

Columns

Technically Speaking

Derek Schuurman



Farewell to Dordt College

Christian colleges to collaborate more closely together.

In addition to enjoying the scholarly interaction, we have also enjoyed experiencing some of the local highlights. These included the stunning midwest sunsets, Blue Bunny ice cream and the hospitality we experienced from many local people.

Some of my fondest memories will surround interactions with various students. In particular, I was honoured to team-teach a capstone course for senior engineering students. This course was originally crafted by Charlie Adams, the founder of the Dordt Engineering program and someone whose writings allowed me to first cut my teeth on topics relating faith and technology. While a tragic accident in 2008 left Charlie Adams unable to continue in his duties as a professor, it is clear that his influence continues to this most recent crop of engineering graduates.

Hope in Christ

The last lecture in the senior engineering capstone course was a final word of encouragement given by Professor Kevin Timmer to the students who were about to set out in their engineering careers. These words were radically different than the ones I would

have heard as an engineering student at a large public university. The engineering students at Dordt were encouraged to seek wisdom as they begin their vocations – wisdom to discern God’s will and to pursue loving service to others and the rest of creation. The students were reminded that despite the brokenness in the world, there is hope. This hope is not based on the technological optimism often found in our culture, nor by a sense that we can solve all problems by our own wits. Instead, they were reminded to place their hope in the finished work of Jesus Christ. He is in control, and they are called to a particular time, place and task in God’s kingdom. Students were reminded that all wealth, power and talent are gifts from God, and are not granted for self-serving ends. Instead, these gifts are given so that we can serve faithfully in God’s kingdom. Students were reminded of the freedom that believers have, that as engineers we can build many kinds of things. However, they were also reminded that not everything is beneficial (1 Cor. 10:23). As engineers they were reminded that normative engineering is rooted in love and care. Finally, the students were encouraged to be brave, confident that if God is for us, who can be against us (Rom. 8:31)?

Faithfulness

I can’t help but think of all the myriad of places these engineering students will



Dordt Engineering graduates 2016.

go. As engineers, many of them will find themselves at the crossroads of our culture, designing tools and technologies that will give shape to our world. My hope and prayer is that they will take the things they learned at Dordt and be a faithful presence in the places where God calls them.

This prayer of encouragement for new graduates applies to us all at every stage of life. Like these new engineering graduates I have had the privilege to teach, I am also facing a new beginning. As I contemplate our move from Sioux Center back to Hamilton and to Redeemer University College, I am reminded that God is in control and also calls me to a particulate time and place. ➤

Derek Schuurman spent the past year as a visiting professor at Dordt College and will be returning to Redeemer University College.



Dordt Engineering Professors.

Our year in Sioux Center is drawing to a close. For the past year I have served as a visiting professor at Dordt College, teaching a variety of courses in computer science and engineering. Now the campus has grown much quieter; exams are completed and commencement has passed. The students have left the campus and I suspect the population of Sioux Center has likely dropped by 20 percent or more.

This past year has been a fruitful time of interacting with faculty at Dordt College. One person mused that I was like a long-lost cousin, someone who grew up in Canada but nevertheless shares the same Reformational DNA that has shaped the mission of Dordt. This past year provided a wonderful opportunity for iron-sharp-ening-iron interactions and conversations, and several plans have been laid for future writing projects and collaborations. This experience has demonstrated for me some of the rich possibilities for Reformed