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Our Theology is Like a Map

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OUR THEOLOGY IS LIKE A MAP

The spring semester of 2019 is complete. We've closed the book on the last official semester of Dordt College.

On May 10 more than 350 new kingdom citizens graduated. They've fanned out from Sioux Center to the ends of the earth, eager to work effectively for Christ-centered renewal.

The 2018-19 academic year was also the year we celebrated the 400th anniversary of the Synod of Dort, which adopted the Three Forms of Doctrinal Unity in the continental Reformed tradition: the Belgic Confession, the Heidelberg Catechism, and the Canons of Dort.



As we at Dordt spent time this year highlighting the Reformed doctrines on which we stand, one of our senior students challenged me to be cautious that we don't love our confessions more than Christ or put more authority in our creeds than in Scripture itself. That student quoted the famous slogan, "No creed but Christ, no book but the Bible."

Both she and I could give examples from our experience in which doctrinal distinctions have driven harmful wedges of disunity in the body of Christ. Yet, I quickly pointed that student to one of my favorite passages from C.S. Lewis:

Theology is like a map ... Doctrines are not God: They are only a kind of map. But that map is based on the experience of hundreds of people who really were in touch with God—experiences compared with which any thrills or pious feelings you and I are likely to get on our own are very elementary and very confused. If you want to get any further, you must use the map ... That is just why a vague religion—all about feeling God in nature, and so on—is so attractive. It is all thrills and no work; like watching the waves from the beach. But you will not

get to Newfoundland by studying the Atlantic that way, and you will not get eternal life by simply feeling the presence of God in flowers or music. Neither will you get anywhere by looking at maps without going to sea. Nor will you be very safe if you go to sea without a map. (*Mere Christianity*, 153-155)

Dordt has always worked to avoid this either/or dilemma by building its educational vision and curriculum on a biblically-based worldview that is grounded in a deep understanding of Scripture and also informed by a historical understanding of the faith we profess as it has been explored and articulated in Reformed confessions.

As we begin the next academic year as Dordt University, we'll continue to affirm the Lordship of Christ over every square inch of the world he created. We'll never diminish Scriptural authority. And we'll continue to make our best efforts to draw from Reformed confessions in a way that helps our students develop a Christian world-and-life view that can serve as a "map" for seeing all of creation and all of history through that lens.

I'm confident about sending our students on the journeys God has in store for them, knowing that we've provided them with a map built on God's truth and based on the gathered wisdom of God's people through the ages. I'm certain that if they continue to use that map effectively, they'll be ready for the hills, twists, turns, and detours that are sure to come in the days ahead, until Christ returns or calls them home.

Soli Deo Gloria!

DR. ERIK HOEKSTRA, PRESIDENT

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Our Mission

As an institution of higher education committed to a Reformed Christian perspective, Dordt University equips students, alumni, and the broader community to work effectively toward Christ-centered renewal in all aspects of contemporary life.

On the Cover

On Friday, May 10, more than 350 students graduated from Dordt. Following the commencement ceremony in the B.J. Haan Auditorium, many students gathered on the Campus Green to celebrate their achievements.

