristics are essential for Christian teachers?

5. What help have teachers given or received in regard to the practice of teaching christianly?

Review of Selected Literature and Research

A comprehensive review of the related literature was conducted for the purposes of this study. The following resources were used in the search through the I.D. Weeks Library at The University of South Dakota, Vermillion, the John and Louis Hulst Library at Dordt College, Sioux Center, Iowa, and through interlibrary loan: *Academic Search Elite, Dissertation Abstracts International (DAI)*, *Ebsco, Education Abstracts,* the Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC) database, *ProQuest, Psychological Abstracts*, *Social Science Abstracts,* and *Wilson Select/Select Plus.*

Context of the Study and Study Participants

North Central Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools accredits Dordt College as a four-year bachelor-degree-granting institution. The curriculum at Dordt College is designed to give each student a complete liberal arts education from a solidly Reformed Christian perspective. Currently, there are over 30 majors and 10 pre-professional programs of study. Dordt offers the following degrees: four-year Bachelor of Arts, Bachelor of Science in Engineering, and Bachelor of Social Work, along with a two-year Associate of Arts degree and a Master of Education degree. As of 2004, Dordt College has 78 full-time faculty members and a student-faculty ratio of 15-1.

The researcher sought to explore what it means to teach christianly, was aware of the need for a thorough view of the topic, desired to study individuals in

their natural setting, and wished to be an active learner in the understanding of the phenomenon of Christian teaching (Creswell, 1998).

Furthermore, this study, within the context of Dordt College, was particularly suited for a qualitative study due to the fact that answering a “what” question was necessary, exploration of the topic was necessary, and a “detailed view” of the topic was necessary (Creswell, 1998). As is the case with most phenomenological studies, the focus of this research was on specific individuals who have experienced the phenomenon, in this case the phenomenon of teaching christianly. Creswell (1998) suggests that for phenomenological studies criterion sampling works particularly well. This type of sampling was employed in this study.

The individuals selected for this study were faculty members teaching at Dordt College. Dordt College was selected for two reasons: first, it is the researcher’s place of employment and therefore she has a vested interest in the teaching taking place there, and second, because it is a Christian college, one would expect teachers to have experience with the phenomenon of teaching christianly.

Due to the significance of the topic of the study for the college and due to the researcher’s good standing at the college, the researcher sought and received permission to conduct the study by both the president of the college, the academic dean (see Appendix C), and the institution’s review board (see Appendix D).

As recommended by Creswell (1998) for phenomenological studies, data were collected using in-depth interviews with no more than ten teachers. The ten teachers were selected from Dordt College's faculty. With initial selection help of the Vice President of Academic Affairs and the three division deans, at least three teachers from each division were chosen. Each of these teachers had experienced the phenomenon of teaching christianly, exhibited a commitment to teaching christianly, and are considered to be outstanding Christian teachers by the Vice President for Academic Affairs, their deans, and the researcher.

Qualitative Design

Qualitative research is described as a process of inquiry that explores a social or human problem while also having the goal of improving some social condition (Creswell, 1998; Rossman & Rallis, 2003). This type of research typically includes five different inquiry traditions: biography, phenomenology, grounded theory, ethnography, and case study (Creswell, 1998). There is consensus among authors that qualitative research includes recurring features. These features consist of a natural-world context, the key instrument is the researcher, an analysis completed with words, an evolving research versus tightly prefigured, a use of multiple methods, an inductive analysis of data, and a focus on participants' perceptions (Creswell, 1998; Rossman & Rallis, 2003; Miles & Humberman, 1994). As Rossman and Rallis (2003) suggest, a goal of qualitative research is "to learn about some aspect of the social world and to generate new understandings that can be used" (p. 4). In order to learn about

what it means to teach christianly at a small, private Christian college, the tradition of inquiry the researcher employed in this study was phenomenology.

Phenomenology, as defined by Creswell (1998), “describes the meaning of the lived experiences for several individuals about a concept or the phenomenon” (p. 51). Phenomenological researchers, Creswell (1998) suggests, “search for the essential, invariant structure (or essence) or the central underlying meaning of the experience” (p. 52). He also states that phenomenology stems from philosophy and has been used for study in the humanities and social sciences, particularly, sociology, psychology, nursing, and education.

This method was most appropriate for what the researcher proposed because in asking the question of “what it means to teach christianly” the researcher assumed that there was a structure or essence to the participants’ shared experiences. The researcher sought to understand and describe this structure or essence.

According to Creswell (1998), there are four “procedural issues” the researcher must consider in this type of inquiry.

1. Epoche or bracketing is the process of data analysis when the researcher must put aside, as much as possible, all prejudgments and preconceived ideas (Creswell, 1998; Marshall & Rossman, 1995). Bracketing is necessary when trying to listen to what participants have to say about the experience of teaching christianly.

2. The researcher must write research questions that get at the meaning of the experience for the participants. The questions must urge the participants to describe their experience.

3. The researcher collects data from participants most commonly through the use of interviews. These interviews are "augmented with researcher self-reflection and previously developed descriptions" (p. 54).

4. Data analysis is conducted using typical, phenomenological steps. These steps include (a) a comprehensive reading of the interview texts, (b) division of interviews into statements, (c) transformation of units into clusters of meaning, and finally, (d) a description of what was experienced by the participants.

Role of the Researcher

The researcher in this study attended an undergraduate college similar to the participating college. There she attained a Bachelor of Arts degree in biology and secondary education. Following graduation, she took a job teaching mathematics and science in a Christian middle school. While employed, she earned her masters degree in educational leadership. After taking some time off to begin a family, the researcher began working part-time and later full-time at Dordt College. In a variety of teaching assignments and administrative duties, she has been employed at Dordt College for seven years. Her primary roles have been teaching pre-service teachers and co-directing the college's assessment program.

Teaching has always been a passion for the researcher, not only teaching but teaching christianly. In addition to her Christian educational background, the researcher was able to call on and find resources on what it meant to teach christianly in K-12 schools, but when she began teaching in higher education, she had no formal training and found that the resources on teaching christianly in higher education were simply not available. These experiences lent themselves to the researcher's desire to understand what it means to teach christianly in higher education as well as to the researcher's desire to interact with participants who spoke about such a phenomenon in this study.

In qualitative research, the researcher is considered to be the primary tool for data collection and analysis. Qualitative methodologists typically refer to the researcher as the instrument of the study where the researcher is simply a tool. As Rallis and Rossman (2003) point out, this is regrettable. They suggest that the researcher is not just a tool but also a learner who makes meaning or interprets as she goes along. Data are filtered through the researcher's worldview as her life history shapes the project in key ways. The researcher also understands that the data collected are from real people, so while the researcher must bracket herself, she is also in relationship with the study participants. While collecting and analyzing the data, the researcher must be aware of her separateness as well as her togetherness. This dynamic is unique to qualitative research and is called reflexivity. Ultimately it calls for the researcher to be aware of her beliefs, values, assumptions, and biases relative to the topic under study (Rallis & Rossman, 2003).

To ensure reflexivity, and to aid in her own learning, the researcher went through a process of self-reflection by answering the interview questions used in the study before beginning the interview process. See Appendix H for the researcher's first set of answers. The researcher completed the interview protocol again at the end of the data analysis and used these insights in the discussion section of Chapter 5.

Data Collection

All data for this study were collected through a single, one-on-one, in-depth, semi-structured interview per participant. Creswell (1998) and Marshall and Rossman (1995) recommend in-depth interviews for phenomenological studies. In phenomenology, "the researcher seeks to understand the deep meaning of a person's experience and how that person articulates these experiences" (Rallis & Rossman, 2003, p. 97). Thus data collection can best be accomplished through in-depth interviews.

Using an interview guide approach recommended by Patton (1990), the researcher developed topics, framed as questions, to explore with the participants. The questions (see Appendix G) guided the interview and helped to uncover the participants' meaning or perspective on what it means to teach christianly. Follow-up questions were asked when clarification or elaborations were needed (Rossman & Rallis, 2003).

During this study, the researcher followed an interview procedure described by Creswell (1998). The interviews were conducted during the month of January, 2005. The interviews took place in a location acceptable to each

participant and lasted no more than two hours (Polkinghorne, 1989). Prior to beginning the interview, participants were asked for consent to be involved in the tape-recorded interview; asked to read a consent form for the human subjects review board at the University of South Dakota (see Appendix F); and given information about the study (i.e. purpose, length of the interview, and plans for using the results of the study).

Each interview was tape-recorded; in addition, notes were taken for non-audible responses (Creswell, 1998; Rubin & Rubin, 1995; Seidman, 1998). For a list of interview questions, see Appendix G.

The data were managed by transcribing the interviews, verbatim, into computer files, immediately following each interview. Any note taking employed before, during, or after the interview was also recorded in a similar manner. When clarification or elaboration was needed, the researcher sought a second interview with participants. These data were used for later analysis. It must be noted that data collection and data analysis proceeded simultaneously. This is called the constant comparison data analysis method (Creswell, 1998). However, formal data analysis was limited until all of the interviews and transcription were completed (Seidman, 1998).

Data Analysis

The data analysis procedures for this study were taken from Creswell (1998) and were conducted as follows:

1. After creating and organizing files for data, the researcher conducted cross-participant analysis. The researcher identified similarities and

differences among the data by reading through the interview transcripts, coding them and sorting them into suitable categories of meaning as these categories became evident (Creswell, 1998; Rossman & Rallis, 2003).

2. According to Moustakas (1994) and Creswell (1998), in addition to study participants describing the meaning of the experience of the phenomenon, the researcher also described the meaning of the experience by answering the interview questions before the interviews began.

3. Next, the researcher classified the data by finding and listing statements of meaning for individuals and grouping these statements into meaning units. The researcher used horizonalization to ensure equal treatment of participants' statements (Creswell, 1998).

4. Following classification, the researcher interpreted the data in three ways: (a) by developing a textural description of what happened by using exact examples, (b) by developing a structural description of how the phenomenon was experienced, and (c) by developing an overall description of the "essences" of the experience (Creswell, 1998).

5. The final step was "a narration of the 'essence' of the experience" (p. 149) which is presented in Chapter 4 complete with tables of meaning statements.

The researcher did not use a qualitative software program for this study.

Verification of Interpretation

Creswell (1998) defines verification as "the process that occurs throughout the data collection, analysis, and report writing of the study and standards as

criteria imposed by the researcher and others after a study is completed" (p. 194). The strategies employed throughout the study to ensure credibility and rigor (Rossman & Rallis, 2003) were making the researcher's bias known from the beginning, triangulation, member checks, thick description, and peer debriefing.

First, the researcher revealed her bias in the role of the researcher section in this chapter when she answered the study's interview questions. Second, although triangulation in this study is limited, it was considered as multiple sources of data were used to build the picture being investigated (Rossman & Rallis, 2003). The researcher used *The Educational Task of Dordt College* (1979) (see Appendix A) and *The Educational Framework of Dordt College* (1993) (see Appendix B) as well as engaged in a debriefing interview with the Vice President for Academic Affairs at Dordt College.

Third, member checks are considered to be the most vital strategy for credibility (Creswell, 1998; Lincoln & Guba, 1985) and thus were carried out in three ways: (a) the researcher performed follow-up interviews with participants for the sake of elaboration and clarification; (b) the researcher reviewed initial descriptions, categories, and themes with three participants; and (c) the researcher reviewed descriptions, categories, and themes with two members of the Dordt College faculty who had some experience with the phenomenon of teaching christianly, but were not participants of this study.

Fourth, thick descriptions (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Merriam, 1988) allow readers to determine what, if any, of the information in the study is transferable to

other settings. Fifth, peer review, Creswell (1998) suggested, provides the researcher with an external check of the research process, and provides the researcher an opportunity to debrief about the research experience. A fellow graduate student, who is also a colleague from Dordt College, assisted in the peer review. Through the use of these strategies, the readers may be convinced that the study was credible, plausible, and believable.

Summary

The methodology described in this chapter was designed to answer the question—what does it mean to teach christianly? Through interviews with Dordt College teachers, the researcher developed a description of the essence and experience of teaching christianly in higher education. This chapter described the Dordt College context, the research problem and research questions, a review of selected literature and research, qualitative design, the role of the researcher, study participants, data collection, data analysis, and verification procedures. It is anticipated that the outcomes of this study will inform faculty and administration at the college as well as facilitate the building of a theory/model for teaching christianly in higher education.

CHAPTER 4

Findings

The findings that emerged from the data analysis conducted for this phenomenological study are presented in this chapter with support data. The chapter begins with a brief demographic sketch of the participants. The bulk of the chapter consists of the themes and sub-themes that emerged from the data analysis process. An outline of the findings is provided. A brief summary concludes the chapter.

The study's central research question was: What does it mean to teach christianly at a Christian college? Data collection emphasized four foci: (a) who students are and why teachers teach christianly, (b) the aim of teaching christianly in higher education, (c) the impact of Dordt College's mission on how its teachers teach, and (d) how teachers at Dordt College have learned to teach christianly.

Demographic Information

For the purposes of this study, interviews were conducted with ten teachers from Dordt College's faculty, two of the participants were females and eight were males. Three teachers were selected from the Humanities, Natural Science, and Social Science divisions with initial selection help from the Vice President of Academic Affairs and the three division deans, at least. Participants in the study had served the college for varying lengths of time. One participant had served the institution for four years; four participants had served for nearly ten years, one participant for nearly 15 years, and four participants for between

20 and 30 years. As stated in Chapter 3, each of these teachers had experienced the phenomenon of teaching christianly, exhibited a commitment to teaching christianly, and was considered to be an outstanding Christian teacher by the Vice President for Academic Affairs, his/her dean, and the researcher. Additionally, the participants have subscribed to a Reformed Christian perspective, have acknowledged Christ's lordship over all of life, and are affiliated with one of the local confessionally Reformed congregations (adhering to the three forms of unity – The Belgic Confession, Heidelberg Catechism, and Canons of Dort and/or the Westminster Standards).

Outline of Emerging Themes

I. Students as Image Bearers of God
II. The Call to Teach Christianly
    A. The Roles of the Teacher
    B. Fulfilling a Calling—The Aims of Teaching Christianly
        1. Developing students' serviceable insight
        2. Developing the whole student
        3. Assisting students in worldview clarification or transformation
        4. Equipping students for lives of discipleship
III Teaching Christianly
    A. How Disciplines are Viewed
        1. Created and part of creation
        2. Interrelated with other fields
        3. Part of a broader cultural context
        4. Something to be passionate about
    B. Methodological Distinctions
        1. Foundation and practice
        2. Reductionistic methodologies
        3. A mystery Dimension of teaching
        4. Teacher characteristics
    C. Creating a Space
    D. Challenges to Teaching Christianly
        1. Lack of time to reflect on and plan for teaching
        2. Participants' limited knowledge about teaching Christianly
        3. Complacency

4. Teaching circumstances

E. Learning to Teach Christianly
1. Collegial interactions
2. Trial and error
3. Self-reflection
4. Student feedback

IV. The Focused Mission of Dordt College

Emerging Themes

Four predominate themes emerged from an analysis of the data gathered from participant interviews: (a) students as image bearers of God, (b) the call to teach christianly, (c) teaching christianly, and (d) the focused mission of Dordt College. These themes emerged from the transcripts by way of a recurring clustering of meaning statements (Creswell, 1998).

Students as Image Bearers of God

Study participants identified their students as being image bearers of God. Clara stated that *"they [students] are made in the image of God; they are not disposable; they are not unimportant; they are infinitely worthwhile."* Participants also explained that they respect their students largely because they are made in the image of God.

For clarification on what is meant by the term *image of God*, Heilema's (in press) definition is helpful. The definition is taken from *Deepening the Colors*, a book used in the general education program at Dordt College. Hielema, currently a teacher at Dordt College, explained that *image of God* "describes our relationship to God, to our fellow image-bearers, to the whole of creation, and to ourselves (our inner integrity and wholeness)" (p. 79).

The participants explained that image-bearing students had been given gifts/talents, a calling, a responsibility, and therefore should be held accountable. Hank said that students are *"made in the image of God, with a calling, with God-given talents and skills that need to be developed."* Phil reported that he informed students that one of the reasons they are at Dordt College *"is to develop your God-given gifts so that in the future you can use them to answer God's call to be a servant and a neighbor and so forth."*

Students have been blessed with God-given gifts and this gifting calls for a response. Students are responsible to develop their gifts while at Dordt by engaging in the learning process and are responsible to develop these gifts for use in the world. Phil stated that at Dordt he can *"talk about God's call on them [students] and on God's gifts that He has given them and their responsibility to develop them."* Hank reported that students have a calling in the world and *"they [students] need to become responsible and equipped to deal with that world."*

The participants stated that students should be held accountable for the use and development of gifts in their calling response. John reported that students *"deserve to be held to account; that is consistent with how God created us and how God treats us."* Hank stated, *"You [students] are accountable not just to who you are now but you are accountable to God's calling for you . . . You are called to grow."*

In summary, study participants contended students are made in the image of God which places them in four relationships (Hielema, 2005): with God, with others, with the creation, and with themselves. Students have been given gifts

and are called to use these gifts within their relationships. Dordt students should develop their gifts, have an understanding of their calling, and be held accountable for both, contended the study participants.

Table 1

Significant Statements: Students as Image Bearers of God

Meaning Statements from Interview Transcripts
1. They [students] are made in the image of God
2. I respect the students because they are made in the image of God
3. The [student] is somebody whom God chose to be very, very special
4. This is a person for whom Christ died (3)
5. A person who is going to live his or her life in front of the face of God
6. They [students] have unique gifts and also not gifts
7. In the kingdom we are all needed. We all have gifts
8. I can talk about God's call on [students] and on God's gifts that he has given them and their responsibility to develop them
9. Students have a calling in that world
10. [Students] need to become responsible and equipped to deal with that world
11. They [students] deserve to be held to account Accountable to God's calling . . . called to grow

(Table Continued)

Table 1 continued

Significant Statements: Students as Image Bearers of God

Meaning Statements from Interview Transcripts
12. Students need to seek insight and understanding
13. This is their [students'] office; this is the position that they are called to
14. Use [gifts] to answer God's call

The Call to Teach Christianly

The call to teach christianly is a theme the participants took seriously. A description of the call included the roles the participants felt they played for students. In addition, a description of the aims of teaching necessary for fulfilling the call to teach christianly was given.

The Roles of the Teacher. A study participant suggested that during a student's lifetime she will interact with many authority figures; "*for instance, a parent, a pastor, an employer, a variety of older adults . . . a faculty member in higher education is only one of them. I'm somebody else in their life, and that gives me license to do things that maybe other people should do or should not do*." The participants in this study collectively identified five roles that teachers who teach christianly may play. These roles are that of mentor, model, peer, disciple, and servant.

Some participants described their relationship with students as a professional mentoring relationship. John described himself as having had more "life and field" experience than his students. Similarly, Kevin stated that "*teaching is a relationship of somewhat more mature to somewhat less mature, in which the material which is being taught is a vehicle for transmitting what has shaped one life to what might shape other lives*." Another participant, Thomas, described teachers' relationships with students as a mentoring relationship because he tried "*to point students in a particular direction*" and helped students "*consider who they are.*" Nathan remarked that a relationship exists with students when "*you are really motivated to teach what you're teaching, content and everything, because you believe that is how you understand who you are and why you exist, and when you convey that to students.*"

A second role of teachers identified by participants was that of a spiritual and personal role model. The teachers saw themselves as a role model not only in their professional life but in their private life as well. Clara stated "*I am a role model all the time, whether I like it or not . . . students will be looking at me as an older version of someone trying to live Christianly, not only academically but in my whole personal life*." This has implications for teacher behavior. Hank stated that he is "*modeling to students for good or ill.*" Participants stated that teachers must model appropriate Christian behavior in and out of the classroom as well as have an authentic nature. Authenticity includes honesty about the learning process and being willing to admit as Nathan suggested "*that there are pieces and parts that do not make sense to us.*"

Study participants also viewed their students to a certain degree as “peers in the making.” John used the term “*peers in the making*” and reported that students “*are persons that have the same capacity and potential and ability as I do, but they are just not quite there yet.*” Hank supported this view of students being peers when he suggested that he and the students “*were seeking understanding together.*” He also stated: “*I have to be a learner as well as the students.*”

A few participants described the importance of being a disciple of Christ. Hank suggested that “*teachers themselves* [should] *act as disciples, to act faithfully in their calling as teachers.*” Nathan remarked that “*good teachers always teach who they are . . . so in terms of teaching christianly, you have got to teach from that—that roots of who you are, as a child of God.*”

Finally, teachers, according to Clara, “*need to see* [themselves] *as a servant of those students.*” Teachers also reported having to care deeply about their students while watching the power relationship. Hank stated that "*while the teacher’s position is a very powerful one, it seems to me that ultimately the teacher has to be . . . at their heart, self-effacing, because it is not about the teacher.*” He also suggests “*a teacher needs to be ready to abandon themselves to the student, to create the possibilities for that student to learn*.”

Fulfilling a calling – The aims of teaching christianly. The participants described the significance of a call to teach as well as what was included in the fulfilling of that call, which was basically the participants’ understanding of the

aims of teaching christianly. The aims of teaching christianly will be described after an explanation of what participants said about the nature of their call.

A call to teach christianly is a solemn call. Nathan stated "*I am a child of God . . . it begins there . . . that gives me my motivation, that is why I am here, and that is why I'm teaching—a sense of calling.*" Hank emphasized that "*we* [Hank and colleagues] *are called to be faithful to God and to God's word for us as teacher to students and our world"* and called to "*profess faithfully.*" Ron suggested that he and his colleagues are part of something powerful. He stated "*I believe with all my heart that if people will really follow Christ and take his commands seriously, his model seriously, and follow that narrow road, that their lives will be completely different and that the world potentially will be a completely different place. That is an exciting thought, even if we are only doing things a little bit at a time with one student at a time.*"

An explanation given by Clara generally summarized what the participants as a whole concluded. Clara explained that her call to teach christianly was "*to develop students who are committed to Christ, a faith component, who are generally educated in the knowledge of God's word and his world in the liberal arts as we do here, and are competently equipped to serve the Christian community and the wide world in the area of their gifts but also in their general insights and approaches to life.*" More specifically, the four aims of teaching christianly according to the participants were (a) developing students' serviceable insight, (b) developing the whole student, (c) assisting students in worldview

clarification and/or transformation, and (d) equipping students for lives of discipleship. These aims are explained in what follows.

The participants suggested that an aim of teaching christianly was to develop students' serviceable insight. Serviceable insight is defined in *The Educational Task of Dordt College* (1979) as:

> The knowledge, competencies, and commitments gained through the educational process aim to prepare students to live thankful lives before the Lord; to serve others with integrity, in common everyday activities as well as in specific locations: and to unfold and care for the creation. (p. 6)

Participants saw that it was their responsibility to, as Thomas stated, "*develop their [students'] knowledge of disciplines and to understand the places of those disciplines in God's world.*" Kevin suggested that students must have "*curricular competence—that the material I am exploring with the students is substantial, meaningful, and organized so that we can deal with it in a way that makes sense and is meaningful for them.*" Hank stated that he ought to "*point the students to that world out there and to encourage them to understand it and take account of it and be responsive to it.*" The participants' idea of serviceable insight included an understanding of the creation and the Creator. This can lead to an informed response of service which includes as Ron stated, "*wanting to change society in a way that is good, good for everybody . . . make it a kinder, gentler society*."

To develop the whole student, not just the intellectual aspect of the student, was another aim reported by the participants. Landon explained that developing the whole student is "*helping students to grow intellectually, which is*

part of it. But growing in other ways as well—grows in terms of their awareness of the greatness of God, of the amazingness of his creation . . . and also the need to be in community with other people." Teachers have, according to Hank, a "*profound responsibility . . . to lead students in a way that builds up their faith commitment rather than tears it down or undermines it*." Another whole-student aspect mentioned by some participants and stated here by Thomas was the importance of helping a student "*become a better citizen, a better citizen in the Kingdom of God, not just a citizen here.*" Part of developing the whole child is also helping "*students identify what their gifts are and are not and to develop them,*" reported Clara. Additionally, as Kevin reported, teachers should remember *"the Lord made us to learn in a multi-layered variety of ways, that's how we're made as creatures, and therefore my teaching has to honor those multi-layers, those multi-dimensions, and address as many different parts of our humanhood as possible.*"

Worldview clarification and/or transformation of the student is a third aim necessary for fulfilling a teacher's call to teach christianly. Kevin stated that his "*goal in teaching, which I think to me teaching christianly means, is to be part of God's work of transforming people.*" He also stated that "*young adulthood is a time of taking a little bit of distance from one's own upbringing, questioning some of what might not ring entirely true in that upbringing, but not to dump it, but more to revise it and deepen it and expand it, and that at Dordt there's a very intentional attempt to frame that in terms of worldview.*" Students must see that worldview matters. Ron contended that he wants students "*to be able to see the*

importance of a worldview and to be able to compare and contrast how one might come to different conclusions when one adopts a different worldview." The participants were committed to students' "*worldview clarification and strengthening*."

Nathan stated that at the heart of teaching christianly is "*transformation—making change . . . I think it is reorientation. It is about transformation of the mind, the whole being, to reorient oneself.*" John reported "*someone might say 'well, that is off limits, you should not do that. You should not shape their world like that. We do not want them to abandon their faith or question all the things they thought were true . . . that is off limits!' But, that is exactly what it is that we are supposed to do as teachers. That is my role; that is my job; that is how I relate to students.*" The participants did not hide the fact that they believed their call was to help students transform and clarify their worldview.

Equipping students for discipleship is the fourth aim participants reported. Hank explained discipleship in this way "*In every aspect of life in the creation we recognize Christ's Lordship and seek to be instruments of his redemptive work in all these different areas. So to equip students to be disciples would involve equipping them to be, for instance, good parents, among others, responsible citizens who pursue justice.*" Hope suggested that to equip students for being disciples is "*to give them the technical and other kinds of tools they will need to function as leaders or participants in Christian action.*"

In summary, the call to teach christianly included a description of five roles that teachers who teach christianly may play—mentor, model, peer, disciple, and

servant. It also included a description of the significance of a call to teach as well as what was included in the fulfilling of that call, which was the participants' understanding of the aims of teaching christianly. The participants identified the importance of developing students' serviceable insight, developing the whole student, assisting students in worldview clarification and/or transformation, and equipping students for lives of discipleship.

Table 2

Significant Statements: The Call to Teach Christianly

Meaning Statements from Interview Transcripts
1. It is a little bit of a mentoring and an apprenticeship relationship
2. A relationship between somewhat more mature to somewhat less mature
3. I am a role model all the time, whether I like it or not
4. I'm modeling to students for good or ill
5. At Dordt College . . . you cannot live with "Do as I say, not as I do"
6. You see someone [student] as a peer in the making as opposed to a child
7. I'm in this with the student
8. Act as disciples, to act faithfully in their calling as teachers
9. Good teachers always have to teach who they are . . . as a child of God

(Table Continued)

Table 2 continued

Significant Statements: The Call to Teach Christianly

Meaning Statements from Interview Transcripts
10. Need to see myself as a servant of those students (3)
11. Ultimately the teacher has to be . . . at their heart, self-effacing (3)
12. Viewing what I do for them as service
13. Transmission of serviceable insight (3)
14. Curricular competence (3)
15. Understand the places of . . . disciplines in God's world
16. Point the students to that world out there
17. Encourage them [students] to understand it and take account of it and be responsive to it (4)
18. To prepare students for a life of service (3)
19. It is helping students grow intellectually; that is part of it.
20. Dordt offers our students—educating the whole student
21. Helping students identify what their gifts are and are not and to develop them
22. Lead students in a way that builds up their faith commitment
23. Help them become a better citizen . . . in the Kingdom of God (4)
24. The Lord made us to learn in a multi-layered variety of ways

(Table Continued)

Table 2 continued

Significant Statements: The Call to Teach Christianly

Meaning Statements from Interview Transcripts
25. See at Dordt the importance of worldview clarification and strengthening
26. Come to different conclusions when one adopts a different worldview
27. Teaching christianly . . . to be part of God's work of transforming people
28. I'm actually trying to be intentional . . . about changing [the students] (3)
29. It is about transformation of the mind, the whole being, to reorient oneself
30. The aim of teaching christianly is to equip students for discipleship (4)
31. Equip [students] with . . . knowledge, attitudes, and perspectives that will be helpful for them to be disciples
32. Seek to be instruments of His [Christ's] redemptive work

Teaching Christianly

Participant Hope made a statement that encapsulated what the participants collectively said about their experience of teaching christianly. She stated, "*You look at your field of study differently than other people do, and so you try to take a Christian perspective in the subject matter, looking at maybe broader kinds of things, maybe other kinds of issues in other ways, from other perspectives than other people might. It impacts the way you think about pedagogy and how you try to organize your classroom to get ideas across and to involve students.*"

The central question of this study and a third emerging theme is about what it means to teach christianly. Five sub-themes support the main theme, teaching christianly: (a) how disciplines are viewed, (b) methodological distinctions, (c) creating a space, (d) challenges to teaching christianly, and (e) learning to teach christianly.

How disciplines are viewed. The first sub-theme focused on the participants' view of their discipline. Many of the participants confessed that they were not as focused on pedagogy as they were on curriculum. Hope stated "*I'm pretty heavily curriculum oriented more than pedagogy oriented.*" The participants described the various ways in which they viewed their disciplines. They viewed their disciplines as being (a) created and part of creation, (b) interrelated with other fields, (c) part of a broader cultural context, and (d) something to be passionate about.

The participants acknowledge that their disciplines are part of the creation, created by God. Clara stated that she sees "*all academic areas . . . as part of creation*" and Nathan remarked that when he is involved in his discipline, he is "*working with the stuff of creation.*" Hope posited that "*just like anything else in creation, there's structure and direction so that things* [disciplines] *can be used for good or ill.*" Not all people see the world or the disciplines as being created; some see them as uncreated. Hope contended if you take this view, which she does not, her discipline "*in some sense has the status of a deity because it is uncreated.*" The participants concurred that their disciplines are a part of the larger creation, all of which God created.

The participants contended that the different fields of study are interrelated and each field is equally important. Phil suggested that having a "*sense of the body of Christ . . . can counteract isolation or pride (mine is the most important subject).*" He tries to reveal in his teaching that "*we are just one aspect of the different kinds of disciplines that are out there and we need each other.*" Nathan stated "*the entire curriculum is the* [his discipline] *curriculum. It makes no sense to separate it out and say 'this is your* [major] *course and that is a theology course. It is so essential for you to be a(n)* [he stated a profession] *which means to be a whole person.*" Participants stated that when a subject was taught in a way that isolated the subject, it was not being taught christianly. Nathan commented "*It is not teaching* [my subject]. *It can't be just teaching* [my subject]. *If it is just teaching* [my subject], *then it's not teaching christianly*."

The participants suggested that when they compared how they taught their discipline with how others taught it, much of it came down to placing the discipline in its "*broader cultural context.*" Phil stated that he tries "*to get students to understand the historical context of* [his discipline] *more than I remember getting when I was in a secular institution.*" Hope stated "*you may teach the same kind of skills and approach it in many of the same ways, but I think the broader context is important and is what really distinguishes what I do from what some other people do.*" Ron suggested looking at the "*historical background to know how we got to the place we are now and then think about your response to that.*" Participants saw that placing their discipline in its broader, cultural context was akin to having, as John stated, "*a different*

understanding of the big picture." Nathan shared a similar thought when he stated "*Fundamentally, if you see Scripture as a whole narrative and you see your piece* [subject] *here at Dordt as part of that overall narrative, then clearly you can always wind your way back to the bigger picture.*"

Clara stated concisely what so many participants suggested and implied. She simply remarked "*I think one has to love one's subject matter, has to be passionate for it.*" Hank confirmed this when he reported, "[teachers] *have to love learning about their subjects . . . you have to have a sense of enthusiasm.*"

Methodological distinctions. At the heart of how one teaches christianly and how that may differ from teaching carried out from a different perspective are some pointed methodological distinctions. This portion of the chapter is separated into four different sections. These sections are: (a) foundation and practice, (b) reductionistic methodologies, (c) a mystery dimension of teaching, and (d) teacher characteristics.

According to the participants of this study, the distinctions between teaching christianly and other forms of teaching are difficult to make; often they have to do with foundation and practice. As Hank stated, "*the differences aren't always obvious.*" Methodologically, other participants agreed that teaching christianly is not necessarily so very unique. Phil suggested that "*a lot of what we do as Christian teachers is what any decent teacher would do.*" Hank remarked that "*one can envision Christian teachers and non-Christian teachers using methods that often are the same.*"

With that qualification, the participants additionally reported that teaching christianly is different because of its Christian foundation. Nathan pointed out that "*no matter what you teach, you're going to be teaching from a religious foundation, that's inescapable; so, if you're not teaching christianly, you're teaching some other perspective.*" Thomas supported this: "*I can't think of just teaching. It's always in the context of Christianity."* Nathan further stated: "*it's about how you know and what do you believe about the reality of things . . . epistemology, ontology—about knowing your place. To teach christianly at Dordt means to come in with knowing your place as a human being before the face of God and knowing that you're still a human creature with all its limitations, dependent on God both for knowing but also then for everything else.*" In keeping with what Nathan articulated, Hope spoke of her opportunity to share her worldview and reflect openly about her motivations. She mentioned "[I am] *able to reflect on what my worldview means positively for my view of* [her subject]" and "*I can also reveal what motivates me and talk about that motivation.*"

While the following practices of the participants may be "what any decent teacher would do," the participants suggested that the following practices are necessary in order to teach christianly. The participants mentioned the importance of engaging and challenging students, including a variety of topics not included in most textbooks, teaching wisdom, and fostering a feedback loop. In terms of engagement, Kevin stated "*I believe significant engagement is at the heart of the matter.*" Challenging students was particularly important to Hank. He stated "*I want to really challenge students and it strikes me that there's a lot*

of teaching methods out there that are downright superficial. And if you don't challenge students, if you don't enable, equip, and demand students to stretch from where they are at, you aren't doing your job as an effective Christian teacher."

In regard to including different topics than what is included in textbooks, Ron remarked that "*he brought subject matter into the courses that simply never would be in the course somewhere else.*" Ron also spoke of teaching wisdom. "*We have to focus on wisdom as opposed to knowledge. There's all kinds of techniques we will teach students about, they will have to understand what these words mean . . . and in addition to teaching them about those things, we will want them to know that just because those things work, for example, it doesn't necessarily mean that we're going to use these techniques.*"

Participants referred to both formal and informal student feedback. Kevin reflected on how his grading or assessing students needed to "*both honor the standards set for the entire class and honor the particular student's personal growth, which are really contradictory goals.*" Ron stated that he didn't think there was enough of "*an appeal to the fact that 'to those whom much has been given, much is to be expected.'*" Kevin explained that he uses informal feedback to drive his teaching. He stated "*I've got to really know my students as much as I can and put in place a feedback loop that is as rich as possible. . . but it shapes my teaching to a great extent because those daily responses are structured so that I can learn how they* [students] *are interacting with the course material, what confusions, clarity, excitement, anxieties, etc., are being evoked in them, and so*

there's a constant two-way dialog happening where my preparation is shaped by their responses, not just their written responses but their body language in class, their comments in class, there's a continual multi-pronged feedback cycle going on."

In the previous section, the essence of the participants' experience was described as it related to teaching christianly in a positive way imploring what foundation and practices are recommended for teaching christianly. In this section, the participants voiced what teaching christianly is *not*—reductioninstic methodologies, or what may be teaching christianly but only in part. For example, teaching christianly is not just having devotions in class. Nathan stated "*I've always been against using devotions in class . . . devotions in class is just a way of pasting something Christian on the front end or back end, wherever you are doing it in the course.*" Phil gave another example, "*teaching christianly doesn't mean that I simply open with prayer at the beginning of class*." It is also not only a matter of having a "*good Christian professor,*" stated Nathan, "*who will be a good Christian example and they'll be very nice to you and they'll pray with you and they'll be able to sing songs in chapel . . . That's not what I mean. I think it's far deeper than that.* The participants contended that teaching christianly is more than inserting prayer, devotions, and Bible passages into a class, or just being a good Christian.

The participants described a mystery dimension of teaching. They stated that there are limits to what we know and understand. Nathan stated that knowing that we have limits is "*recognition of who we are before God, and we are*

creatures and there's limits to that, limits to our knowing and understanding." He added to this thought by stating "*I mean as a larger community there are questions that just aren't out there, and I wish we had answers for them but we don't.*" A different participant, Kevin, found this acknowledgement of our limitedness to be freeing. "*I find that very helpful and liberating in that I am not called upon to completely figure something out and then nail it but I can play in the mystery . . . Therefore, we go to the insight that we have and the wiring that we have and do the best we can.*"

Analogous to teaching methodologies, the participants suggested that the characteristics necessary for teaching christianly were similar to characteristics any good teacher should have. Ron stated "*I think there are characteristics that are necessary to be an effective teacher, and I'm not completely sure that those are different from what it takes to be an effective Christian teacher.*" The characteristics that most often emerged from the data were: (a) a love of students, (b) a visible passion for subject matter, (c) good communication skills, and (d) a balance between sharing one's life and getting out of the way.

In terms of loving students, Ron suggested "*you don't have to be a Christian to love your students, but I think that to be a Christian teacher you've got to have that* [love of students]." Kevin spoke of visible passion. He stated, "*Every teacher I know is passionate; well, most, but not every teacher is visibly passionate. Somehow the students must perceive me as being passionate.*" Along with others, Hank mentioned that "*if you can't communicate, you will not be effective.*" In regard to finding a balance between the centrality of the teacher

and the centrality of the student, Hank confessed, "*I try to be self-effacing, but I also try to be just a real person to students.*" Kevin focused on his realness with students; he said, "*almost every day I will find at least one story from my life that will illustrate what I'm teaching . . . in I Thessalonians, Paul says (this is a Scripture teaching that I see as foundational) 'We were so delighted to be with you that we shared with you not only the gospel but our lives as well.'*"

Creating a space. No other topic in the study had participant agreement like this section on creating a space. All participants commented on the need for such a space in their classrooms. Clara called this space-making "*creating a hospitable space.*" Landon referred to it as a "*healthy and safe context for learning"* as well as a "*classroom of care.*" Phil referred to this space as a "*covenant community in the classroom.*" Participants listed important ways in which this space can be created. They suggested that the teacher should be "*authentic, transparent, vulnerable, courteous, flexible, open, and model the fruits of the Spirit* [Gal. 5:22-23a]" with and for students.

Participants explained why creating a space in their classrooms was so beneficial for students. Clara insisted that students need to experience this type of environment so that they will "*feel safe and welcome and therefore can learn.*" Hank described this space as a space where fellowship happens; "*Fellowship because I want students to feel that in my classroom they can assume a basic respect about each other and for each other as fellow image-bearers. Also fellowship in a sense that I want us to be able to assume that we, even if we are different, are parts of the body of Christ and called to build each other up, in*

community. Also fellowship in the sense of feeling safe, feeling safe to ask or say things that some might consider dumb but here's the place to ask." Kevin professed that when we create this space, we are creating "*a space where the Holy Spirit can thrive . . . a central part of a teacher's calling.*"

Challenges to teaching christianly. A fourth sub-theme pertained to what impeded the participants from teaching christianly. The participants described four factors which are in decreasing order from most often mentioned to least often mentioned. Some items are not discussed due to their low representation. Participants stated that lack of time to reflect on and plan for their teaching was their greatest challenge. Hope reported, "*You're so busy in the midst of things that you don't have enough time to reflect on what you're doing and change what you're doing.*" A second challenge was the participants' limited knowledge about what it means to teach christianly. The participants attributed their lack of knowledge to a variety of things—lack of time, their own complacency, and an absence of institutional conversations about teaching christianly. Nathan stated, "*I wish it* [teaching christianly] *was something we could talk about. It feels like this is a topic that . . . because you got hired at Dordt, you know how to do.*" A third factor, complacency, was mentioned in regard to participants' lack of knowledge, but it also was mentioned in terms of, as Thomas confessed, "*a lack of will to do the things I ought to do.*" In addition, a fourth factor mentioned was teaching circumstances. Participants noted that it was easier to teach christianly when class sizes were kept to a reasonable limit. Hank reported, "*It can be difficult in a large class to create the kinds of relationships with students that I*

would like to create with them." Kevin supported this, "*When a class gets to a certain size of students, then that heavy engagement, feedback loop gets harder and harder to maintain.*"

Learning to Teach Christianly. Participants were given the opportunity to reflect on how they learned to teach christianly; a majority of participants reported learning to teach christianly earliest at some time in their prior education. Two participants recalled that it was even a part of their home life having had Christian-teacher parents. Clara stated: "*I inhaled it . . . I just grew up in that atmosphere.*" In addition to these two participants, four other participants described having observed teachers teaching christianly in elementary schools, high schools, and Christian colleges. John recalled that he had "*good role models, especially in high school, from teachers who did the sorts of things that I now value."* Ron remarked, "*I have seen Christian teachers through a good stretch of my life and they have modeled for me without saying a word about teaching.*"

All of the participants reported significantly developing and/or enhancing their skill of teaching christianly at Dordt because of the environment. Clara remarked, "*The capstone has been teaching at Dordt where it is so intentional . . . there are so many documents written and the community is struggling with these documents . . . it has helped me grow enormously . . . I have thrived here.*" Another participant, John, stated: "*There's a very rich environment here [Dordt College] and I think I've learned an enormous amount . . . so you learn it here.*"

The study participants described four ways in which they have learned to teach christianly while at Dordt College. The way most often mentioned was via the participants' interactions with colleagues. These interactions happened incidentally, in department meetings, or while observing colleagues teach, most often in team-teaching situations. Hank reported learning something about teaching christianly while "*just talking with colleagues about how to teach this or that course effectively and appropriately.*" Ron suggested, "*individual talks with department members and other faculty have both helped me and I think I have helped some others in these discussions.*" Nathan mentioned that his department meets regularly and "*last semester, every other meeting was a discussion meeting.*" Landon, Hope, and Kevin mentioned that team teaching experiences were very helpful in their learning to teach christianly. Landon remarked that when you team teach, "*You have to talk about the content; you've got to talk about pedagogy; you've got to talk about administrative stuff; you've got to figure it out.*" Team teaching gave these participants an opportunity to observe their colleagues teach. Hope mentioned that she thought "*we really ought to do more of that—sit in each other's classes. Just sit and learn.*"

In addition to collegial interactions, participants mentioned that they learned to teach christianly through trial and error, self-reflection, and student feedback. Landon mentioned learning "*through mistakes,*" and Nathan mentioned learning "*by experience . . . you try it . . . you work with it. You find out what doesn't work and every once in a while you find something that seems to work.*" Kevin mentioned that he "*learned on the job, and I basically learned by*

intense self-analysis and trial and error and watching and asking others from time to time." Ron suggested, "*A lot of it has come from simply having a restless mind.*" In class, student responses as well as student evaluations were reportedly useful in teaching some participants how to teach christianly. "*Every time you teach a course you learn some new things and often that comes from students and the questions they ask. So you need to be open to learning from students,*" reported Hope. Kevin stated "*student evaluations are extremely helpful . . . when certain themes occur, both in terms of what is going right and what can be improved.*"

Participants reported learning the most about teaching christianly while teaching at Dordt. Their learning came primarily through interactions with their colleagues, through a trial and error process, through self-reflection, and through student feedback.

In summary, regarding teaching christianly, participants described the importance of viewing academic disciplines in a certain way, making distinctions between Christian and secular teaching methodology, and creating a conducive space for students in classes. The participants spoke of the challenges they face when teaching christianly, and how they learned to teach christianly.

Table 3

Significant Statements: Teaching Christianly

Meaning Statements from Interview Transcripts
1. Seeing all academic areas . . . as part of creation (3)
2. They [non-Christian teachers] may see this as an uncreated world (2)
3. Interrelatedness with other fields
4. A sense of the Body of Christ which can counteract isolation or pride
5. If it is just teaching [his discipline], then it is not teaching Christianly
6. The broader context is . . . what really distinguishes what I do
7. You are looking at these broader contextual kind of issues
8. Do some history, do some philosophy . . . thinking about . . . worldviews
9. One has to love one's subject, has to be passionate for it (5)
10. What we do . . . is what any decent teacher would do (5)
11. If you're not teaching christianly, you're teaching some other perspective
12. Teaching christianly doesn't mean that I simply open [class] with prayer
13. We're creatures and . . . limits to our knowing and understanding
14. Characteristics are going to be the same as any sort of decent teacher
15. Have to love your students
16. Need passion for the field . . . passion for the overall aim
17. Good communication techniques

(Table Continued)

Table 3 continued

Significant Statements: Teaching Christianly

Meaning Statements from Interview Transcripts
18. Be self-effacing . . . also try to be just a real person to students
19. Creating a hospitable space so that they [students] can [learn]
20. Teacher's calling is to create a space where the Holy Spirit can thrive
21. You're so busy . . . you don't have enough time to reflect
22. Limitations of understanding, knowing how to do it [teach christianly]
23. Lack of motivation or seriousness
24. Teaching circumstances . . . for example, class sizes
25. I inhaled it [teaching christianly] . . . I just grew up in that atmosphere
26. Good role models . . . teachers who did the sorts of things I now value
27. The capstone has been teaching at Dordt where it is so intentional
28. Talking with colleagues about how to teach this course or that course
29. Sit in each other's classes . . . just sit and learn
30. [Learn] through mistakes
31. Learned on the job, and I basically learned by intense self-analysis
32. You learn some new things and often that comes from students' questions
33. Student evaluations are extremely helpful

The Focused Mission of Dordt College

Many of the participants declared that the reason they taught at Dordt College was because they shared the mission of the college (see Chapter 2). Ron stated: "*It's* [the mission] *congruent with what I think I should be doing and frees me to do the kinds of things that I wanted to do both in terms of scholarship and in terms of teaching.*" Thomas contended: "*The reason I'm here at Dordt College is because I'm free; I'm free to teach as I believe it ought to be done.*" John contended, "*It's more or less my mission and I embrace it . . . otherwise I wouldn't be here. It just makes it easier in terms of teaching.*" In addition to John, others also contended they would not be at Dordt if its mission were different. Nathan stated: "*If Dordt were to lose its mission, I wouldn't be here.*"

The participants explained how the college's mission impacted their teaching. They said the mission was freeing, was foundational or provided framework, was a driver or energizer, and provided purpose and/or vision. Nathan proclaimed: "*Because Dordt has its mission, really what they're doing is saying, 'Here you have it, you're free to teach christianly.*'" Clara stated: "*It* [mission] *provides that umbrella or context or framework in a very specific way and helps me to think about my particular corner.*" Thomas remarked about the mission that "*it drives my teaching,*" and John suggested "*it gives it* [his teaching] *that kind of ongoing energy . . . and purpose and vision.*" Hank stated: "*It* [the mission] *reminds me that I am responsible to be seeking understanding and insight and at the same time, that I am responsible to encourage and enable my students to seek that insight.*"

In contrast with what the previous participants reported, Kevin remarked, "*Because, I in my personhood feel so at home with Dordt's mission, I can just trust myself that what I am naturally prone to do in the classroom is going to resonate with Dordt's mission. So its impact is something that frankly I rarely think about, and I like that. That I don't need to be thinking about it; I can trust that who I am fits with who Dordt is and therefore, I can just be myself and trust that I am furthering Dordt's mission.*"

Two participants made additional mission-related comments about the college. These participants, with satisfaction, contended that they don't teach in isolation at Dordt because they share the mission and perspective of the college with other teachers at Dordt. Participants also remarked that, by and large, the students hold this same perspective. Nathan explained the significance of a shared perspective: "*Students are being shaped, changed, and transformed by not just me. So it's not me versus another . . . like it is at many universities. This is my paradigm and this is their paradigm. Here we share the same view. We may stand at little different perspectives . . . but we're still looking in the same direction.*" In summary, Nathan stated: "*And so to teach in that context, it's not that it's just you anymore but you're being supported and encouraged, whether verbally or not, by the college around you.*" In regard to sharing a Christian perspective with students, Hope lamented that at other institutions, she couldn't "*expect that there's any kind of synchronization between my views and the views of the students. Here* [at Dordt] *we can have a discussion back and forth about*

views that are common to both students and professor rather than me presenting my viewpoint take it or leave it."

In summary, the participants came to and stay at Dordt largely due to their commitment to the mission of the college. If the college were to change its mission, many of the participants may be inclined to leave the college. Participants reported feeling free to teach christianly at Dordt and reported that the mission of the college helped them teach christianly. A few of the participants reported that they were comforted by the fact that the teachers and students at Dordt shared a similar perspective and mission.

Table 4

Significant Statements: The Focused Mission of Dordt College

Meaning Statements from Interview Transcripts
1. The mission of Dordt makes a huge difference on why I'm here (5)
2. If Dordt was to lose its mission, I wouldn't be here (4)
3. It's more or less my mission (6)
4. You're free to teach christianly (4)
5. It [mission] provides that umbrella or context or framework
6. It [mission] drives my teaching . . . and [gives] purpose and vision
7. It [the mission] reminds me that I am responsible to be seeking understanding and insight

(Table Continued)

Table 4 continued

Significant Statements: The Focused Mission of Dordt College

Meaning Statements from Interview Transcripts
8. I can trust that who I am fits with who Dordt is
9. Students are being shaped, changed, and transformed by not just me
10. You're being supported and encouraged . . . by the college around you.
11. [Share] views that are common to both students and professor

Summary

The data analysis process of this phenomenological study sought to answer the central research question: What does it mean to teach christianly at Dordt College? The process of data analysis resulted in the identification of four major emergent themes: (a) students as image bearers of God, (b) the call to teach christianly, (c) teaching christianly, and (d) the focused mission of Dordt College. The four themes described in this chapter gave the essence of the participants' experience of teaching christianly at Dordt College

CHAPTER 5

Summary, Conclusions, Discussion, and Recommendations

Chapter 5 provides a focused summary of the study, conclusions drawn from the study, discussion of the conclusions in light of the literature and related research, and recommendations for practice and further research.

Summary

This study was conducted to address a void in the literature regarding the phenomenon of teaching christianly in higher education. The lack of literature on teaching christianly can be particularly problematic for religious institutions of higher education whose missions typically emphasize Christian values and Christian teaching.

The purpose of this study was to investigate what it means to teach christianly at a small residential Christian college. This study used a phenomenological approach to explore teachers' perceptions and beliefs about teaching christianly in higher education. The principal research question was "What does it mean to teach christianly at a Christian college?" Sub-questions that guided this study included the following:

1. What does it mean to teach christianly at a Christian college?
2. What is the aim of teaching christianly in higher education?
3. How does the mission of Dordt College impact how its teachers teach?
4. What personal characteristics are essential for Christian teachers?

5. What help have teachers given or received in regard to the practice of teaching christianly?

To recapitulate this study, the following portions of the study will be revisited: the literature review conducted in Chapter 2, the methodology described in Chapter 3, and the findings explained in Chapter 4.

Literature Review

College teaching and learning has gone through an evolutionary process (Furhmann & Grasha, 1983). During the seventeenth century, higher education was paternalistic, for the sons of the elite, and for promoting the Christian religion. Today, three somewhat oppositional views or philosophies of higher education prevail on college campuses in varying combinations dependent upon the type of institution. These views are: the utilitarian or vocational view, the scientific or intellectual view, and the liberal or general education view (Furhmann & Grasha, 1983). "Teaching can, [sic] and is, viewed from all three perspectives, with the result being a wide variety of approaches from which modern faculty can select" (Furhmann & Grasha, 1983, p. 16).

Over the years, research on teaching and learning has been conducted based on the previously mentioned views or philosophies as well as on evolving learning theories (Furhmann & Grasha, 1983; McKeachie, 1990; Merriam and Caffarella, 1999). Emphasis on research and teaching continues to grow into the twenty-first century enabling the field of education to become a scientific field (McKeachie, 1990). In order to improve teaching, Ramsden (1992) argued that one should study students' learning. Four current models of student learning are

particularly meaningful for college teachers today. The models are (a) andragogy, which is a learner-centered model for helping adults learn (Fry, Ketteridge, & Marshall, 1999; Knowles, 1980, 1984; Light & Cox, 2001; Merriam & Caffarella, 1999), (b) self-directed learning, a model in which the learners take responsibility for planning, doing, and evaluating their own learning (Grow, 1994; Merriam and Caffarella,1999; Tough,1971), (c) transformational learning, a theory about dramatic, fundamental change in the learner (Merriam & Caffarella, 1999; Mezirow, 1991), and (d) experiential learning, a theory about the importance of experience in facilitating learning (Fry, Ketteridge, & Marshall, 1999; Kolb, 1984; Svinicki and Dixon, 1987).

Each of the learning models has shed light on how students in higher education should learn and, therefore, how teachers might teach. There are also three helpful current models of effective teaching that should be considered. The models are (a) Lowman's two-dimensional model of effective college teaching (Hativa, Barak, & Simhi, 2002; Lowman, 1984, 1996), (b) poststructural feminist pedagogy (Merriam & Caffarella, 1999; Tisdel, 1995), and (c) Baxter Magolda's constructive-developmental pedagogy (Magolda, 1999). Lowman's (1984, 1996) model emphasizes the importance of clear, selective content organization and well-honed interpersonal skills. Tisdel's (1995) model gives suggestions for creating inclusive adult learning environments for women and other underrepresented populations. Magolda's (1999) theory conjectures that teachers need to validate students as knowers, situate learning in the student's own experiences, and define learning as mentally constructed meaning-making.

In addition to models of learning and teaching, four highly esteemed and extensively referenced descriptions of effective teacher characteristics and practices have been formed. Each of these descriptions was developed in an effort to improve undergraduate education (Diamond, 2002). The descriptions include *Seven Principles of Good Practice in Undergraduate Education* (Chickering & Gamson, 1987, 1991, 1999), *A Teacher's Dozen* (Angelo, 1993), Engagement theory as described in *Emblems of Quality: Developing and Sustaining High Quality Programs* (Haworth & Conrad, 1997), and the *Joint Task Force on Student Learning—10 Principles* (Engelkemeyer & Brown, 1998).

While all of the models, theories, and descriptions previously described are beneficial for teaching and learning, teachers in institutions of Christian higher education are seeking practical resources that fit the unique mission of religiously affiliated colleges and universities (Migliazzo, 2002). Palmer (1998) stated that we have much to learn from K-12 teachers; therefore the researcher of this study combined the work of Van Brummelen (1988) and Van Dyk (2000) and formed a conceptual framework for teaching christianly at the K-12 levels. This framework was constructed with the idea that it might inform teachers on how to teach christianly at the college level.

The conceptual framework for teaching christianly at the K-12 level developed from Van Brummelen's and Van Dyk's work described the aims, components, and phases involved in teaching christianly. Basic for both authors is the premise that all people are God's image bearers, and therefore teaching is inherently a religious activity. Their central aim in teaching christianly is to

“educate [students] for a life of responsible discipleship” (Van Brummelen, 1988, p. 2), and to equip “students for knowledgeable and competent discipleship” (Van Dyk, 2000, p. 38). To accomplish this, Christian teachers should be “personally committed to Jesus Christ” and “model Christian love and the fruits of the Spirit” (Van Brummelen, 1988, pp. 25-26). Additionally, Christian teachers, who desire to teach christianly, must truly want to subject their entire teaching practice to the will of God (Van Dyk, 2000).

The authors identify several components and phases that are important for teaching christianly. They contend that Christian teachers must (a) guide students, (b) unfold content, (c) structure learning, and (d) enable students to develop and use their gifts (Van Brummelen, 1988). The phases of learning included in Van Brummelen’s and Van Dyk’s conceptual framework can be used to facilitate student learning at the class level, the course level, or even the program level. These phases of effective learning are (a) setting the stage, (b) disclosure, (c) reformulation, and (d) transcendence (Van Brummelen, 1988). The framework contends that teaching is a journey and that the teacher is both a craftsperson and guide (Van Brummelen, 1988; Van Dyk, 2000).

The authors Van Brummelen and Van Dyk of the previously described framework share the same religious beliefs and affiliations as the members of the Dordt College community. The context for this study is Dordt College, a religiously affiliated college, founded in 1955 as an independent Christian college closely related to the Christian Reformed Church in North America. The college is dedicated to promoting student learning for lifelong Christian service

(*Educational Task*, 1979) and promotes student learning through a coherent curriculum which is organized under four headings based on a Reformed Christian perspective. These four headings are referred to as the *Four Coordinates*: (a) religious orientation, (b) creational structure, (c) creational development, and (d) contemporary response (*Educational Framework*, 1993).

The Educational Task (1979) of Dordt College states "The Dordt graduate must have both a theoretical understanding of a situation and the practical ability and skill to be reformingly busy in response to God's call to service" (p. 6). In other words, Dordt College students must develop *serviceable insight*. Serviceable insight is the aim of teaching and learning at Dordt and is quite comparable to Van Brummelen's (1988) "responsible discipleship" and Van Dyk's (2000) "knowledgeable and competent discipleship."

According to the *Educational Task (1979)* document, "to occupy a position at the college means to be placed in a God-ordained office requiring educational service in self-effacing love and obedience to the Lord" (p. 7). Faculty "have the primary responsibilities for the development and transmission of insight . . . who through research and teaching, are called to carry out the central task of Dordt College" (p. 7). Students are also called to participate in the educational task of the college and are understood to be image bearers of God.

The Educational Task (1979) and The Educational Framework (1993) are guiding documents for the college. These documents give a comprehensive description of the college's mission, purpose, and curriculum, but give very little description of how teachers should teach accordingly. This study took up the

challenge of determining what it means to teach christianly at Dordt College in hopes of supplying teachers, who desire to teach christianly, with more guidance than they have received in the past.

Methodology

All procedures were aimed at answering the research question: What does it mean to teach christianly at a Christian college? The study employed a phenomenological approach in order to understand the essence of the experience of teaching christianly (Creswell, 1998).

The participants selected for this study were ten teachers who taught at Dordt College, a small private Christian college located in the Midwest. Dordt College was chosen for two reasons: first, it is the researcher's place of employment and therefore she has a vested interest in the teaching taking place there; and second, because it is a Christian college, one would expect teachers to have experience with the phenomenon of teaching christianly. The participants were purposefully selected; to be considered for participation in the study, each participant had to (a) have experienced the phenomenon of teaching christianly, (b) have exhibited a commitment to teaching christianly, and (c) been considered an outstanding Christian teacher by the college's administration and the researcher.

All data for this study were collected through a single, one-on-one, in-depth, semi-structured interview per participant. The interviews were transcribed verbatim and used for later data analysis. To ensure equal treatment of the participants' statements, horizonalization was used (Creswell, 1998). Data

analysis for this study included (a) reading through interview transcripts, (b) conducting cross-participant analysis, (c) identifying meaning statements, (d) coding and sorting meaning statements into suitable categories, and (e) interpreting the data. The researcher interpreted the data in three ways: (a) by developing a textural description of what happened by using exact quotes, (b) by developing a structural description of how the phenomenon was experienced, and (c) by developing an overall description of the "essence" of the experience (Creswell, 1998).

To ensure credibility and rigor, the following verification methods were employed in this study: (a) illumination of the researcher's bias, (b) triangulation, (c) member checks, (d) thick description of participants' experience, and (e) peer debriefing (Rossman & Rallis, 2003).

Findings

Following analysis of the data gathered from participant interviews, four predominate themes emerged providing insight into how teachers at a Christian college described what it means to teach christianly. The four themes were: (a) students as image bearers of God, (b) the call to teach christianly, (c) teaching christianly, and (d) the focused mission of Dordt College.

Students as image bearers of God. Students are made in the image of God which places them in four relationships (Hielema, 2005): with God, with others, with the creation, and with themselves. As image bearers, students have been given gifts and are called to use these gifts within their relationships. Study

participants contended that Dordt students should develop their gifts, have an understanding of their calling, and be held accountable for both.

The call to teach christianly. The call to teach christianly included a description of five roles that teachers who teach christianly may play—mentor, model, peer, disciple, and servant. It also included a description of the significance of a call to teach as well as what was included in the fulfillment of that call. Participants described their call fulfillment by stating their understanding of the aims of teaching christianly. The participants identified the importance of (a) developing students' serviceable insight, (b) developing the whole student, (c) assisting students in worldview clarification and/or transformation, and (d) equipping students for lives of discipleship.

Teaching christianly. In regard to teaching christianly, participants proclaimed the importance of viewing academic disciplines as being (a) created and part of creation, (b) interrelated with other fields, (c) part of a broader cultural context, and (d) something to be passionate about. The participants also made distinctions between Christian and secular teaching methodology, stating that the teaching foundation or context is distinct, but the practice or methods used may not be. They also declared that reductionistic methodologies do not equal teaching christianly. Participants described a mystery dimension of teaching which they said implied that humans/teachers have limits to what they know and understand about creation. Finally, participants suggested that teacher characteristics necessary for teaching christianly may be quite similar to characteristics any good teacher possesses.

According to all participants, creating a hospitable space for students in classes was a critical component of teaching christianly. This space encouraged and allowed students to learn and according to a few participants, welcomed the Holy Spirit.

The participants contended there were basically four challenges to their teaching christianly. Lack of time to reflect on and plan for teaching was the chief challenge. Participants' own limited knowledge about what it means to teach christianly was a challenge, as well as complacency on the part of participants. Additionally, participants stated that it was difficult to teach christianly with overly large class sizes.

Participants reported learning to teach christianly mainly while teaching at Dordt College. Learning took place primarily through interactions with their colleagues, through a trial and error process, through self-reflection, and through student feedback.

The focused mission of Dordt College. The participants reported coming to Dordt and staying because of their commitment to the mission of the college. Participants felt free to teach christianly at Dordt and stated that the mission of the college helped them teach christianly. A few of the participants described being comforted by the fact that the teachers and students at Dordt shared a similar perspective and mission.

Conclusions

The following conclusions have been drawn from this research study:

1. The combined conceptual framework of Van Brummelen (1988) and Van Dyk (2000) is relevant for teachers who wish to teach christianly in higher education.

2. Students are made in the image of God which requires them to use their gifts within their relationship to God, others, the creation, and themselves. Teachers who teach christianly hold students accountable for developing and using their gifts.

3. Teachers are called by God to develop their students in holistic ways, including the development of students' serviceable insight, worldview clarification and/or transformation, and discipleship ability. Teachers fulfill their calling by being mentors, models, peers, disciples, and/or servants for their students.

4. Teacher characteristics and teaching methodologies necessary for teaching christianly may be identical to characteristics and methodologies any good teacher possesses.

5. Teachers who teach christianly must be passionate about their academic discipline and view it as being part of the created order, interrelated with other fields, and part of a broader cultural context.

6. Creating a hospitable space for students to learn is a critical component for teaching christianly.

7. Teachers at Dordt College demonstrate a strong sense of mission and articulate a solid contextual base for teaching christianly, but are reluctant or unable to describe normative methodologies for teaching christianly.

8. Teachers need time to learn about, reflect on, and plan for teaching christianly. Teachers learn to teach christianly through collegial interactions, trial and error, self-reflection, and student evaluations.

9. Teachers are encouraged and feel free to teach christianly when their personal worldview is aligned with the mission of the college. They also experience freedom when they accept the mystery dimension of teaching which implies that humans/teachers have limits to what they know and understand about creation.

Discussion

Although this study focused on the perceptions and beliefs of only ten participants, the thick and rich data that were uncovered offered insight into the essence of what it means to teach christianly at a Christian college. This portion of the chapter includes a discussion of (a) a directional change in the study, (b) the growth of the researcher, (c) revisiting of the conceptual framework of Van Brummelen and Van Dyk, and (d) teaching at Dordt College.

Directional Change in the Study

The study began with research questions about what it means to teach christianly, what is the aim of teaching christianly, how a college's mission impacts teachers' teaching, what teacher characteristics are essential, and to what degree did teachers give or receive teaching help. Through the process of

constructing the study and carrying it out, it became apparent that the sub-questions didn't fully represent the participants' experiences, therefore the focus of the study became more about whom the students were, why teachers teach christianly, the aim of teaching christianly in higher education, the impact of Dordt College's mission on how its teachers teach, and how teachers at Dordt College have learned to teach christianly. During the data analysis phase of the study, the researcher became aware of the participants' ability to articulate a philosophy of teaching more suitably than they were able to articulate specific methodologies necessary for teaching christianly. The participants also rarely spoke about their involvement in what Boyer calls the scholarship of teaching (Cambridge, 1999)—improving teaching and learning beyond their local setting. They focused primarily on how they themselves learned to teach christianly.

Conceptual Framework of Van Brummelen and Van Dyk

The work of Van Brummelen and Van Dyk was developed first and foremost for K-12 teachers who sought to teach christianly. Nonetheless, the combined framework was developed in this study because it has application for teachers in K-12 education as well as in higher education and because no other alternative was available for Christian teaching in higher education. The study revealed that there are many similarities between the conceptual framework and the findings.

Students in the image of God. Based on the data, one can make the assertion that study participants view their students as being made in the image of God. This view of students is not unique to the study participants. It is a view

held by Van Brummelen (1988) and Van Dyk (2000) as well as stated in the foundational documents of Dordt College. Van Brummelen (1988) and Van Dyk (2000) are in agreement with study participants when they suggest the following: (a) students are holistic beings, (b) students are accountable and responsible for their actions, and accountable for living according to God's will, (c) teachers should enable students to understand their particular gifts and develop these gifts, (d) and teachers must help direct students in the way they should go.

Van Brummelen (1988) and Van Dyk (2000) discussed the importance of helping students understand their particular gifts. Participants in the study focused primarily on students developing and using their gifts but did not focus on the importance of helping students identify their gifts. Gift identification would appear to be necessary as it is unlikely that 18-year olds have already sufficiently gone through the process of gift identification. Van Brummelen (1988) and Van Dyk (2000) also discussed the importance of students gradually being given more and more responsibility for their learning and then being held accountable for their decisions. The participants in the study did not mention the importance of self-directed learning although it is a goal of Dordt College (*Educational* Framework, 1993). Self-directed learning is a major goal of many colleges and universities (Merriam and Cafferella, 1999). It would benefit students if teachers who desired to teach christianly would consider the importance of leading students to self-directed learning (Grow, 1994; Merriam & Cafferella, 1999; Tough, 1971).

The Call to teach. Participants in this study believed they were called by God. According to *The Educational Task* (1979), to be placed in a teaching position is to be placed in a "God-ordained office." In the office of teacher, teachers are called to develop their students in holistic ways. Developing students also included development of serviceable insight, of worldview clarification and/or transformation, and of discipleship ability. The development themes mentioned by the participants correspond with the conceptual framework of Van Brummelen (1988) and Van Dyk (2000). Van Dyk suggested that the aim of education is to equip "students for knowledgeable and competent discipleship" (p.38). Van Brummelen suggested that "to educate means to lead forth, shaping attitudes and dispositions, and giving form to ideas" (p. 5); and "teaching and learning aims to discover God's laws and apply them in obedient response to God" (p. 7).

Teachers who teach christianly are unique in that their teaching "emerges from a philosophy of education grounded in a holistic, life-encompassing worldview" (Van Dyk, 2000, pp. 86-87); but teachers who teach for transformation are not necessarily unique. Transformational learning (Merriam & Cafarella, 1999; Mezirow, 1991) and experiential learning (Fry, Ketteridge, & Marshall, 1999; Kolb, 1984; Svinicki and Dixon, 1987) have been important applied learning theories that suggest transformation in the learner is essential. Teachers who teach christianly should strive for deep level change or transformation in their students.

Participants reported fulfilling their calling by being mentors, models, peers, disciples, and/or servants for their students. These roles also correspond with the conceptual framework. Van Brummelen (1988) and Van Dyk (2000) describe teaching as a journey and "teachers and learners are on a pilgrimage together, a pilgrimage that focuses on the kingdom of God" (Van Brummelen, 1988, p. 181). Magolda (1999) also used a journey metaphor in a description of constructivist-developmental pedagogy. The roles described by the participants are important and helpful imagery for teachers who chose to teach christianly.

An interesting finding from the study is that teacher characteristics and teaching methodologies necessary for teaching christianly may be quite similar to characteristics and methodologies good teachers possess or utilize. When participants were asked to suggest necessary teacher characteristics or to suggest how teaching christianly is different from other forms of teaching, they were unable to make a significant distinction. The difference, they suggested, was in the motivation, the aims, or the outcomes of teaching, not necessarily in the methodology. The phases of learning as described by Van Brummelen (1988) and Van Dyk (2000), similar to Kolb's (1984) four-stage model, could be particularly helpful for teachers who teach christianly. Although *The Educational Framework* (1993) of Dordt College doesn't offer a lot of guidance for teaching christianly, it does offer more than the participants were able to articulate.

A passion for subject matter. Both authors, Van Brummelen (1988) and Van Dyk (2000), discuss the importance of K-12 teachers being passionate about teaching and about loving students. Interestingly, the study participants

discussed the importance of loving students and being passionate about their subject matter. The study participants stated that teachers who teach christianly in higher education must be passionate about their academic discipline and view it as being part of the created order, interrelated with other fields, and part of a broader cultural context. Teachers at Dordt College focus more on subject matter and students than do their counterparts in K-12 education who focus more on teaching and students. This lack of focus on teaching is incongruent with what *The Educational Task* (1971) of Dordt College states, "teaching is considered a high calling" and the primary responsibility of the faculty is "the development and transmission of insight" (p. 7). Teaching christianly needs to be a higher priority among Dordt teachers and administration.

Creating a hospitable space. Study participants stated that creating a hospitable space for students to learn is a critical component for teaching christianly. The idea of a specially created atmosphere or space in the classroom or with students is supported by the conceptual framework of Van Brummelen and Van Dyk, Dordt College, and secular literature. Van Brummelen (1988) and Van Dyk (2000) contend that teachers are more able to give students direction when they have worked at establishing an atmosphere of security, lack of fear, and mutual respect. Dordt College states in its mission statement that a climate in which discipleship becomes a way of life will be fostered on and off the campus. Secular researchers such as Tisdel (1995) and Magolda (1999) refer to the space in a classroom as a community based on openness and intellectual

rigor. While it may not be uniquely Christian, a hospitable space is necessary for teaching christianly.

Teaching at Dordt College

Dordt College has a strong and distinguishing mission. Not unlike other religiously affiliated colleges, it emphasizes Christian values and reports placing a high value on teaching (Diamond, 2002). In this last section, the shared mission of Dordt College will be discussed, as well as a lack of methodological articulation on the part of teachers, and how teachers learn to teach christianly in higher education.

Shared missions. From the data analysis, it is impressively obvious that the study participants embraced the distinctive mission of Dordt College. Participants reported that their worldviews aligned with the mission of the college, an alignment which fostered a sense of freedom in the participants. Participants described feeling free to teach in a way that corresponded with their worldview.

Lack of methodological articulation. The study participants did not clearly and completely articulate methods necessary for teaching christianly. The participants were reluctant or unable to describe normative methodologies for teaching christianly. Questions were asked during the interview process in regard to examples of teaching christianly and the difference between teaching christianly and other forms of teaching; therefore interview procedures are unlikely to have caused the lack of articulated methodologies. There is reason to believe that teachers at Dordt College are not very familiar with teaching methodologies, Christian or otherwise.

Learning to teach christianly. In order for teachers at Dordt College to realize the mission of the college, they must learn not only to articulate what it means to teach christianly, but also execute it. Teachers face challenges when trying to teach christianly. A lack of time is often a challenge as well as complacency on the part of a teacher. Participants stated that in order to learn to teach christianly, they needed time to learn about it, time to reflect on it, and time to plan for it. Teachers at Dordt have learned in varying degrees how to teach christianly, through collegial interactions, peer observation, trial and error, self-reflection, and student evaluations. This information is useful for the college when it considers how to assist teachers in learning to teach christianly. Teachers at Dordt College adeptly articulated a solid foundation for their teaching but did not describe teaching methodologies necessary for teaching christianly.

Growth of the Researcher

To ensure reflexivity and to aid in her own learning, the researcher answered the interview questions before beginning the formal interview process with participants and again after the data analysis was completed. I found it difficult to give specific examples of how I teach christianly, but did articulate some methods that I endorse based on collaborative, reflective, and experiential learning. Unfortunately, the participants found it difficult to give specific examples of teaching christianly or methods of teaching christianly, thus not aiding in my growth in this area. What I did learn from the study was the importance of knowing who my students are, what my role is with my students, the seriousness of my call to teach, and the aim of teaching christianly. I also

came to a better understanding of the mission of Dordt College and a better appreciation for the opportunity to teach at an institution whose mission was aligned with mine.

Recommendations

Within the limitations and delimitations of this study and in light of the conclusions and discussion, several recommendations for practice and further research can be made.

Recommendations for Practice

1. Christian colleges should maintain a strong mission.

2. Christian colleges must understand that many new teachers will come to the college without a fully developed vision. Teachers will need time at to develop this vision, and intentional faculty development programs will help.

3. Christian colleges should view students as being made in the image of God complete with gifts that need to be identified and developed. As students identify and develop their gifts, teachers must encourage students to become more self-directed in their learning.

4. To further the mission of Christian colleges, more emphasis should be placed on teaching and teaching christianly.

5. Teachers of Christian colleges should consider using the Van Brummelen and Van Dyk conceptual framework for teaching. The framework offers normative methodologies for teaching christianly that go beyond a solid contextual base.

6. Christian Colleges should be certain that teacher-evaluation tools contain items pertaining to teaching christianly.

7. Teachers in Christian colleges should be sure to create hospitable spaces for student learning.

8. Christian colleges should help students identify the particular gifts which the students should be developing and using.

Recommendations for Further Study

1. Replicate this study with other religiously affiliated colleges.

2. Replicate this study with Dordt graduates to determine to what degree students and faculty agree on what it means to teach christianly.

3. Utilizing the themes that emerged from this study, design a quantitative instrument so that greater generalizability can be made.

4. Design a study in which classroom observation is the tool for identifying methodologies for teaching christianly.

Final Summary

This phenomenological study sought to illuminate the essence of what it means to teach christianly at a Christian College. Participants in this study shared their understanding of and experience with the phenomenon of teaching christianly. They determined that persons who teach christianly view their students as fellow image bearers of God. Teachers also view themselves as having been called by God to teach christianly. This calling is best carried out by maintaining significant relationships with students including the role of professional or academic mentor, spiritual and personal role model, peer learner,

disciple of Christ, and servant. Teachers are called to educate the whole student for serviceable insight, worldview clarification and/or transformation, and discipleship. The subject matter is the vehicle for educating the whole student and the subject matter must be viewed as being part of a broader cultural context, connected to other disciplines, and created by God.

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APPENDIX A

The Educational Task of Dordt College

THE EDUCATIONAL TASK OF DORDT COLLEGE

INTRODUCTION

The Educational Task of Dordt College sets forth the principles that are to direct the institution in the performance of its educational task.

Dordt College owes its origin and continuing existence to a society of God's people, whose faith commitment demands obedient acknowledgment of biblical principles in education. Those who first showed interest in establishing a college in northwest Iowa stated the following in a report submitted in 1937 by Classis Ostfriesland (now Classis Northcentral Iowa) of the Christian Reformed Church:

That Classis Ostfriesland invite Classis Pella, Minnesota, Orange City, and Sioux Center to join with us in working towards the organization, support and control of a Christian junior college in harmony with Reformed principles. The aim of such a junior college is to give young people an education that is Christian, not merely in the sense that devotional exercises are appended to the ordinary work of the college, but in the larger and deeper sense that all the class work, all the students' intellectual, emotional, and imaginative activities shall be permeated with the spirit and teaching of Christianity.

This biblical perspective has continued to determine the direction of Dordt College:
In the training and development of the redeemed in Christ the Holy Scriptures are basic, since they are indispensable to the proper realization of the individual's capacities and the proper fulfilling of his responsibilities. All education must be scripturally oriented. (*Educational Task of Dordt College*—Adopted in 1961, Proposition #9)

The covenant parent recognizes the school, formal education, as the second sphere vital to the fulfillment of his task. In agreement with his covenantal-kingdom philosophy, he demands an education for his child that is scripturally oriented. (*Scripturally-Oriented Higher Education*, 1968, p. 26) This religious commitment, which is historically known as the Reformed faith, must also be honored in the articulation of the principles and purposes of the college.

The college faculty has a particular responsibility for the formulation of a purpose statement. The members of the faculty have received special gifts and training which qualify them and make them responsible for defining as well as implementing the educational philosophy of the college. The faculty, working under the supervision of the board of trustees, must remain sensitive to the religious perspective of the supporting society. But the faculty must also lead the members of the society, by means of Christian scholarship, to a deepening understanding of the demands of that perspective. This document, written by the faculty of Dordt College, is an attempt to go beyond what was set forth in previous documents.

CHAPTER I: BASIS

Fundamental to the faith of the constituents of Dordt College is their confession that the scriptures are the Word of God. As God's infallibly and authoritatively inspired revelation, the Bible reveals the way to salvation in Jesus Christ, requires life to be lived in obedience to the Lord, and provides the key to the understanding, interpretation, meaning, and purpose of life. Only the Bible can unlock the door to a true insight into the nature of created reality. Ultimately, all things must be judged in the light of its teachings. Hence, Dordt College confesses that the Bible provides the determinative and essential principles for a Christian educational philosophy.

The Bible reveals to us a sovereign God: all things are under his control. Nothing can exist apart from him, and everything finds its goal and purpose in his glory.
In the beginning, the Bible tells us, God created all things by his sovereign will. The Son of God,

the Word incarnate, was central in this work of creation. The Apostle John affirms that Christ is the Son of God, the Word, without whom nothing was made; Paul explains that the Son is the image of the invisible God through whom and by whom the entire cosmos was brought into existence. In the same context, furthermore, Paul makes clear that God upholds and maintains the entire creation by his Son. Therefore, the creation is an integrated totality, a cosmos in which each part is designed to function coherently and meaningfully.

The creation belongs to God and is under his sovereign rule; it is God's Kingdom. God controls and orders the cosmos by his will; and it is only by obedience to his will that the creation can fulfill its purpose in the service of God.

By the Word, that is the Son of God, a *diversity* is brought about within the creation. We acknowledge this when we confess that God "has created of nothing the heavens, the earth, and all creatures, when it seemed good unto him, giving unto every creature its being, shape, form, and several offices to serve its creator." Each creature is accountable to the sovereign King and must obey the laws which God has established for it.

The Bible also tells us that God created men and women in his image, religious creatures, covenantally bound to their creator by the law which calls for loving obedience. The religious character of human kind is manifested through the heart, which is the integrating center of human existence. With hearts open to the will of God, people were to serve the creator by fulfilling the mandate to subdue the earth. That is, God placed men and women in office and called them to the task of working in His Kingdom.

However, by disobeying God, men and women violated their office and broke the bond of covenantal fellowship. They closed their hearts to the will of God and exchanged the true service of the creator for the idolatrous service of the creature. After the fall, people began to treat the creation not as the Kingdom of God, but as an object of exploitation for their own glory. Having rejected the source of true fellowship and harmony, humanity abandoned itself and the creation to division and strife, misery and death.

God determined not to leave his creation in such a state, however. He came to us with his word of grace, promising to reclaim what had been deformed and distorted by sin. He fulfilled this promise in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, the Word of God incarnate. Through faith in Christ, we are restored to covenantal fellowship with God and made to live again as his office-bearers in the kingdom. We must clearly see that Christ redeemed not only humanity, but the cosmos as well. Even though the effects of the fall continue to be present, Christ has broken the dominion of Satan, rescued the creation from the curse of sin and reigns as King over all. From this position of power, he summons the members of the new humanity to work for the expression of His Kingdom everywhere. As agents of reconciliation, they are called to labor together as one body in fulfilling the original mandate according to the claims of Christ.
God continues to sustain all existence through his Word and to require obedience of all his creatures. While the redeemed joyfully comply with the demands of the will of God, the unregenerate willfully oppose them. Thus, an antithesis arises between the reconciling work of Christ's body and the resistance of unbelief. Although significant insight into the created order can be gained by unbelievers, true meaning and coherence remain inaccessible without the light of the Bible, a heart committed to Christ, and the operation of the Holy Spirit.

Therefore, biblically oriented learning is both a possibility and a necessity for the Christian community. Recognizing this, the constituents of Dordt College maintain an institution of Christian higher education.

CHAPTER II: CONTEXT

To understand the nature of education, we must see it against the background of God's mandate to subdue the earth. God called humanity to the task of dressing and keeping the garden that is,

developing and conserving the created order. Moreover, as God's image-bearers, people are capable of fulfilling this mandate, because God, in calling people to his task, also equips them. Education, in its broadest sense, is an essential element in the development and exercise of that capability.

Humanity's ability to develop the creation depends on insight. Consequently, people must study, examine, and understand the world. Furthermore, the results of such study and investigation must be preserved by transmission from one generation to another. Education, therefore, is fundamental to humanity's task of developing and conserving the created order.

Education also relates to the performance of humanity's cultural task in another way, however, God instructed men and women to be fruitful and multiply. This inevitably involves not merely the begetting but also the training of children. Such training, too, reflects the call to develop and conserve, for children must be trained to acquire and exercise insight.

Education, then, is a constituent of life itself, and in its broadest scope refers to all human efforts to gain and transmit insight, whether at the forefront of science in universities and research centers or in the kindergarten class or on mother's lap. Seen thus, education pervades all of life. It is operative in every human relationship. In marriage, it manifests itself in the deepening of understanding between the two partners. In the home, the rearing of children is essentially an educational activity. In the church, we are instructed in the Scriptures. In all other spheres, too, such as commerce, industry, the arts and the media, there is development and conservation which requires growing insight.

In the course of history, as the human community engaged in increasingly complex cultural activity, a differentiation of tasks and offices took place. And, whereas at one time the authority of a father and that of a ruler were combined in one office, soon such authority came to be distinguished and localized in different offices, in the spheres of family and state. As civilization marched on, a multiplicity of tasks developed, requiring a variety of offices and responsibilities. The school is one of the results of such historical differentiation.

The school is the sphere in which education has become institutionalized, and has therefore been endowed with a characteristically educational task. Its responsibility is to focus on the process of gaining and transmitting insights. This task, however, is so great and so complex that further differentiation within institutionalized education became necessary. As a result, there are today elementary schools, high schools, colleges, and graduate schools.

The elementary school and the high school develop insight on a relatively uncomplicated and preparational level. Elementary and high school pupils learn to understand the fundamental character of the creation and of the tasks that will confront them as adults. On the college level the insight acquired is more abstract and scientific. There the understanding of reality is both broadened and deepened. On the graduate level the emphasis shifts to research, the further expansion of the limits of human knowledge, and advanced levels of professional training.

Within the Christian community, education plays an especially significant role today, for the Christian's task of understanding God's handiwork is complicated by the extensive deformation brought about by centuries of secularization. Christians are tempted to view God's laws and our response through the screen of distortions fabricated by unbelief. This situation makes the work of Christian education particularly difficult.

As an institution of higher learning, Dordt College addresses itself to the task of Christian education. It seeks to acquire and transmit genuine Christian insight, that is, to develop and implement an understanding of the entire creation in the liberating light of the Scriptures. Dordt College desires to be an institution of Christian learning for the benefit of both the attending student body and the entire Christian community, so that the Lord's Kingdom may come to greater expression.

CHAPTER III: STRUCTURE

The educational task of Dordt College is to be understood as a calling whereby the Lord summons committed and insightful men and women to educational service. When they hear and accept the calling to participate in the task of the college, they accept and occupy a variety of offices. As office-bearers, board members are elected, professors, administrators, and support staff are appointed; and students voluntarily join in the work of the educational community. These office-bearers, endowed with God-given competence and insight, are thus authorized to take part in the educational work of Dordt College.

Authorization to office entails responsibility. The educational office-bearers at Dordt College are responsible to carry out their specific tasks in a spirit of loving service to their fellow office-bearers.

Since God authorizes this educational task, it is important that a sense of office pervade all aspects of the college. To participate in the work of developing and transmitting insight is not merely an occupation or a means to gain financial security or self esteem, but a task to which God calls. To occupy a position at the college means to be placed in a God-ordained office requiring educational service in self-effacing love and obedience to the Lord. When office consciousness is lost, the essential meaning of this work is lost, though the connection to Dordt College may continue to be of personal interest, or prove materially rewarding. Dordt College, therefore, seeks to develop and foster an atmosphere in which the sense of calling and meaningful office consciousness can flourish.

Since the educational mission of Dordt College comprises a diversity of tasks, there is also a diversity of office. Historically, the educational activities of the college involve at least five distinct kinds of office.

Out of the community which accepted the challenge of college-level education, trusted persons were chosen to constitute a board. The board's specific task was to start and to oversee the college. They were and are mandated to provide leadership, especially to guide the religious direction of the college and to ensure its academic excellence.

Competent educators have been engaged to serve Christ in their specific tasks. As educators, these office-bearers have the primary responsibility for the development and transmission of insight. They constitute the faculty, who, through research and teaching, are called to carry out the central educational task of Dordt College.

The students also are called to share in the educational task. As office-bearers they are required to advance the educational enterprise by acquiring, contributing to, and serving as the agents for the transmission of insight from its theoretical beginnings to concrete applications.

The administrators and support staff participate in the educational task of the college as well. They are to construct and maintain the context within which the educational work of the college can grow and thrive.

A distinct office is occupied by the chief executive officer, the president of the college, whose special task is to oversee, guide, and direct the entire academic and administrative life of the institution. The president serves as liaison between board and constituency on the one hand, and faculty, students, administration, and support staff on the other.

These tasks compose the one, common educational calling which pervades every segment and activity of Dordt College. Yet, though these tasks are similar in that they all respond to the one, all-encompassing educational calling, each task is unique and functions properly only when the

others are duly recognized and allowed free expression. It should be noted, however, that there is not an exclusive identity of office with person, and that a person can occupy more than one office.

To avoid incompetence and to promote responsible use of office, Dordt College aims to provide the kind of educational service which will deepen the insight of its office-bearers. Faculty, administrative, and staff development, therefore, must rank high on the institutional agenda. Board members, too, must continue to grow in insight if they are to function effectively. And students, as a result of their education at Dordt College, may be expected increasingly to exhibit a degree of maturity and wisdom. To ensure that the tasks of the various office-bearers are carried out responsibly and competently, the college community should maintain an effective program of evaluation on all levels.

CHAPTER IV: AUTHORITY

The specific callings, tasks, and offices are associated with specific kinds of authority. Such authority is not to be regarded as supreme. Only God is the Sovereign. All authority among human creatures has been given by God and is therefore always delegated and representative authority.

The kinds of authority associated with the various kinds of educational office share with one another the requirement that they be exercised in servanthood. Educational authority, therefore, is not to be used in order to dominate or exercise presumed rights. It must be exercised in order to serve, facilitate, and edify. The goal of authority is to permit and to encourage office-bearers to perform their tasks as fully and as effectively as possible in response to the will of the Lord. At the same time, the various kinds of educational authority differ from one another in the extent to which those who exercise such authority are authorized to hold other office-bearers accountable. Some office-bearers are called to oversee the work of other office-bearers; their task, responsibility, and concomitant authority, therefore, are more extensive.

At all levels, authority must go hand in hand with responsibility. Every office-bearer has the responsibility to serve others, and to ensure their freedom to carry out their task and exercise their authority. A spirit of mutual responsibility and accountability to each other before God must exist, if authority is to be exercised in a biblical manner.

Specifically, the board possesses the authority to make and implement decisions which affect the direction of the entire educational enterprise. Normally the board will entrust the actual day-to-day operation of the college to the other office-bearers. But wherever the board detects a departure from the stated goals of the college, there the board is authorized to act.

The faculty, through its officers, is authorized to exercise authority over the academic and curricular program. As educational office-bearers they must at the time of their appointment give evidence of possessing the requisite competence, insight, and expertise to make and implement curricular, academic, and institutional decisions. Such insight and competence constitute important grounds on which their authority is to rest.

Because they are not the primary initiators of the curricular program, students exercise a more limited, yet meaningful authority. Since by virtue of their task they are directly involved in the actual teaching and learning process, their judgments regarding elements of instruction should be taken seriously. The students must evaluate whether the promise to them by the board, president, and professors is actually being fulfilled. If, through working conscientiously, they find no maturation of personal and communal insight, they are called to express their dissatisfaction, and their voice must be heard. It must be observed, moreover, that the students are significant participants in a major segment of the supporting and facilitation side of Dordt College, namely, student life; in this area, too, their judgments should be given careful consideration by those whose task it is to oversee the work of the entire institution.

The authority of the administrators and the support staff is circumscribed by their special task of organizing and facilitating the educational process. Their expertise lies in the administering and carrying out of the academic, financial, operational, and public relations matters.

The office of president of the college is endowed with a broad range of authority. As liaison between board and staff, he speaks to the staff with the specific authority of the board; he speaks to the board with the specific authority of the staff. Moreover, since the president is called to the task of overseeing, guiding, and directing the entire college, it is his responsibility to ensure that the college functions effectively and efficiently. Thus he is authorized to exercise both academic and administrative authority. All office-bearers on the campus, in the performance of their various functions, are accountable to him. The president, in turn, is accountable to the board.

Authority on campus can be exercised effectively and responsibly only if the office-bearers carry out their tasks competently. Board members, as overseers of the college, must exhibit insight and wisdom as they are called to deal with the larger questions of direction. Office bearers endowed with educational authority at the curriculum and academic heart of the college must show themselves competent in their research and teaching. Student authority, as it develops through several years of maturation, is to be closely associated with evaluation of levels of understanding. The administrators and the support staff, too, must be competent to supply an enabling context for the educational process. The president, as leader of the entire institution, must have a special measure of experience and understanding.

The exercise of authority requires structured and open lines of communication. Any person may examine or question procedure, policy decisions, or the college's effectiveness in developing and transmitting serviceable insight. Such questioning should not be regarded as failing to submit to authority or as attacking the legitimacy of authority, but necessary testing of the spirits of the college's activities. Such questioning should, however, be done in a communal spirit of love.

Dordt College recognizes that a distinction must be made between arriving at a decision and implementing a decision. The decision-making process should involve not only the persons who have the authority to implement, but also those who are impacted by the decision. Thus the communal nature of the educational enterprise must constantly come to the fore. Conflicts and disputes are to be resolved not by the force of coercion, but in a spirit of love and mutual trust. Principles guiding the resolution of conflict must be the recognition of proper areas of authority, determined by the specific task of the office-bearers involved, and the willingness to exercise authority in servanthood and stewardship. Thus the exercise of authority may never be designed to advance one's personal viewpoint or advantage, but, rather must always be prompted by the desire to advance, unitedly, the educational purposes of Dordt College.

CHAPTER V: CONTENT

The central educational task of Dordt College is to provide genuinely Christian insight on an advanced level. In our increasingly complex age, such insight is no luxury. To function effectively as a Christian in a technological and secular civilization requires deepening wisdom and understanding. Members of the body of Christ need the ability to distinguish sharply, to think critically, and to judge wisely. In their daily lives they are continually confronted by the difficulties and problems of our age. National and international tensions enter their homes through the media: political and economic problems touch their everyday lives; and the power of technology and mass communications affects them all. In addition, Christians are surrounded by the subtle influences of the secular spirits of our century. Coping with these multi-dimensional problems requires an advanced level of insight. Furthermore, many vocations and occupations have been professionalized to the extent that broad knowledge and a wide range of skills frequently are prerequisites for one's career. Hence, as our civilization advances, more and more insight is needed, not only by leaders, but by all Christians as they seek to do the Lord's bidding in our complex culture.

This situation puts a particularly heavy responsibility on Dordt College and other Christian institutions of higher learning. Such institutions are faced with the need to meet increasingly varied demands. They can no longer be satisfied with the transmission of abstractions. They must provide the kind of insight that enables Christians to carry out their task effectively in a complicated world. Whereas the majority of North American educational institutions transmit little more than the kind of insight that contributes to secularization and foster individualism, it is the educational task of Dordt College to provide genuinely Christian, that is, truly serviceable insight. Such insight is not designed to enhance the service of one's self, but rather, seeks to equip the Christian community to respond obediently to the central Scriptural command, "Love God above all, and your neighbor as yourself."

Such serviceable insight is, in effect, a contemporary expression of the Scriptural references to wisdom and understanding. The Bible teaches that "the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, a good understanding have all they that do his commandments." Also, "Look carefully, then, how you walk, not as unwise, but as wise, redeeming the time, because the days are evil. Therefore don't be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is." And again: "Who is wise among you? Let him show by his good life his works in meekness of wisdom."

The Scriptures, then, admonish us to seek wisdom and understanding so that we may be able to discern the will of the Lord and to redeem the times. Dordt College must take this injunction very seriously by seeking to provide and promote such wisdom and understanding. Dordt College must strive to transmit the kind of insight that will enable Christians to discern the will of the Lord for any situation and to develop the capacity to implement it. Serviceable insight, therefore, prepares for kingdom citizenship. And Dordt, as a Christian college, aims to train kingdom citizens aware of the demands of the cultural mandate, equipped to take their place and carry out their tasks within the community of believers, able to discern the spiritual direction of our civilization, and prepared to advance, in loving service, the claims of Christ over all areas of life.

The Christian insight that Dordt College seeks to impart is, therefore, not merely abstract and theoretical. While at its most fundamental level it reflects an understanding of the structure and workings of God's created order, insight includes other dimensions as well, such as the practical ability to carry out one's task in loving obedience and service. Moreover, built into Christian insight is the motivation and desire to function effectively as a kingdom citizen.

It is clear, therefore, that Dordt College is to provide multi-dimensional insight in which theory and practice, though formally distinguishable, are nevertheless closely integrated. The Dordt College graduate must have both a theoretical understanding of a situation and the practical ability and skill to be reformingly busy in response to God's call to service. For that reason, practice or skill is not to be separated from its imbeddedness in the wider structural context to be theoretically understood; nor is the theoretical understanding of God's creation to be divorced from the practical capacity to implement the will of the Lord in everyday situations.

It is evident that in our complex society a growing number of vocations require deepening insight of the kind that Dordt College seeks to provide. One goal of the college is to identify those occupational areas where serviceable insight is increasingly needed. In principle, no legitimate profession, occupation, vocation, or station in life can be precluded from Dordt's educational concern. Wherever insight is required, there Dordt College is called to supply it. The college must therefore continually examine the nature and scope of its offerings and programs. Decisions about programs, however, can no longer be made on the basis of traditional distinctions between professional and nonprofessional vocations. Rather, criteria such as the level of insight required--as well as financial, geographical, and other practical considerations--must play the deciding role. In this way Dordt College, by remaining aware of the demands of the times, can carry out its educational task of providing leadership that is not only uniquely Christian, but also dynamic and relevant.

CHAPTER VI: IMPLEMENTATION

Central to the implementation of the educational task of Dordt College is the curriculum, the basic means for transmitting serviceable insight. The curriculum consists of an organized encyclopedia, that is, a range of fields of investigation. These fields do not constitute a random collection of disciplines and subjects; rather, they reflect a coherent creation order.

Within the encyclopedia those fields that focus on the structure of the created order constitute the backbone of educational activity at Dordt College. Hence there is a strong stress on a core curriculum of various academic disciplines. The created structure is determinative for all of life's functionings. It provides the condition for all creaturely activity. Historical and cultural development, as well as vocational endeavors, take place within and always reflects an ordered creation. The energy question, for example, reflects physical, economic, and other dimensions of reality. To understand this question as a whole requires insight into the nature of the physical and economic aspects. Insight into all kinds of practical situations and problems, therefore, demands concomitant insight into various aspects of God's creation.

At Dordt College the dimensions of reality are examined in order to obtain an understanding of the underlying unity in diversity. Dordt College attempts to convey the perspective of an ordered creation continuously upheld by God's word of power, the cosmos in which people are placed and called to carry out their task. Dordt College, therefore, stresses the indispensability of Biblical study and Christian philosophy to our understanding of the character and coherence of the created order.

Insight into the structure of the creation is to be integrally linked to an investigation of man's response to God's call to service. In their building of civilizations, God's image bearers have been guided by a variety of spirits. Dordt College, therefore, requires the student to engage in a broad study of history and of contemporary problems. The investigation of historical developments is designed to enable the student to recognize the various deformations effected by secular and humanistic spirits, as well as the wholesome result of God-obedient activity. Such an investigation equips students to discover and evaluate the character of their own civilization. In addition, Dordt College seeks to provide insight into a number of the most crucial problems of our age. As the world seems to be shrinking, more and more of the great questions of our time impinge on our lives and require our judgment. Contemporary examples of such problems are the energy question, the role of the media, and the impact of technology. Dordt College aims to implement a curriculum sufficiently flexible to address the problems as they arise. By requiring the study of history and contemporary problems, Dordt College, as a Calvinistic institution in the tradition of the Reformation, seeks to instill the ability to discern the spirits and to engage in genuinely reforming cultural activity.

Lastly, Dordt College seeks to provide insight into the nature and demands of the various vocational and professional tasks. Graduates of Dordt College must be equipped to carry out their tasks as kingdom citizens in the professions, careers, and occupations to which they have been called. As a result, majors and preprofessional programs form another essential component of the curriculum.

While the various disciplines and programs, together with historical and contemporary studies, constitute the core of the curriculum, Dordt College by no means neglects the various skills required by graduates as they continue in their calling. Emphasis is placed on analytic, communicative, artistic, and physical skills, as these are essential for effective Christian service. Other skills, too, as demanded by the nature of vocational tasks, are included in the curricular offerings. The teaching of such special skills forms an integral part of majors and preprofessional programs, and thus of the entire curriculum.

The components of the curriculum—namely, courses in academic disciplines, studies of history

and contemporary problems, major and preprofessional programs, and skill courses--together constitute the basic ingredients required by the student to attain genuine Christian insight and wisdom. None of these facets may be isolated from any of the others. For this reason, Dordt College seeks to offer an integrated curriculum conducive to contextual learning.

Since, as stated in the preceding chapter, truly serviceable insight involves theoretical comprehension, practical ability, and proper motivation, the curriculum of Dordt College aims at coherence and interrelatedness. Education at Dordt College is not a concentration of unrelated facts or isolate bits of information; nor does the curriculum consist of dissociated academic subjects and unconnected skill courses. Rather, the various areas of the curriculum, whether they involve academic disciplines, creative activity, or skills, are to be interrelated within the unifying framework of a Biblical perspective.

In order to implement such an integrated curriculum more effectively, Dordt College strongly encourages and promotes communal scholarship. Faculty members responsible for the various components of the curriculum are to become increasingly aware of each other's work. Dordt's faculty ought to develop into a team of teachers and scholars, competent professionals who are vitally concerned about their teaching effectiveness, their area of academic specialization, and their responsibility to contribute to the overall development of integrated serviceable insight.

While the curriculum organized as an encyclopedia of fields of investigation, constitutes the central part of the educational task of Dordt College, the non-curricular aspects of the college also play an essential role in the implementation of that task. Both curricular and extracurricular activities have the same goal: the development and transmission of insight. It is clear that much extracurricular activity on campus relates to one or more of the fields of investigation formally treated in the curriculum. Conferences, clubs, special events, and guest lecturers, for example, normally deal with specific topics already considered in the disciplines. Dordt College, therefore, seeks to provide a wide range of extracurricular opportunities to develop and enhance serviceable insights.

Finally, inherent in all of Dordt's educational activity, whether curricular or extracurricular, is the goal of developing a desire to serviceable insight. To a large extent Dordt College will have failed if it graduated knowledgeable and skillful students who lack the desire to carry out their tasks in service and loving obedience. The college must therefore, cooperate closely with church and home to develop and foster genuine Christian attitudes by promoting Scripturally-oriented devotional and social activities. Such activities ought not to be considered mere additions to the academic task; rather, they should be integrated into the total pattern of curricular and extracurricular activity, all of which is designed to provide the student with serviceable insight, i.e., wisdom according to the mind of Christ.

CHAPTER VII: ACADEMIC FREEDOM

The implementation of the educational task described in the preceding chapters includes an institutional commitment to the principle of academic freedom. A Reformed view of academic freedom rests in part on the biblical concept of sphere sovereignty.

Dordt College occupies a distinct societal sphere with its own God-given authority and responsibility. The college desires to cooperate with other nonacademic institutions such as businesses, churches, or governments; but these institutions must not infringe on the academic integrity of the college.

Academic freedom must also be acknowledged and promoted within the institution. The college must stimulate, not inhibit, genuine Christian scholarship and teaching. The faculty must be free to explore and investigate.

Such freedom, however, is not to be equated with enlightenment philosophy. Individual

autonomy, the traditional idea of academic freedom, suggests that freedom knows no bounds. This view is not acceptable because all perceptions of academic freedom are, in fact, based on worldviews that set parameters for the academic enterprise. All scholarship and teaching is governed by an allegiance to prior commitments. The enlightenment view of academic freedom is grounded in assumptions about individual autonomy that exclude institutional and communal claims.

Unlike secular-religious views of academic freedom that do not acknowledge limitations and restrictions established by unexpressed assumptions, Dordt College boldly maintains that the academic freedom on its campus is restricted and bounded by the Word of God and a Reformed view of academic life as set forth in The Educational Task of Dordt College.

When appointments are made, all parties must clearly understand the nature and parameters of the statement of purpose, The Educational Task of Dordt College, and agree to carry out their academic responsibilities within the framework articulated therein. At the same time they must agree that if, in the performance of their academic task, they find themselves departing from the stated goals and purposes of the college, they should be prepared for the reevaluation and possible termination of their appointment by the board of trustees.

Explicit affirmation of The Educational Task of Dordt College and contractual obligations establishes a framework from which faculty are encouraged to engage in creative and innovative Christian scholarship. Faculty are free to explore and investigate—to "think new thoughts." Dordt College faculty are busy exploring and developing our world by asking probing questions, formulating new insights, wrestling with new ideas, and freely dialoguing with differing perspectives.

Encouraging such scholarship motivates Dordt College both to actively promote an environment of trust and mutual responsibility and to discourage a climate of suspicion and judgmentalism. Academic freedom implies, therefore, cooperation with one another and a growing understanding that disagreement does not necessarily imply error and need not lead to confrontation and division.

Dordt College confesses that the source of true freedom is Jesus Christ. Christ empowers us by His Spirit and directs us by His Word. He frees us to perform our academic task in a liberating way that enables us to respond obediently to His call.

APPENDIX B

The Educational Framework of Dordt College

EDUCATIONAL FRAMEWORK OF DORDT COLLEGE

The Educational Task of Dordt College, published in 1979, sets forth the basic overarching principles that direct Dordt College in fulfilling its educational task. The Educational Task of Dordt College makes clear that the curriculum, which is central to the mission of the college, must be a presentation of a coherent view of creation--not a random collection of disciplines and subjects.

Institutionwide strategic and long-range planning began a decade later. A self-study produced a strategic plan in 1989 titled Renewing Our Vision. This document affirms the religious-philosophical basis of the college and sets forth ways in which the vision can be sharpened and the educational task more consistently realized. Specific attention is directed to the ongoing construction of an integrated curricular program.

Renewing Our Vision mandates the Dordt faculty to continue to develop an integrated curriculum and to collaborate in designing strategies that foster interdisciplinary learning. In 1993 the faculty responded by adopting a curricular framework for the overall educational program. The Educational Framework of Dordt College elaborates on Chapter VI: Implementation of The Educational Task of Dordt College. It clarifies what the curriculum should be and how it should be structured to fulfill the mission of the college.

We do not assume that The Educational Framework of Dordt College represents the final word on curricular matters at the college. Indeed, the reformational directive to be always reforming will lead future Dordt faculty to articulate an even more biblically sensitive view of curricular content and design.

Rockne McCarthy
Office of Academic Affairs

THE EDUCATIONAL FRAMEWORK OF DORDT COLLEGE

The Educational Framework of Dordt College sets forth a structure for the overall educational program at Dordt College. We begin with a section on the underlying educational principles of the college. The part contains a number of statements that spell out our confessional basis and religious affiliation and that delineate the main features of our educational task. What we say on these topics is not new; it summarized what has been said elsewhere: in Scripturally Oriented Higher Education, The Educational Task of Dordt College, and Renewing Our Vision. We include these statements here to give an explicit context for the remainder of the document.

The second section contains some parameters for organizing the curriculum, both with respect to curricular content and curricular design. It describes in general terms what the curriculum should be and how it should be structured in order to fulfill the mission of the college.

Our treatment of the content of the curriculum, as well as of the curricular goals in the following section, is organized under four broad headings: religious orientation, creational structure, creational development, and contemporary response. These categories are meant to be comprehensive and inclusive, not the exclusive domain of particular disciplines. They sum up our curricular responsibilities before God, regardless of specialty.

Each part of the curriculum should be infused with Christian perspective, should reveal how God has structured that field of investigation for the benefit of His creatures, should show how that area of creation has unfolded over time and how human beings have responded to God's law there, and should prepare students to fulfill their contemporary responsibilities relative to the insights it provides. Different courses may weight these things differently, but all four sides should be present in a balanced way in every student's program.

This fourfold classification provides a coherent curricular framework that is consistent with a Reformational Christian perspective. None of these dimensions can be considered in isolation from the rest, but each highlights an important feature of the curriculum and of life itself. In a sense, the first three may be viewed as culminating in the last: we respond in contemporary situations according to our religious orientation, the structure of the situation, and the possibilities for action that are available to us at the time. The conceptual schema we have adopted directs our attention to each of these points in turn, as well as on the need to respond.

In the last section we focus on curricular goals and student outcomes. These are the general abilities and characteristics we would like to see developed by the curriculum in all those who graduate from Dordt College. We have not tried to separate student outcomes from curricular input, since we see these as two sides of the same coin. Nevertheless, more specific curricular objective for accomplishing the overall goals will need to be fleshed out for each program.

In formulating student outcomes we have consciously incorporated what are usually called "skills" into the section dealing with creational structure. This was done for two reasons. First, we did not want to artificially separate skills from knowledge and commitment: all three are and should be woven together to provide students with the abilities and resources needed to engage our world Christianly. Each area of study must help students acquire and develop theoretical and intuitive insights (knowledge or understanding), cultivate those abilities necessary for appropriating and applying them (skills), and build personal responsibility and initiative (commitment). Secondly, these competencies are essential to the nature of learning. They are practiced abilities students should possess in order to be effectively engaged in the educational process and be prepared for the challenge of Christian discipleship in today's society.

The principles, parameters, and goals comprise the framework for the total curriculum and context in which each individual program can take shape. The general education program, professional and preprofessional programs, majors, and minors should each articulate its own framework and relate it to that of the total curriculum. Once this is done, programs can be evaluated and redesigned, if necessary, to make them more productive participants in fulfilling the mission of the college.

UNDERLYING PRINCIPLES FOR CHRISTIAN COLLEGE EDUCATION

Confessional Basis and Tenets

1. Scriptural Direction and Reformed Tradition
The Bible is God's written Word. It reveals His will for creation and provides guidance for our lives. Our understanding of the implications of Scripture for the scope and meaning of our task as Christian community stands within the Reformed tradition of John Calvin, Abraham Kuyper, and their followers.

2. Creation
Our entire world, in all its parts, aspects, and relations, is the revelatory creation of the triune God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. God orders and preserves the cosmos by His Word as an expression of covenantal love. All things are unified under God's rule and exist to give Him glory.

3. Humanity
Human beings were created to bear God's image. As such, they were given a mandate to cultivate creation, to develop its potential and take good care of it.

4. Fall Into Sin
Through humanity's willful disobedience to God, sin entered the world. Sin disrupted communication between God and humankind, spawned disharmony between people, set men and women in harmful opposition to the rest of creation, and brought about a curse on creation that resulted in hardship and death.

5. Redemption and Restoration
God sent His only son, Jesus Christ, the Word made flesh, to save us from sin and restore all things to himself. Jesus' death and resurrection broke the domination of the Evil One and inaugurated the renewal of creation. The divine campaign to regain full control over the world will be completed when the Lord returns to make everything right.

6. The Kingdom of God and the Task of the Church
As God's people, the church, we are called to be agents of reconciliation. Under the leading of the Holy Spirit and in communion with God and one another, we are to summon sinners to repentance and strive to advance God's rule in all areas of life. We seek to transform culture and bring shalom to a broken world.

7. Christian Education
Christian education is an integral part of the Christian community's contemporary responsibility before God. It assists each new generation of God's people to discern His will for their time and place. It prepares them to care for and unfold all of creation in praise to Him, and it helps them to fight against the works of the Devil.

8. Christian College Education
Christian college education develops insight, capabilities, and Christian perspective across a broad spectrum of areas and at an advanced level of theoretical reflection and practical competence so that God's people can become better equipped to serve Him as mature adults in all areas of life.

Educational Task of Dordt College

1. Educational Mission of Dordt College
Dordt College strives to develop and share serviceable insight into the meaning, structure, and development of the world God has created and graciously maintains.

2. Serviceable Insight
Education at Dordt College is not pursued for its own sake nor for its civilizing qualities nor for the strictly pragmatic purposes of vocational instruction, but to provide insight and develop talents that will sustain lifelong responsible service in God's Kingdom. The knowledge, competencies, and commitments gained through the educational process aim to prepare students to live thankful lives before the Lord; to serve others with integrity, in common everyday activities as well as in specific vocations; and to unfold and care for creation.

3. College Community
Within the context of Dordt's administrative support staff and its constituency among God's people, the faculty and students of Dordt College form a community of scholars responsible for developing and sharing serviceable insight on all aspects of creation.

4. Curriculum
Dordt College accomplishes its educational task primarily via the curriculum, which is the formally structured set of interconnected learning activities and experiences designed to realize the mission and goals of the college. The curriculum thus constitutes the central focus of the college's organization and activities.

5. Living Environment and Cocurricular Activities
While remaining focused on its educational task, the college must treat its members as whole people. It should therefore maintain an environment that promotes responsible Christian living and supports scholarly investigation and practice. Cocurricular activities and organization of college life in general should facilitate and complement study of the curriculum, so that the college can better realize its mission.

PARAMETERS OF CURRICULAR ORGANIZATION

Curricular Content

1. Religious Orientation
The curriculum should be rooted in the Word of God and infused with a Reformational worldview to reflect the fact that all of creation is related to God as its Creator, Redeemer, and Lord.

2. Creational Structure
The curriculum should be organized into a balanced cohesive whole of complementary academic programs to faithfully reflect the diversity and coherence of reality. The curriculum should include the study of general areas of common concern to all people, and it should contain in-depth study of selected fields of specialization.

3. Creational Development
The curriculum should reflect and promote knowledge of the dynamic unfolding of creation, and it should highlight the various aspects of human responsibility and involvement in this process.

4. Contemporary Response
The curriculum should help students convert their insights and competencies into committed action. It should enable them to translate the results of theoretical investigation into faithful response to God and practical Christian service to their neighbor. Insofar as resources permit, the curriculum should contain a focused range of programs that explore the main areas of contemporary life, giving opportunities for study in those academic fields where genuine biblical insight has been developed and the Christian community's need and significant student interest have been demonstrated. The curriculum should be broad enough to address the pressing concerns of today's world, but narrow enough to be able to treat these issues with the sustained thoroughness required to develop genuinely serviceable insight on them from a Christian perspective.

CURRICULAR DESIGN

1. Sequencing of Learning
The curriculum should be organized vertically into a sequence of courses and learning activities that build upon previous learning experiences and that demonstrate sensitivity to and understanding of the various types and stages of maturation that normally take place during typical college-age years.

2. Coordination of Learning
Curricular programs should be organized horizontally to complement and interconnect with one another and to provide a well-rounded understanding of creation. The curriculum should arrange ways in which insights from different fields of investigation can be integrated to provide comprehensive understanding of issues.

3. Pedagogy for Effective Learning
The curriculum should be organized to employ instructional styles and strategies that suit the

subject matter being studied, that recognize different stages of late adolescent development and help students progress in their learning, that employ learning experiences to match the various ways students learn, that foster communal scholarship, that capitalize upon and broaden faculty members' strengths, that encourage student reflection and response, and that connect learning with real-life situations.

4. Assessment of Learning
Students ' progress should be regularly assessed as part of the educational process in order to monitor their success and that of the various programs in meeting the goals of the college.

5. Extension of Learning
The curriculum should be organized to facilitate interaction with Dordt's constituency, other Christian organizations, and the surrounding community. The curriculum should reach out through appropriate study centers, workshops, practicums, internships, and other channels to develop and extend serviceable insight into the life of contemporary society.

CURRICULAR GOALS--STUDENT OUTCOMES

Religious Orientation

1. Biblical Basis
Students should recognize the guiding role of the Bible in a life of Christian discipleship. They should be familiar with the main themes and teachings of the Bible, and they should be able to develop Scripturally-based perspectives and strategies on contemporary issues.

2. Reformed Faith and Worldview
Students should have a good working understanding and appreciation of the Reformed Christian faith, both with regard to its roots in God's revelation and its elaboration in a distinctly Christian worldview. They should be able to discern, evaluate, and challenge the prevailing spirits and worldviews of our age in the light of God's Word and our Reformational perspective.

3. Christian Lifestyle
Students should know the nature and implications of living a life of Christian discipleship in today's world, and they should be committed to developing such a lifestyle and to transforming those features of our culture that oppose it.

Creational Structure

1. Lawful Regularity of Creation
Students should understand that all of creation has been structured in an orderly way by God and that He faithfully preserves it through His laws, thus making possible the systematic organization experienced in each field of investigation.

2. Coherence of Creation
Students should understand that all of creation is unified in Christ Jesus as its sovereign head and that nothing exists apart from Him or has a right to our ultimate allegiance. They should also learn to appreciate and properly distinguish the rich diversity within the creation. They should recognize the interdependence of the various parts and aspects of creation, and they should be able to connect what they learn to their everyday experience and their future vocations.

3. Place of Human Beings in Creation
Students should recognize the central position human beings hold in creation as image bearers of God. They should learn to exhibit proper care and respect for everything God has created, acknowledging their responsibility to treat all creatures justly and with compassion; and they

should know how to maintain a balanced, wholesome lifestyle.

4. Disciplined Focus of Learning
Students should be able to use the ideas, theories, and procedures from a variety of disciplines in order to conceptualize issues, solve problems, and provide service to others in daily life. They should be competent in one or more specialized fields of inquiry, and they should be acquainted with the main contours of other fields of study.

5. Structural Conditions of Learning
Students should develop the various abilities and understandings necessary for engaging in college level learning and for continuing to develop, share, and apply serviceable insights after graduation. They should be able to work professionally and cooperatively with others, taking responsibility for their work and striving to build community among people with diverse backgrounds, interests, and capabilities.

Creational Development

1. Dynamic Character of Created Reality
Students should appreciate the developmental nature of reality. They should understand in broad terms how our world has developed, and they should be equipped to cope with a rapidly changing world.

2. The Cultural Mandate and Stewardship
Students should recognize their calling to give form to culture as creative historical agents acting in obedience to God. They should comprehend and appreciate their God-given responsibility to unfold the potential of creation in stewardly ways, exhibiting care for and proper use of the things they employ, and showing concern for those creatures that suffer from the misery caused by human sin and error.

3. Development of Culture and Civilization
Students should understand and critically evaluate the formative processes and religious spirits by which our civilization and others have been shaped. They should understand how creation has developed historically and human civilizations have helped to form today's world. Students should be familiar with the different ways in which major world cultures and civilizations have responded to the cultural mandate, and they should be aware of the interconnected global nature of contemporary life.

4. Historical Development of Fields of Study
Students should be able to identify and evaluate influential formative traditions operating in their particular disciplines and vocations and in common areas of life. They should be familiar with the resources available to them for developing new perspectives or plans of action consistent with a Christian worldview.

Contemporary Response

1. Learning for Service
Students should develop the insights, skills, and strategies needed to contribute entry level expertise and work in their special vocations and the common tasks of adult life. They should realize that they are called to vocations and communal responsibilities by God himself, and they should seek those areas of service that further His Kingdom.

2. Gaining in Wisdom
Students should exhibit increasing wisdom, rooted in a mature fear of the Lord, in their understanding of His world and their service to His Kingdom. They should be equipped for, and

committed to, lifelong learning so that they can continue to develop and apply insight in faithful response to God.

3. Commitment to Transforming Culture
Students should be sensitive to the impact of sin and idolatry in their own lives, in human society, and in the world around them. They should show a desire to transform the world for the service of God's Kingdom and the good of all his creatures. They should seek Christian responses to the world's contemporary needs, and they should actively participate in their various communities, supporting with their time, money, and prayers those institutions and ventures that serve God's Kingdom and promote a Christian vision of life.

APPENDIX C

Seeking Dordt College Permission Letter

PERMISSION LETTER

742 N. Meadow Dr.
Sioux Center, IA 51250
October 22, 2004

Dr. Carl A. Zylstra
Dordt College
498 4th Avenue NE
Sioux Center, IA 51250

Dear President Zylstra:

As you know, I am an employee of Dordt College and a doctoral student at the University of South Dakota. I am currently in the process of writing my dissertation and would like to use Dordt College for the context of my study.

This study context is the reason I'm writing—to ask for your permission. I would like your permission to carry out interviews with ten purposefully-selected professors currently teaching at the college.

The purpose of my study is to investigate what it means to teach christianly at a small, residential, Christian college. Through a single, one-on-one, in-depth, semi-structured interview per participant, I hope to acquire a better understanding of the phenomenon of teaching christianly.

I can assure you that each participant's privacy will be protected and that proper consent from the University of South Dakota's Human Subjects Committee will be obtained before the interviews are conducted.

I would appreciate, at your earliest convenience, written confirmation of your permission. If you have any questions or concerns about this study, please contact me.

Yours sincerely,

Barb Hoekstra

cc: Dr. Rockne McCarthy, Vice President of Academic Affairs

APPENDIX D

Permission from the Dordt College Insitutional Review Board

PERMISSION FROM DORDT COLLEGE

COVER SHEET: APPLICATION FOR HUMAN PARTICIPANTS RESEARCH REVIEW Dordt College, Sioux Center, Iowa

DATE RECEIVED 11/23/04 NUMBER ASSIGNED: # F04-010

DECISION OF THE IRB: APPROVED Daniel F. Hitchcock, PhD , IRB Chair Date 12/2/04

****

TITLE OF PROJECT **Teaching Christianly at a Christian College: A Phenomenological Study Conducted at Dordt College**

INVESTIGATOR(S) **Barb Hoekstra**
HOME ADDRESS **742 N. Meadow Dr.** PHONE **(712) 722-1024**
CITY, STATE, ZIP CODE **Sioux Center, IA 51250**

FACULTY SPONSOR(S) **Dr. Dennis Vander Plaats** Dept. **Education** Phone **722-6331**

PROPOSED DURATION OF PROJECT: [**X**] One time only [ ] Multiple times
FROM **January, 2005,** TO **February, 2005**

PROPOSED LOCATION **Dordt College**

TYPE OF RESEARCH:
[ ] Individual
[ ] Class Project
[**X**] Other, **Dissertation Research**

PARTICIPANTS:
Number of Participants **10**
Ages of Participants **> 18**
Compensation **0 dollars**

THIS PROJECT IS: [**X**] New [ ] Modification [ ] Renewal only (no modification)

DESIGN OF PROJECT: [**X**] Qualitative [ ] Quantitative
Control Group Involved [ ] yes [ ] no

****

Give a brief description of the PROCEDURES to be performed with or on human participants:

During this study, the researcher will conduct a single, one-on-one, in-depth, semi-structured interview per participant which will take place in each participant's office at Dordt College and last no more than two hours. Prior to beginning the interview, participants will be asked for their consent to be involved in the tape-recorded interview; asked to complete a consent form for the human subjects review board at the University of South Dakota and Dordt College and given information about the study such as its purpose, length of the interview, and plans for using the results of the study. Each interview will be tape-recorded; in addition, notes will be taken for non-audible responses. In the event that clarification or elaboration is needed, the researcher will seek a second interview with participants. The identity of the participants will remain confidential and all audio tapes destroyed after transcription has been completed.

APPENDIX E

RECRUITMENT LETTER

RECRUITMENT LETTER

742 N. Meadow Dr.
Sioux Center, IA 51250
October 22, 2004

(first and last name)
Dordt College
498 4th Avenue NE
Sioux Center, IA 51250

Dear (name):

As you may know, I teach in the Education Department of Dordt College and am a doctoral student at the University of South Dakota. I am currently in the process of writing my dissertation and plan to use Dordt College for the context of my qualitative study.

The purpose of the study is to investigate what it means to teach christianly at a small, residential, Christian college. The title of the study is: *Toward a Model of Christian College Teaching: A Phenomenological Study Conducted at Dordt College*. In order to better understand the phenomenology of teaching christianly, I will carry out interviews with ten purposefully-selected professors currently teaching at Dordt College.

I am writing to invite you to be one of these selected professors. You have experienced the phenomenon of teaching christianly, have exhibited a commitment to Christian teaching, and are considered to be an outstanding Christian teacher by your Division Dean and the Vice President for Academic Affairs.

As a participant of this study, you will be involved in a single, one-on-one, in-depth, semi-structured interview taking approximately 1 to 1 1/2 hours. The interview will be recorded and later transcribed. The audio tape used for the interview will be used for study purposes only and will be destroyed after the research is completed. For information, prior to the interview, you will be given a copy of the interview questions.

I will take every precaution to keep your participation confidential and the information provided by you will be used strictly for this study. Your name and identity will not be used on tapes or transcripts, only an assigned pseudonym.

If you are willing to participate in this study, please contact me by calling (712) 722-1024 or by emailing bhoekstr@dordt.edu. If you have any questions or concerns, you may also contact me.

Yours sincerely,

Barb Hoekstra

APPENDIX F

Consent Form

University of South Dakota

CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH

TITLE:	**Teaching Christianly at a Christian College: A Phenomenological Study Conducted a Dordt College**
PROJECT DIRECTOR:	**Barbara Hoekstra**
PHONE #	**(605) 677-6184**
Department:	**Adult and Higher Education**

You are invited to be involved in research. The purpose of this study is to investigate what it means to teach christianly at a small residential, Christian college. You were selected as a possible participant because you teach at Dordt.College.

If you choose to participate in this research project, you will be asked to meet with the researcher of this study, Barb Hoekstra, for approximately one and one-half hours, at a time and location convenient for you.

This research is being conducted for a doctoral dissertation required in USD's Graduate School of Education. The title of the study is *"Teaching Christianly at a Christian College: A Phenomenological Study Conducted at Dordt College"*. There are no public or private organizations sponsoring this research although the researcher hopes that the results of this study will be published.

Your participation in this study is entirely voluntary. If you do agree to participate, you may choose to withdraw or discontinue participation at any time with no penalty or negative consequences. You may also refuse to answer any questions you don't wish to answer and still remain a part of the study.

Only the researcher will have knowledge of your participation. You will be assigned a pseudonym, and in no way will your name be used in connection with your comments. With your consent, the interview will be audio taped and transcribed in its entirety. The tapes will be destroyed following transcription. Only the researcher will work directly with the interview material.

Your participation should involve no risk, no discomfort, and minimal inconvenience. You will be offered a summary of the findings when the research project is complete. If you have any questions about your legal rights as a human subject, you may contact the Human Subjects Committee Compliance Officer at the University of South Dakota.

Questions related to any aspect of this consent form or the study in general may be directed to the researcher, either by mail (Barb Hoekstra, (605) 677-5815 or by e-mail, bhoekstr@dordt.edu).

You are not waiving any legal claims, rights or remedies because of your participation in this research study. If you have questions regarding your rights as a research subject, contact the USD Institutional Review Board at (605) 677-6184.

If you have any questions in general about your participation as a research participant in studies at Dordt College please contact Dr. Daniel F. Hitchcock, Chair of the Dordt College Institutional Review Board at (712) 722-6357.

I understand the procedures described above. My questions have been answered to my satisfaction, and I agree to participate in this study. I have been given a copy of this form. Participation in this study implies consent to participate in this study.

APPENDIX G

Interview Guide

INTERVIEW GUIDE

Project: What it means to teach christianly at Dordt College

Script: Thank you for your willingness to participate in this study about what it means to teach christianly at Dordt College. Please read the consent form. If you are willing to participate in this study, please show your agreement by continuing with the interview.

This interview will last between 1 and 11/2 hours and will be tape recorded. So that you will remain anonymous, the audio tape will be used only by me and used only for the purposes of this study. The tape will be destroyed after it has been transcribed verbatim. Your name will not appear on the tape nor the transcription as a pseudonym will be used instead.

During this interview, I will be asking questions concerning what it means to teach christianly.

If at anytime you would like to conclude this interview please feel free to inform me of this.

Questions:

1. What does it mean to teach christianly at Dordt College?
2. What principles drive your teaching?
3. Will you give specific examples of how you teach christianly?
4. How do you differentiate between Christian teaching and other current forms of teaching?
5. How and where did you learn about teaching christianly?
6. What is the aim of teaching christianly in higher education?
7. How does the mission of Dordt College impact your teaching?
8. What personal characteristics are essential for an effective Christian teacher?
9. What help have you given or received in regards to the practice of teaching christianly?
10. What, if any, obstacles are in your way to teaching christianly?

APPENDIX H

Researcher's Answers to Interview Questions

RESEARCHER'S ANSWERS TO INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

This section includes the researcher's first set of answered interview questions.

1. What does it mean to teach christianly at Dordt College? *Teaching Christianly has to do with being very conscious about every aspect of my teaching. This consciousness is spurred on by my commitment to do all I do to the Glory of God. This means that the goals I have for students, the lessons that I plan, the questioning techniques I use, the assignments I develop, the activities I lead, and the relationships I have with students, must all be God glorifying. Teaching christianly, like Christian spirituality, "must begin with God, depend on God, and end with God" (Thompson, 1995).*

Teaching christianly at Dordt College means that I do all of the above while keeping central the mission of the college. My philosophy of teaching is very much in line with Dordt's mission; therefore the mission assists me in teaching christianly.

2. What principles drive your teaching? *My teaching must be God glorifying, it must assist students in becoming who they're meant to be, and it must be a communal effort, and it must celebrate something of the creation.*

3. Will you give specific examples of how you teach christianly? *I struggle with this answer. I'm not clear about what exactly it is in my pedagogy that can be defined as Christian teaching.*

4. How do you differentiate between teaching christianly and other current forms of teaching? *The difference lies in three areas (a) aim or goal of*

teaching, (b) the methods used, and (c) the outcomes. The aim of teaching christianly is responsive discipleship. Other forms of teaching have other aims such as good citizenship. The methods I endorse are collaborative, reflective, and experiential. The outcome is a student who has come to better understand their relationship to God, themselves, others, and the creation.

5. How and where did you learn about teaching christianly? *I first began learning about teaching christianly as a student observing how my Christian teachers taught me. More formally, I learned about teaching christianly in my undergraduate education at a Christian college. After graduation, anything I learned about Christian teaching happened "on the job," from a book, or my peers and mentors.*

6. What is the aim of teaching christianly in higher education? *The aim of Christian teaching is to help students come to know and serve the Lord, others, and his creation better than they have in the past. The aim is also to help students become thankful people who will become life-long servants to Christ and His kingdom.*

7. How does the mission of Dordt College impact your teaching? *The mission provides me with a focus for my teaching. It gives me parameters and goals. The four coordinates mentioned in The Educational Framework, help me set my bearings. The mission reminds me to discover with students how sin has played a part in the field of education (my discipline), and to discover how the field can be made better by Christian educators' involvement in it.*

8. What personal characteristics are essential for an effective Christian teacher? *Christian teachers must have accepted Christ as their Savior. They must lead a God-glorifying life. They must love their students and have good rapport with them, and they must know and enjoy their subject matter and present it well.*

9. What help have you given or received in regard to the practice of teaching christianly? *I have had the opportunity to give help to my colleagues. This help came in the form of one-one-on pedagogical review and advice as well as a round table discussion group discussing good teaching practices. I have also helped teachers with syllabus development. I have received help from colleagues, peers, and mentors.*

10. What, if any, obstacles are in your way to teaching christianly? *Lack of time and lack of knowledge are two obstacles to teaching christianly. I would like more time to reflect on teaching christianly and I would like my teaching to be more informed.*