

Adopted for Life

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ADOPTED FOR LIFE

First Mondays speaker highlights the importance of adoption.

On Monday, September 2, Dordt University hosted "Adopted for Life," featuring Dr. Russell Moore, the president of the Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission of the Southern Baptist Convention and author of *Adopted for Life: The Priority of Adoption for Christian Families and Churches*. The event was sponsored by Kaitlyn's Fund, Bethany Christian Services, and Dordt University.

Families from the local community gathered together for food and fellowship with a delicious picnic supper hosted by Dordt Dining Services. After supper, the children participated in activities planned by Dordt's track team, while the adults had the opportunity to listen to Moore speak on God's heart for adoption.

In his talk, Moore described how sometimes people interested in adopting would come to him, wanting to make sure they'd done their homework, so as to avoid being hurt in the adoption process. But, as Moore pointed out, any relationship with the potential for love has potential for hurt.

"The greater the love, the greater the potential for hurt," says Moore. "There's a sense that adoption brings in all these unknowns that parenting does not. But in reality, any kind of parenting brings with it someone who is able to be completely unpredictable. Walking into the life of a child is going to require cross-bearing, and it's going to require a sense of family that does not see this as



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"The gospel of Jesus Christ means our families and churches ought to be at the forefront of the adoption of orphans close to home and around the world," writes Russell Moore in his book *Adopted for Life*.

provisional, but sees it as permanent and ongoing, no matter what."

"Our identity is found in Christ," adds Moore. "The gospel ought to inform our understanding of family, and adopting and fostering families have a duty, a calling, an ability, to inform the rest of the church of the picture of the gospel found there."

A number of families at Dordt have chosen to adopt and pursue this calling. Dr. Justin Vander Werff, an engineering professor, says, "Our family's adoption journey has helped us learn to rely on God's love, timing, and providential care to create, build, and mold our family. God has shown us as parents how each child is uniquely molded and equipped. He calls us to nurture and encourage each of our kids in different ways, according to their individual personalities and gifts."

Dr. Spring Dahl, an associate professor of agriculture, and her husband, Kyle, have adopted five children. "Adoption has meant following God's lead down a wonderful, challenging, unexpected path, filled with sleepless nights, big morning hugs and beautiful smiles, daily trials, and unexpected blessings,"

says Dahl. "Proverbs says, 'Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding, in all your ways acknowledge him and he will direct your paths.' For us, that has meant recognizing God's direction through it all, and grasping for his hand along the journey."

Moore described how adoption is a picture of our life as children of God. "If we understand what's really taking place in adoption, we understand what it means to be in Christ. The apostle Paul is saying that Jews and Gentiles are together—we've come together by the spirit of adoption, and we are all children of God."

Aaron Baart, Dordt's dean of chapel, has five children: two biological and three adopted. "Adoption for us has been an opportunity to live into the family God has called us to be," Baart says. "It certainly has its challenges, but most good things do. At this point, I couldn't even imagine what our family would look like without the biological and adoptive combination that makes up our home."

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More than 190 people attended the "Adopted for Life" event.