

Pondering Sin

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PONDERING SIN

I've been thinking quite often about sin over the past year.

You might be surprised to see a president's column focus on such a topic. Typically, columns like this are filled with the glories of students, alumni, and faculty of the university. I've written those pieces in the past—and will again.

I believe that readers of *The Voice of Dordt University* are also interested in reading about the distinctives of Dordt as a Christian university. Understanding sin is one of those distinctives. Not sin as something we aspire to, but sin as a reality. My sense is that our cultural inability to acknowledge and wrestle with the reality and implications of sin is a huge issue.

Dordt is committed to Scripture, affirming this commitment as the first statement of our foundational document:

At Dordt University, we confess that the Bible is the inspired Word of God, his infallible and authoritative revelation. It reveals God's good creation, the radical fall into sin, the total redemption in Jesus Christ, and the fullness (shalom) of the kingdom in the age to come. The Bible reveals to us the Word become flesh, Jesus Christ, who is the key to understanding the interpretation, meaning, and purpose of life. The Bible provides insight into the true nature of created reality and ultimately how all things must be judged in the light of its teaching. Therefore, at Dordt, we confess that the Bible provides the essential principles for a philosophy of Christian education.

Those four biblical themes—creation, fall, redemption, and consummation—frame the entire educational enterprise of Dordt.

Many colleges and universities point students to "making the world a better place" or "impacting society

positively" or "changing the world." These statements are inspirational, but I'm convicted that without an honest account of sin, such educational philosophies and university strategic plans will always be incomplete.

Understanding the importance of creation, fall, redemption, and consummation is crucial as we train students to work in engineering, social work, education, theatre, or any other field. It is only by honestly acknowledging and wrestling with sin that we can move forward meaningfully. One of our foundational confessions—the Heidelberg Catechism—has three parts: sin, salvation, and service.

Contemporary culture, often either unable or unwilling to name sin, tries to improve the world from a simply "human" perspective. Yet without sin, there is no need for Jesus as Savior. If acknowledged at all, Jesus becomes a wise teacher or moral philosopher. Without an honest acknowledgement of the reality of sin and the redemptive work of Christ, human theories to ameliorate the ills of our age are fleeting.

If you're wondering why Dordt's president is so focused on sin, rest assured that we don't stop there. We clearly name sin—both the cosmic impact of sin in every area of life and the personal nature of sin pervasively running through the heart and lives of each member of our community. But we also focus on Jesus Christ as Creator, Sustainer, Redeemer, and King, as the central figure in history.

Christ-centered renewal is the focus of our educational mission at Dordt. In fact, our joy and hope in Christ is more powerful because of the reality of sin. Christ overcomes our sin, our brokenness, and our having fallen short of the glory of God. He makes us and his world renewed. Education that acknowledges that is exactly what our world so deeply needs.



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

Professor of Chemistry Dr. Carl Fictorie prepares to add a small piece of sodium metal to water. "Sodium reacts vigorously with water, and by using that ancient technology called an overhead projector, the entire room was able to see the reaction happen," he says. Photo by Melissa Laarman.

