

Mondays with Mouw

Sarah Moss

Dordt University, sarah.moss@dordt.edu

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MONDAYS WITH MOUW

I spend too much time with my head down, staring at my calendar and to-do list, my email and my text messages, trying to be as efficient as I can with my time, energy, and attention," admitted Associate Professor of Education Dr. Matthew Beimers ('94) in his commencement speech to the class of 2024. "In making efficiency the end goal, I run the risk of missing the wonders and gifts of God's creation that not only surround me but sometimes even interrupt me."

One beautiful inefficiency that interrupted Beimers this year was the "Mondays with Mouw" book group. On the last Monday of every month, 10 faculty members gathered at the Fruited Plain Café to discuss five books by Reformed theologian and philosopher Dr. Richard Mouw. These deep discussions culminated in a spring break trip to California to meet Mouw in person.

"Sitting with and listening to someone as wise as Dr. Mouw was incredibly shaping for me," says Professor of Mathematics Dr. Tom Clark. "He was one of the most genuine people I've ever met. I remember thinking, 'This is how you do it: this is how you do 60 years of faithful service and investing.'"

Associate Professor of Theology Dr.



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"Listening to Mouw and hearing his story was like seeing what the course of ordinary faithfulness—rooted in hope and in Christ—could bring," says Dr. Gayle Doornbos.

Justin Bailey described the experience as "radical generosity." "We were able to sit in a room with Dr. Mouw for two hours, listening to the stories of a full life of faithfulness to the Lord, and asking about the things we cared about most. The experience put us in a place of gratitude and generosity for one another."

"Our group later talked about how it felt like the Holy Spirit was telling us, 'This is what matters in life; this is what it means to live life before the face of God.' Yes, making meals and sharing conversation is ordinary, but because of what God has done, everything is extraordinary," says Associate Professor of Theology Dr. Gayle Doornbos.

"For a few days, I felt released from answering emails or sending texts," Beimers reflected as he stood on the B.J. Haan Auditorium stage, addressing the class of 2024. "I found myself sharing meals, laughing, crying, and hiking with my dear friends. One reason it was transformative is that our group learned to be beautifully inefficient with our time."

Those days together were a balm for Beimers' soul, as the ordinary became extraordinary because of God.

"Graduates, I wonder if someday you'll look back at the ordinary moments you

experienced at Dordt and realize they were quite extraordinary and sacred," said Beimers. "Pay attention to the mundane—the ordinary. You don't know when or how God will show up."

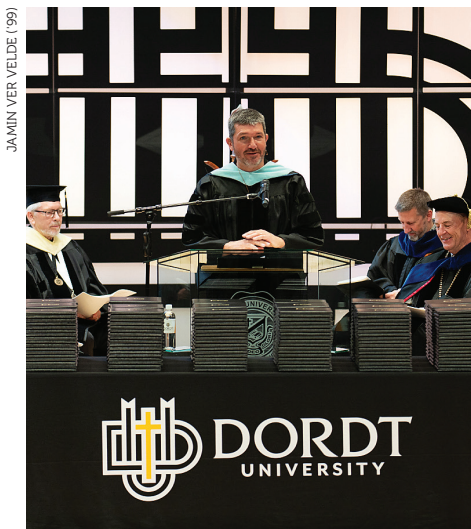
During their time in California, the faculty members appreciated reimagining what culture-building and faculty development looks like. "Our group spent time focusing on flourishing and wholeness as we stretched our minds, our hearts, and our relationships. It was one of the most meaningful professional experiences of my career," says Beimers.

In his commencement speech, Beimers encouraged graduates to find places, spaces, and people to linger with, as he did with his fellow faculty members this past spring.

"In doing so, perhaps you will discover something that I only recently learned: that when you find appropriate places to become beautifully inefficient with your time and attention, you and the people around you become a little more human.

"And maybe, in becoming more human, you might be more effective in the square inch where God has called you."

SARAH MOSS ('10)



"Graduates, I hope you intentionally build margin into your life so you notice and long for things other than paychecks and promotions," says Dr. Matthew Beimers.