Always Winter, Never Christmas

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“It is winter in Narnia,” said Mr. Tumnus, “and has been for ever so long...always winter, but never Christmas.”

In October, Dordt was privileged to host Dr. Gabriel Salguero as our October First Mondays speaker, and he used this famous line from C.S. Lewis’ The Lion, The Witch, and The Wardrobe to express the despair many of us may feel in our culture today.

A leading evangelical leader on issues of immigration, Salguero suggested that if we’re paying attention to our national conversations on immigration as well as on a host of other issues, we might be tempted to succumb to such dispirited thinking.

As we live as Christ’s kingdom citizens in this world, we need to face the reality of the “not yet” side of our lives. I’d love to be the college president who tells students that life on campus will always be sunny and that, after graduation, all of their dreams will come true.

Yet, it’s our acknowledgement of our sinfulness and the resultant brokenness of this world which makes the work at Dordt even more important and inspirational to me. While the world may feel that it’s “always winter, but never Christmas,” as followers of Christ, we need to be dealers in hope, waking up each day ready and willing to take up our cross and follow him.

The gospel story proclaims, “He is risen, he is risen indeed!” and this reality allows us to bring Christmas to our work on a daily basis. Here at Dordt, we have the opportunity to work with students to help them see with gospel glasses the brokenness in the world. Simultaneously, we also provide them with biblical wisdom and help them develop the head, heart, and hands to take the hope they have in Christ out into the world.

As president, I have the privilege of having every freshman over for dinner in the fall semester; it’s become a tradition, and these evenings are always highlights for me. At every dinner, I read the last verses of Isaiah 40: “Those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength. They will mount up on wings like eagles, they will run and not grow weary, and they will walk and not faint.”

It’s that hope which we cling to—even in the throes of winter. Christmas isn’t just coming—it’s here! Thanks be to God!

DR. ERIK HOEKSTRA, PRESIDENT