

How Will Football be Played in Heaven?

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HOW WILL FOOTBALL BE PLAYED IN HEAVEN?

This year, I had the privilege of interviewing candidates for a coaching position within Dordt's football program.

We interviewed several excellent candidates. During my time with the finalists, I asked (among other questions), "How will football be played differently after Christ returns, when we compete as part of the new heaven and new earth that we read about in Revelation 21?"

I have always enjoyed asking this question in varying ways during faculty and staff interviews at Dordt. It's such an important question, it seems to me, given our mission and our commitment to a comprehensive biblical worldview. And it nearly always helps me discern if applicants will really thrive at Dordt.

When we view our lives rightly under the Lordship of Christ and through the biblical themes of creation, fall, redemption, and consummation, the work we do here and now isn't just busywork to fill the days until we finally get to join the celestial choir and spend eternity singing praises around the Sea of Crystal. Adam and Eve were given the original task to continue God's loving work of creation, and we continue that to this day. Certainly, every part of cultural development is impacted by the fall; yet I trust that God is just overjoyed in seeing his image-bearers play football. And if that's true, why would it cease in eternity?

Not every job applicant has great answers to this question—but many do, including the football coach we hired this summer. To be frank, I don't hold



the coaches responsible for their lack of clarity on this matter; it's really our theologians and clergy who we should hold accountable, it seems to me. To capture the imagination of young people today, our theology needs to connect with their work in new ways, helping them see how they're needed in God's eternal Kingdom in tangible and permanent ways.

My view is that God created our head coaches of every sport with the specific image-bearing calling to be coaches. And that's just not a temporary calling—nor is it due to the impact of the fall. Their work, and indeed all our work in whatever calling God has given us, has eternal significance and will be ours for eternity—in some way or another.

I have a sense that this worldview applies equally to agriculturalists, engineers, writers, computer programmers, and accountants. I can also see potential eternal work for medical professionals and social workers. It's less clear to me what our criminal justice graduates will be doing in the New Jerusalem, but it deserves our consideration, too.

Until Christ does return to set everything right, we'll continue our work here at Dordt University keeping our eyes on the horizon with that hope, while also keeping our heads down and doing our work as faithfully as we know how. It's our joy and our calling.

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 Art Ryan Eckert provides input on a student's work during a drawing class this fall. Photo by Jamin Ver Velde ('99).

