Tyranny of the "Or"

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I was asked recently by the parent of a prospective student whether Dordt College was remaining true to its Reformed distinctives or watering that perspective down to appeal to a broader audience. As president, that’s a question I enjoy responding to.

I’ve been a student of both Jim Collins and Roger Martin for many years. Neither are explicitly Reformed thinkers—but they are among the best at thinking about long-term organizational thriving.

In *Built to Last*, Collins has a section on the “Tyranny of the ‘OR.’” He says we can become mentally trapped when we assume we must choose between two seemingly contradictory paths. He encourages readers to seek out the “Genius of the ‘AND’”—to get beyond binary choices and find alternatives that aren’t immediately obvious.

Roger Martin in *The Opposable Mind* advocates for integrative thinking, “the ability to face constructively the tension of opposing ideas and, instead of choosing one at the expense of the other, generate a creative resolution of the tension in the form of a new idea that contains elements of the opposing ideas but is superior to each.”

This approach shaped my response to the parent. Dordt College seeks to be hospitably Reformed. We are absolutely committed to proclaiming God’s sovereignty, and we are guided by a biblically grounded understanding of redemptive history that pivots on Christ’s life, death, and resurrection. And yet, we proclaim this reformational worldview in ways that invite participation from those who may not (yet) be deeply steeped in that tradition.

This means we pay attention to whether we’re using jargon and dense Reformed terminology (at least in introductory classes). We see that Reformed thinking, and preaching, is on the rise across the world, and we’re signaling our eagerness to welcome those interested in deepening their learning accented with a Reformed flavor.

We’re seeing signs that this approach is effective. Our enrollment is at an all-time high—and I believe that reflects our deep commitment to our Reformed identity. As you read this issue of the *Voice*, please pause to pray that we continue to be hospitably Reformed in winsome ways, without watering ourselves down.

Soli Deo Gloria!

DR. ERIK HOEKSTRA