

Columns

Technically Speaking



Derek Schuurman

Destination Dordt



Readers of *CC* may be aware that my employment situation changed this past year and my family and I have been facing a period of uncertainty. In my March column I wrote that my wife and I were planning to take some time away to pray and discern our next steps. Since then there have been several new developments in our unfolding journey.

During the February reading break Carina and I drove up to a rustic cottage north of Toronto. The cottage was nestled near a frozen lake covered in deep snow and ice. Although the temperatures were bitterly cold, we were grateful for a warm fireplace and some uninterrupted time to talk. We spent a few days talking, praying, snowshoeing and working through some self-directed Scripture readings. The only outside interruptions came from two closely spaced phone calls, curiously originating from a 712 area code, which I dismissed, not recognizing the number.

During our time away, we came to the distinct conclusion that we should explore getting away for a year. We were not certain where this might lead. In fact, one of the options we discussed was pursuing a year working overseas. Immediately upon returning from our retreat, there was a message waiting from Dordt College – inviting us to explore spending a year there. Although Dordt is not exactly “overseas,” Carina and I immediately felt at peace about pursuing this opportunity. It turns out the area code for Dordt is 712; we were literally being called while we were away to discern our call.

Falling into place

Needless to say, my wife, daughter and I will be traveling to Sioux Center, Iowa in July. I will take up a role as a visiting associate professor at Dordt for the 2015/2016 academic year, teaching courses in computer science, information systems and engineering. We have already experienced hints of hospitality from Iowa and I am looking forward to time away and for the opportunity to collaborate with the folks at Dordt College. Besides their impressive new science and technology facilities, Dordt has engineering and computing professors who share a keen interest in articulating a Christian perspective of technology. I look forward to a time of “iron sharpening iron.” In the meantime, Redeemer University College has asked me to return. We plan to return to Hamilton in June of 2016 at which time I will help launch a new program at Redeemer in Information Systems.

We may have been somewhat naive about the complexities of moving to another country for a year, but we are thankful that many things have started to fall into place. My wife, a Christian school teacher in Burlington, was granted a leave of absence from her employer. We phoned a real estate agent about renting a place in Sioux Center who was initially quite skeptical about finding something in town. That very same day she discovered a lead on a rental house that was coming available the very month we're planning to arrive. We are grateful we could rent our own home to a group of seminary students, a subset of the population that I presume is quite trustworthy. Our oldest three children will all be enrolled at Redeemer in the fall, a place that is still dear to me.

Throughout this process I sensed a continued call to work in Christian higher education which brought us into contact with a number of different Christian colleges (Dordt being among them). Although we were not certain where we might be led, we are thankful to God for the opportunity to continue working in Christian higher education. We are also thankful for many encouraging words and notes we have received throughout the past few months. We have felt discombobulated at times, but also felt God's leading through this recent process. Stay tuned – over the next year I hope to write some more about our adventures from the Iowa plains. ✂

Derek Schuurman has been a professor of computer science at Redeemer University College for 12 years. Next year he will be a visiting professor at Dordt College in Sioux Center, Iowa.



A painting by Carina Schuurman titled “Wait,” which was inspired by our winter get-away.