

COVENANT COLLEGE ■ SPRING 2010

THE VIEW

COVENANT'S IMPACT ON THE CHURCH



- Student Internships
- The BUILD Campaign: Celebrating & Expanding

In a recent blog posting, I wrote:

On Sunday mornings, our students scatter to a host of churches around the Chattanooga area. What a blessing to know that these churches are eager to have our students join their congregations, and that our students are sitting under the regular teaching and preaching of the Word of God, participating in the sacraments, enjoying the fellowship of other generations, and finding areas of service. Pastors and other church leaders regularly visit our campus to meet with their attending students.



And then, of course, these students become alumni, moving into other communities around the country and the world where they carry on with active and fruitful church life.

This issue of *The View* provides several glimpses of this conviction about the importance of the church, and this commitment to participation in the church. I trust that you will understand these stories not as pleasant “extras” to what we hope for Covenant graduates, but as part of the very heart of the intended impact of a Covenant education.

As parents of one Covenant alumnus (who is married to a Covenant alumna) and one soon-to-be Covenant alumnus, Kathleen and I are thrilled to see this conviction and this commitment flowering in our sons’ lives: Dan and his wife, Lyndee, joyfully engaged in the fellowship and ministry of Redeemer Presbyterian Church in Waco, TX; and David considering where to go after he graduates in May largely on the basis of proximity to a vibrant congregation.

I hope you will be encouraged in your own involvement with a local body of believers. This is God’s plan for his people: the fellowship of the saints, for worship and discipleship and mercy and witness, until Jesus Christ comes again.

And I hope you will be encouraged by the additional feature items about Covenant:

- » The good news of God’s abundant blessing in enabling us to meet and surpass our BUILD campaign goal, and now to pursue an enlarged goal, and
- » The opportunities for internships that are complementing our students’ academic work in enabling them to be better equipped for God’s callings in the years ahead.

What a delight to share all this with you! May God bless us as together we explore and express the preeminence of Jesus Christ in all things!

Niel Nielson, Ph.D.
President

View President Nielson’s blog at president.blogs.covenant.edu.

THE VIEW SPRING 2010

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Editor

Jen Allen

Designer

Tad Evaritt '98

Contributing Writers

Jenni De Jong '06, Sara Drexler '78,
Rachel Tilley Witherow '00

Contributing Photographers

Nate Carl '11, Beth Doreian, Tad Evaritt '98,
Garrett Reid '10, Show the Story Photography, Warren-
McLelland Aerial Photography

Contact the editor at:

Editor, *The View*
Covenant College
14049 Scenic Highway
Lookout Mountain, GA 30750
Phone: 706.419.1119
E-mail: theview@covenant.edu

Letters to the editor are welcome.

Send alumni notes to:

Alumni Office
Covenant College
14049 Scenic Highway
Lookout Mountain, GA 30750
Phone: 706.419.1649
E-mail: alumni@covenant.edu

Website: covenant.edu

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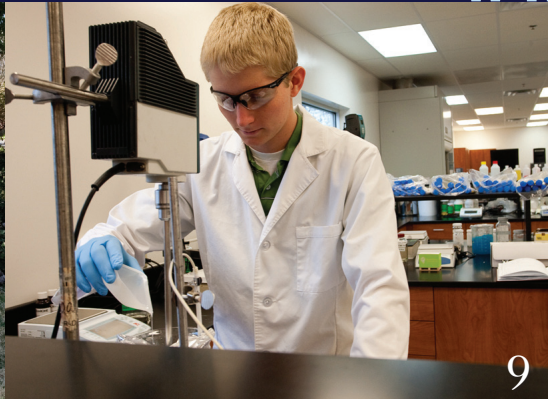
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MISSION STATEMENT

The View's purpose is to: Encourage alumni, parents and friends to keep Christ preeminent in all areas of their lives • Give alumni, parents and friends—our most important ambassadors—stories and information about the College, its students, alumni, faculty, and staff • Provide alumni with an ongoing connection to the Covenant community • Give God’s people news about Covenant that will encourage them to praise, thank, and petition our Heavenly Father.

**COVENANT
COLLEGE**

IN ALL THINGS CHRIST PREEMINENT



ON THE COVER

Covenant alumni have an incredible impact on the church in a host of different ways. Read about several young alumni who are helping with a church plant, learn from two experienced alumni pastors, and meet an alumna who leads a vibrant children's ministry program.

4 ScotStuff

A roundup of recent Covenant news and events, including a new Church Involvement Scholarship and the publication of chemistry research by a faculty-student-alumna team.

8 A Family Affair

Nathan Pifer '84 returned to his old stomping grounds to coach the Scots' soccer team, his two sons included.

9 Student Internships

Meet a handful of the many Covenant students who are gaining valuable on-the-job experience before graduation day.

13 The BUILD Campaign: Celebrating and Expanding

Join us in celebrating God's goodness in enabling us to surpass our original goals for the BUILD campaign and in pressing forward to meet more needs.

19 "Real Life" Church

Four Covenant alumni are active members of the core group of a PCA church plant in the historic, diverse community of Dorchester, Massachusetts, striving to live out the Gospel among their neighbors.

22 A Conversation with Pastors Harry Reeder '74 and George Robertson '88

A Q&A with two PCA pastors about their college memories, their thoughts on the church today, and their hopes for the future of the PCA.

24 Train Up a Child in the Way He Should Go

Robin Gorab '76 seeks to integrate children's ministry with the rest of life, creating memories, habits, and relationships.

25 Faculty View: I Attend Chapel; Do I Really Need To Go To Church?

College Chaplain Aaron Messner explains that Covenant is not the church—and that students' participation in a local church is of utmost importance.

26 Alumni News

Updates and pictures contributed by alumni.



Snow was not lacking this winter. Several snowfalls coated Covenant's campus over the past few months, making snowmen and snowball fights regular sightings. You can see more winter photos at covenant.edu/snowandice.

Church Scholarship Promise Grants Increase, New Church Involvement Scholarship Introduced

Two exciting developments that provide scholarship funding to students are underway in the College's church relations program.

The Church Scholarship Promise (CSP) program, which allows local churches to develop and leverage unique financial partnerships with Covenant College to benefit students from their congregations, now offers grants that cover a minimum of 12.8% of full-time tuition. Any church that gives to the Covenant Fund at the rate of \$10 per communicant member qualifies all students from its congregation for a CSP grant upon matriculation to Covenant. Students will continue to receive a CSP grant at this level throughout their enrollment at Covenant as long as their church continues to give to Covenant at the same level.

Over 250 students currently benefit from a Church Scholarship Promise grant.

In addition, students from participating congregations are now eligible to apply for a competitive Church Involvement Scholarship. One \$10,500 scholarship will be given to a student who applies and is invited to participate in Covenant College's Scholarship Weekend. Candidates will be assessed on their understanding of the role of the local church and their own church involvement.

Learn more at covenant.edu/csp.

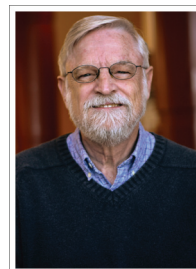
Dr. Nicholas Barker, 1937-2009

Dr. Nicholas Barker, a member of the faculty of Covenant College from 1966 until 2006, died on Christmas Eve 2009. He was 72. He is now in the presence of his Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

During his tenure at Covenant, Dr. Barker served as a professor of English, dean of the faculty, and vice president for academic affairs.

"Nick shaped the ethos of the College during his entire tenure, particularly his 25-year term as vice president for academic affairs," says Dr. Jeff Hall, Covenant's current vice president for aca-

demic affairs. "His abiding faith, intellectual honesty, true humility, and dedication to a liberal arts education served the College well. He was loved and respected by the entire community, and his influence continues in many ways to this day."



Dr. Nicholas Barker

Former Covenant College president Dr. Frank Brock served alongside Dr. Barker for many years. "Nick was brilliant and one of the best educated people I have ever known," says Dr. Brock. "He was also very kind and patient."

"No one shaped the Covenant of today more than Nick Barker, the College's longest serving dean, and I daresay, one of the longest tenured deans in higher education, even though he constantly struggled with the administrative aspects of the job. He was most comfortable in the classroom, but he was always teaching regardless of the setting. I truly loved and admired Nick and will miss him."

Debate Society Shines at National Tournament

In only its second year of existence, Covenant's Debate Society brought home national awards.

The team earned first place in the Individual Event Sweepstakes (Division III) at the 2010 National Christian College Forensics Invitational.

Susanna Griffith '13 and Zach Robbins '12 swept the first and second place junior division speaker awards, respectively, for parliamentary debate. Among an array of other awards, Covenant students earned four of the top six awards in the extemporaneous speech category.

"As Christians, we have the most beautiful message," says Zach, president of the club. "We should be able to communicate it the most beautifully. Without the education and practice necessary to prepare for that, we're leaving our culture behind."

Three Professors Receive Grant To Conduct Research on Educational Leadership

Social research organization Cardus awarded a grant of \$25,000 to Covenant College faculty members Jack Beckman (education), James Drexler (education), and Kevin Eames (psychology and institutional research).

Their research project, *Stopping the Revolving Door: Role Stress and Educational Leader Retention*, is a study of the role of turnover and retention rates of leadership in K-12 Christian schools.

They hope that their research will shed light on the causes of unstable leadership, because, as Dr. Eames says, "unstable turnover in leadership leads to organizations that are themselves unstable."

Dr. Drexler states that he is "frankly concerned for the future of Christian school leadership. I hope our research will play a role in . . . making proposals for meaningful changes that will strengthen both schools and leaders."

In addition to teaching undergraduate students, Drs. Beckman, Drexler, and Eames teach in Covenant College's Master of Education program, and they contributed to Purposeful Design



A cast and crew of over 50 Covenant students presented the American Broadway classic *West Side Story* in the spring of 2010.

Publications' 2007 book *Schools as Communities*, which Drexler edited.

In the summer of 2009, Cardus Education Survey, a major research study of K-12 Christian schools, requested proposals for studies that would add depth to research recently done by the University of Notre Dame. Beckman, Drexler, and Eames' proposal, along with two other proposals, was awarded a grant. The research is scheduled to be completed by autumn of 2010.

Covenant Receives \$4 Million Gift, \$1 Million Foundation Grant

Covenant College has received a \$4 million gift from the estate of Mr. Lowell Andreas and a \$1 million grant from a foundation that wishes to remain anonymous.

Lowell Andreas of Naples, Florida, and Mankato, Minnesota, was a former president of Archer Daniels Midland Company, and loved philosophy and Reformed theology. His pastor, Jim

Conrad '62, introduced Mr. Andreas to Covenant, and as he learned more about the College's mission and purpose, Mr. Andreas became a generous donor.

Covenant's newest residence hall, opened in the fall of 2007, was named in his honor. Mr. Andreas gave liberally despite having no family connection to Covenant and having never set foot on the College's campus.

"Lowell's appreciation for and commitment to Covenant grew over fifteen years, across administration and staff changes and culminating in this marvelous legacy gift from his estate," said Covenant President Niel Nielson.

"We are deeply grateful for his convictions about Christian education and Covenant College education in particular, and we rejoice that generations will enjoy the blessing of his foresight and generosity. Thanks be to God!"

The gift of \$4 million from the estate of Lowell Andreas, on the heels of a \$1 million grant from a foundation, is the largest single gift in the history of Covenant College.

"It is amazing to look back and see how God wove together relationships and people to create this story and bless Covenant more than we could imagine," said Vice President for Advancement Troy Duble. "Especially in this challenging economic environment, these funds will help us meet some of the goals we have already set."



The first students to live in Andreas Hall signed a picture of the hall and gave it to Mr. Andreas.

goFigure

3322

Classes offered in a semester

12.8

Minimum percentage of tuition paid by a Church Scholarship Promise

330

Percentage of alumni who gave to Covenant last year

13

Coffee mugs in the psychology department commons

571

Churches that support Covenant financially

87

Percentage of faculty with a doctorate or terminal degree

4,000,000

Dollars in the largest single gift to Covenant College

61

Tweets by Covenant this year

4,087

Donors to Covenant during the BUILD campaign



Dr. Ray Clark



Dr. Paul Hesselink



Dr. Jack Muller



Dr. Doug Sizemore

Four Retired Faculty Members Honored With Emeritus Status

Four recently retired members of the Covenant College faculty who hold a combined 152 years of teaching service at Covenant have been awarded emeritus status.

Covenant's board of trustees, upon recommendation from the administration, named Drs. Ray Clark, Paul Hesselink, Jack Muller, and Doug Sizemore professors emeriti. They were honored by their peers at a faculty dinner in December 2009.

Dr. Ray Clark taught at Covenant for 42 years as a member of the biblical and theological studies department. Dr. Clark is known for his energy in the classroom and passion for the study of doctrine, New Testament studies, and world religions. Two generations of pastors, missionaries, Sunday school teachers, and Bible study leaders can trace their zeal for God's Word back to their work in his classes.

Dr. Paul Hesselink taught at Covenant for 37 years as a member of the English department. Dr. Hesselink's arid sense of humor and probing classroom discussions equipped his students to handle difficult texts skillfully and kept his faculty colleagues on their toes. For many years he oversaw the Maclellan Scholars Program, pushing some of Covenant's best students to work near the limits of their potential.

Dr. Jack Muller taught at Covenant for 38 years as a member of the sociology department. Dr. Muller's commitment to the lives of his students extended to their most complicated spiritual and interpersonal struggles.

Covenant's sociology program owes its existence and current health to Dr. Muller's vision, persistence, and effort.

Dr. Doug Sizemore taught at Covenant for 35 years as a member of the information and computer science department. Dr. Sizemore's impact on Covenant is much larger than he would ever admit—even to himself. In addition to teaching statistics to legions of psychology, sociology, and business students, he is personally responsible for bringing Covenant into the computer age by bringing the first computers to campus.

2010 Nick Barker Writer in Residence Dr. Jim Schaap

Covenant was pleased to bring to campus Dr. Jim Schaap, a professor of English at Dordt College and this year's Nick Barker Writer in Residence.

In January, Dr. Schaap spoke on "Amazing Grace" in chapel, and in March he returned to give a literary reading.

An award-winning novelist and essayist, Schaap has authored many books, including *Sixty at Sixty: A Boomer Reflects on the Psalms*, *Romey's Place*, and *Touches the Sky*.

The Nick Barker Writer in Residence program is made possible by the generosity of a Covenant alumnus who wanted to honor the late Dr. Barker. The grant enables the English department to bring to campus each year an established writer to teach an intensive writing course, interact with



Dr. Jim Schaap

students, and present a public reading and a chapel address. This is the same grant that brought to campus Leslie Leyland Fields, Robert Siegel, and former U.S. Poet Laureate Billy Collins.

Brad Voyles Promoted to VP for Student Development

President Niel Nielson is pleased to announce that Dean of Students Brad Voyles has been promoted to VP for Student Development, effective November 2009.

"Over these last five years, Brad has demonstrated outstanding and creative leadership in all the aspects of his responsibilities as dean of students," said Dr.



Brad Voyles

Nielson. "With his oversight responsibilities also including academic support, the diversity program, health and counseling services, and safety and security, it is appropriate to include him as a vice presidential member of the senior administrative team."

In addition, Voyles now also oversees the athletics program, including intercollegiate, intramural, and club sports.

Voyles joins Troy Duble and Dr. Jeff Hall on the vice presidential team. Duble, vice president for advancement, oversees

development, alumni relations, church relations, communications, admissions, career services, facilities, grounds, and auxiliary services. Oversight of academics, business, financial aid, technology services, and human resources rests with Hall, vice president for academic affairs and chief financial officer.

Professor Zuidema, Chemistry Student, and Alumna Publish Research

Chemistry professor Dan Zuidema, Katie Wert '08, and Sarah Williams '10 discovered a way to reduce ketones without running the risk of starting fires. The results of their research were published this spring in the peer-reviewed journal *Synthetic Communications*.

"We've been continuing our study of reduction reactions in organic chemistry," says Dr. Zuidema. "Many reduction procedures require the use of hydrogen gas, extremely flammable or explosive reagents, expensive catalysts, or a combination of these. Some of these reagents burst into flames upon exposure to water. The method we developed requires isopropanol and sodium hydroxide. Both of these materials are inexpensive and fairly benign compared with many of the reagents required to carry out reductions."

Their discovery has immediate practical applications. "When making chemical structures, chemists often need dif-

ferent ways to change a ketone into an alcohol to make specific chemical compounds," explains Sarah. "Some synthetic drugs and other compounds may require this conversion step in order for them to be made. One way of reducing ketones does not work for all molecules, so our research provides another tool in the toolkit that chemical manufacturers use to make chemical compounds."

"Getting to do this research with Dr. Zuidema was such an honor. . . . Often, we would sit and talk over the finer details of the research, how things worked, and why certain byproducts were made."



The Department of Theatre and Film Studies produced *Lucifer* this spring, exploring the origins of man and of evil. Three faculty members took part in a panel discussion following a performance.



Dr. Dan Zuidema and Sarah Williams '10, along with Katie Wert '08, discovered a new method of reducing ketones. Their findings were published in a peer-reviewed chemistry journal this spring.

Follow Covenant on Twitter

At the request of a number of alumni, Covenant now has a presence on the microblogging site Twitter.

Find us at twitter.covenant.edu and become a follower to stay current on campus news and happenings.



A Family Affair

by Rachel Tilley Witherow '00

"God just opened the door. Angie and I can't believe that we are back where we went to school."

Nathan Pifer '84, head men's soccer coach

For Nathan Pifer '84, Covenant College is all in the family. Nathan's inaugural season as Covenant's head men's soccer coach garnered the Scots a 13-6-2 record and a third place trophy at the NCCAA national tournament. But for Nathan, this season was monumental for a very different reason as well: for the first time since they were very young, David and Christopher Pifer could call their dad "coach."

"David was already playing for Covenant, and Christopher had already committed to play for Covenant long before we even knew that God was leading me this way," says Nathan. "Back when they were young, I always wondered if I would get the chance to coach them in college, and had pretty much accepted the fact that I wasn't going to when God opened this door."

As an alumnus of the College, however, coaching his sons was by no means the only factor in Nathan's decision to return as a coach. "With our kids being here, we were always very supportive of Covenant. I had

been praying about coaching a men's program again, but I had no idea that I would end up coaching at Covenant. God just opened the door. Angie and I can't believe that we are back where we went to school."

Last year, Angie Graziano Pifer '86 had a son playing soccer for Covenant, another son playing his senior year of high school, and a husband coaching a high school girls' team. This year, Angie was able to cheer for all three of her men in the same game. "We were all prepared to be empty-nesters, and God had other plans," she says. "It's nothing that we ever expected, but God has done that often in our lives."

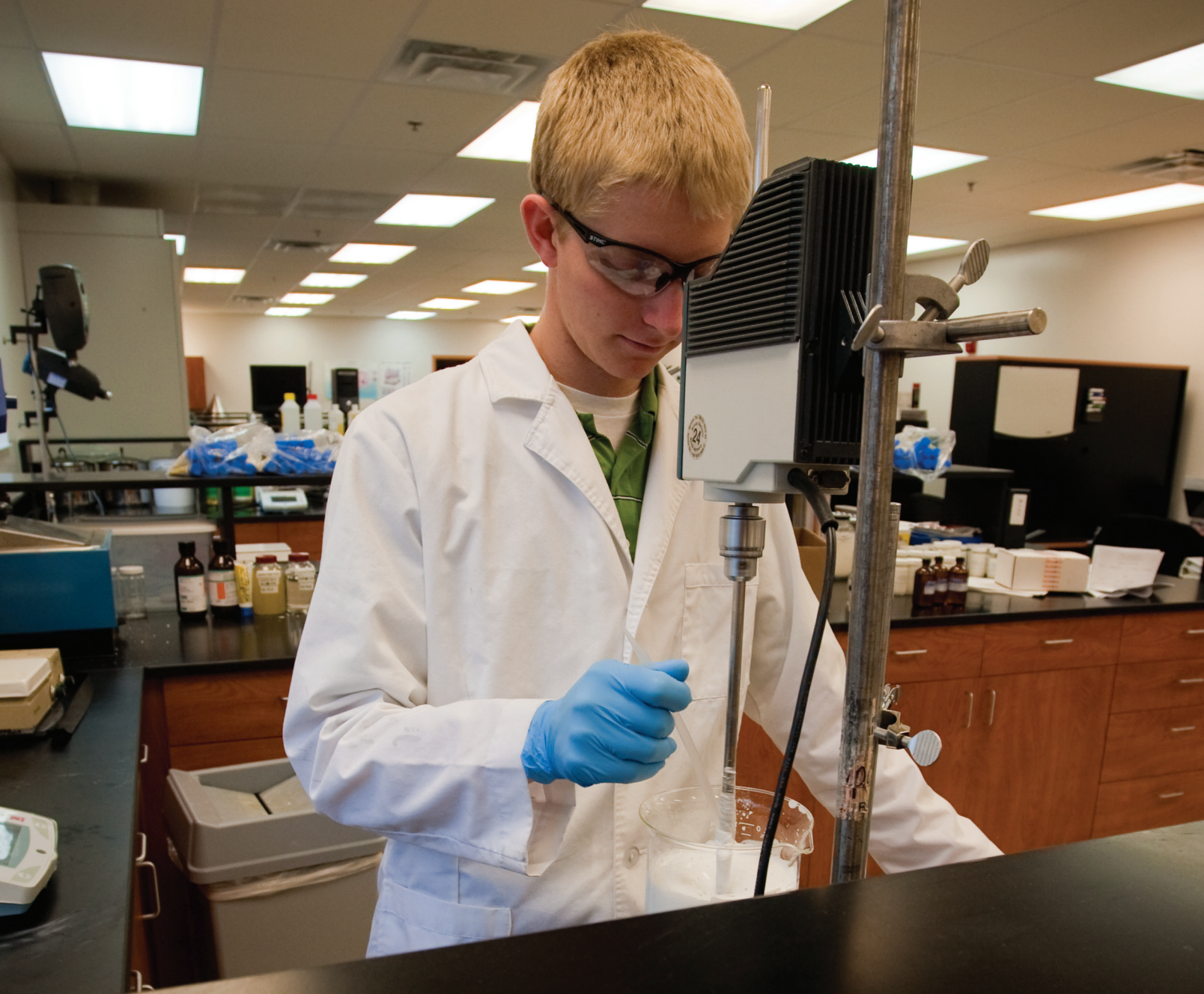
Being "mom" to a whole team is a role Angie thoroughly enjoys. "Having guys come over to watch a football game or a soccer game, or when the dining hall is closed and they need to eat—that's been a great joy. We love being back in that."

Nathan is encouraged by his first year of coaching at Covenant. "Seniors are sometimes skeptical of a new coach, but this place is different," he states. "These seniors have been

tremendous; they're guys who are not only good leaders on the team, they are good, quality Christian young men. They worked hard, they led the team to work hard, and I feel it was a smooth transition and a very successful season because of that."

With over twenty years of experience coaching nationally ranked high school and collegiate teams, one of Nathan's top goals as coach is having a national caliber team at Covenant. However, he maintains that their highest focus must be on Christ. "When we go out and we win, of course we're praising the Lord and giving Him the glory, but when we lose, we also thank the Lord and learn through it."

Adjusting to new jobs, buying a new house, finding a new church, and making new friends are all typical aspects of moving, but for the Pifer family, this transition felt a little like coming home. "We're just thankful that Covenant has brought us in, and we're really excited to be part of God's work up here on the mountain." 🙏



Student Internships

To come alongside the rigorous academic program and enhance classroom education with hands-on experience, Covenant encourages students to pursue internships and other career-related work.

"We believe that these meaningful experiences will truly help students identify where their skills and desires meet real needs in society and further define their career paths," says Anthony Tucker '99, director of the Center for Vocational Exploration and Career Services.

According to a 2009 survey conducted by the National Association of Colleges and Employers, employers extended offers for full-time employment

to an average of 68% of their interns from the 2007-2008 year.

"Whether students are looking for opportunities in the Chattanooga area, nationwide, or globally," says Tucker, "we're working to make our personal contacts as well as connections through the alumni network meaningful for both students' vocational exploration and their identification of career paths."

The following profiles of student interns offer a small taste of the diligence Covenant students are demonstrating in an effort to identify and boldly pursue their vocational callings.

Student Internships

Jonathan Casselberry '12

Major: Economics

Hometown: Bartlesville, Oklahoma

Internship: Marketing for ConocoPhillips

Jonathan Casselberry's internship doesn't begin until this summer, and he's already "learned a lot of lessons about the importance and usefulness of effective networking and trusting in God to provide these opportunities—I just have to try."

Planning to pursue a career in business—in particular, corporate finance or investment—he will be doing data analysis and economic analysis for the marketing department of ConocoPhillips—"producing figures and information for management to make an educated decision with the company's marketing policies."

"I believe any amount of experience in different branches of a business enables you to better understand the working of the business as a whole."

Under the advisement of a senior staff mentor, Jonathan will have the opportunity to work in several areas within the company and will be responsible for giving a presentation to the managerial staff at the end of the summer.



Kaitlin Fender '10

Majors: English, Spanish **Minor:** Philosophy

Hometown: Augusta, Georgia

Internship: Social Media for Top Flight, Inc.

"I am totally fascinated by what drives consumers to purchase a product, especially in connection to my generation's obsession with all things technological," says Kaitlin Fender. "I already knew that I was interested in the potential of social media, and this internship has solidified that interest."

Chattanooga-based Top Flight hired Kaitlin to evaluate its Internet presence and help market the company via its website and social media sites like Facebook and Twitter. She spent last semester conducting research, evaluating other companies in the industry, and formulating a plan for Top Flight. She's moved to implementation this year—collaborating with the staff to launch a new website and delve into the world of social media marketing.

Kaitlin says her internship has helped to hone her organizational and people skills. "It's also forced me to generate and promote my own ideas, and then carry them to completion. . . . I believe that the communication skills I've acquired will serve me well no matter what sort of job I have—and this internship has been no exception."

Melanie Coiner '10

Major: Biology **Minor:** Chemistry

Hometown: Wakiso, Uganda

Internship: Product Research & Development at Chattem, Inc.

Melanie Coiner plans to enroll in medical school this fall and become a family practice doctor. She sees the laboratory internship she's had at Chattem for the past year and a half as good preparation for both med school and her future practice.

In the R&D department, Melanie helps test experimental formulations for over-the-counter personal care products and works on in vitro testing of products before they're sent out for clinical testing. When asked how she has contributed to the company, she notes that she's "developed standard techniques for in vitro SPF measurement, tripling the accuracy of the earlier use of the machine. I have also developed a standardized hair comb test that measures the conditioning of a shampoo, which has shown good results compared to labs dedicated solely to this kind of testing."

Melanie says that many of the techniques and habits she developed in her general and organic chemistry classes contributed a great deal to her ability to do her job well. She now has an abundance of lab experience under her belt, which seems to run in the family. Her sister held an internship at Chattem before she did. "I was told that they prefer Covenant students, because we have tended to be hardworking and serious interns," Melanie explains.



Sam Belz '10

Major: Philosophy

Hometown: Walker, Iowa

Internship: Chattanooga office of U.S. Senator Bob Corker

"I worked for Sen. Charles Grassley (R-Iowa) this past summer, and while I was there some friends who work in other offices said it would be good experience to work for Sen. Corker, especially since I'm considering a future in public policy," says Sam Belz. "The idea was that after I had gotten a feel for a national office in D.C. it would be good to get a feel for the regional side of congressional affairs."

So Sam interned in the Chattanooga office of Senator Bob Corker in the fall of 2009. He answered the phone, directed constituent messages to the appropriate staff, and handled paperwork, but his primary responsibility was to make clips each morning, based on local Chattanooga news and mentions of the senator's name, for the national press office. "I learned about the busy life of a senator and the inner workings of his office from the ground up," says Sam, who is weighing a career in public policy or journalism—and would like to attend seminary at some point as well.

He sees internships as "important for helping discern your real interests. Figure out what you like and go after it—that's my advice."

Student Internships

Aaron Skrivan '11

Major: Business **Concentration:** Finance

Hometown: Tacoma, Washington

Internship: Russell Investments Global Headquarters

Aaron Skrivan has completed two internships for Russell Investments and has a third lined up this summer. He worked in Russell's short-term investments division in the summer of 2008 and the following summer at the equity trading desk, where he was accountable for gathering and producing data regarding the performance of the company's equity trading.

"The experience, as well as the information I learned by osmosis, was unlike any experience that I could have imagined," he says. "Looking forward to work every day was just the beginning of the advantages."

Aaron gained his internships through a web of networking and interviews, and testifies that the experience has reassured him that this is in fact the career path he wants to pursue.

"My internship at Russell allowed me to apply the theoretical to the practical. The information that I learned from Professor Dodson and Dr. Quatro, my business professors, laid the foundation for my knowledge and allowed me to be confident in the work that I was doing."

Upon graduation, Aaron plans to pursue a career in high finance, with his eye on a permanent position at Russell, and to obtain a CFA (chartered financial analyst) designation.



Clark Sealy '12

Major: Biology **Minor:** Chemistry

Hometown: Greenwood, South Carolina

Internship: Product Research & Development at Chattem, Inc.

Clark Sealy says he's gained and learned several things from his internship this year: "lab experience, what product development looks like, what research looks like, what going to work at 8:00 every morning feels like, why people like coffee so much in the morning...the list is endless."

Clark, along with Melanie Coiner, performs formulations of products for testing and assists as needed in the lab. As he has discovered during the course of his internship this academic year, his research assignments typically require months of work. Currently he is determining the lower detection limit of the smell and feel of menthol and capsaicin.

"I find classes and my job overlapping constantly," he says. "To better understand how a product works, I must first know the structure and what determines the properties that it has. This all relates back to chemistry, especially organic chemistry."

Clark looks forward to attending medical school and then doing medical missions overseas. "I enjoy my work [at Chattem] tremendously and would be satisfied to work there as a full-time career. It simply is not what I feel God is calling me to do with my life."

► If you would like to recruit a Covenant student for an internship in your organization, contact the Center for Vocational Exploration and Career Services at careerdevelopment@covenant.edu.

BUILD: *An Expanded Vision*

What happens when you reach a \$31 million, five-year campaign goal in only three years? Well, you celebrate God's incredible provision, and then seek to widen your vision in step with His!

That's what happened at Covenant College in 2008. We watched churches, alumni, foundations, families, and friends give above and beyond in challenging economic times to support Covenant's mission. Three years into the five-year campaign, God pushed past our original plans and continued to provide to meet additional needs.

Now, after much prayer and deliberation, we are moving forward in faith, expanding the original campaign to encompass eight years and a goal of \$53 million. We are excited about the opportunity this affords us to reach forward and complete needed

building and renovation projects, to continue providing much-needed scholarships and a vital, Christ-centered liberal arts education for our students, and to steward and enrich our core mission for years to come.

The BUILD campaign will now span 2005-2013. Building on the momentum of the original campaign, we continue to raise funds and introduce new friends to the College. Currently, God has provided \$46.4 million toward our expanded \$53 million goal. We are grateful for the generosity of so many people, and celebrate God's incredible provision, now five years into an eight-year campaign.

Here's a look at the BUILD campaign goals by the numbers:

	Original BUILD Campaign	Expanded BUILD Campaign
Covenant Fund	\$11 million (\$2.2m/year, 5 years)	\$17.6 million (\$2.2m/year, 8 years)
Capital Projects	\$15 million	\$28.9 million
Endowment	\$5 million	\$6.5 million
Total	\$31 million	\$53 million

The BUILD campaign is designed to have a great impact on our campus and community. Please pray with us for God's continued provision, and that in all of these plans and purposes, Christ would have the preeminence.

Check out the following pages for a look at what the expanded BUILD campaign has and will accomplish for our campus, for our programs, and ultimately for our students, whose lives are daily changed by Covenant's mission.



**4,087 donors have given to Covenant
during the BUILD campaign so far.**



Carter Hall

Covenant's beloved flagship building, Carter Hall, has been a centerpiece of the campus since the College moved to Lookout Mountain in 1964. Formerly the Lookout Mountain Hotel, Carter Hall initially served the College as the only significant building on campus. Today, it remains the largest residence hall on campus and houses administrative offices in addition to its ornate lobby and dining hall.

Built in the 1920s, Carter Hall requires an extensive, multi-year renovation. Ultimately, all rooms will be renovated, including the installation of new wiring, plumbing, and fixtures. The initial phase, a light refresh of the central residential floors, was completed in the summer of 2008. The next phase, a refresh of the south residential floors, is slated for the summer of 2010. We are committed to stewarding this beloved building for our students for many years to come, and are grateful for the opportunity to expand the scope of renovations to fit the building's needs.

Carter Hall Match Opportunity

Now, when you designate your gift for Carter Hall renovation, you can double the impact of your gift. The Maclellan Foundation is offering a \$1.8 million matching grant to steward this beloved historic landmark.

"I lived in Carter Hall for three years, and cherished every experience with this elegant yet quirky building. From the halls to the lobby, from the Great Hall to the mailroom, Carter is characterized by community and personality. Carter is truly the heart of Covenant's campus, and I'm glad that we are taking the steps now that will ensure its presence and function for years to come." –Julia Wohlers '10

30% of Covenant alumni gave to Covenant last year.

Endowment

Growing Covenant's endowment is one of the most strategic means by which we can build a foundation for future generations of Covenant students.

Covenant's endowment directly benefits students by funding numerous scholarships and academic and

co-curricular programs, as well as contributing to faculty salaries and the maintenance of buildings across campus. Because the endowment yields interest income, it decreases the College's reliance on the annual Covenant Fund for all expenses.

"Without the generosity of these scholarships, I would not be the person I am today. I have learned and grown so much since I have been at Covenant. I have been stretched, challenged, encouraged, and motivated to seek Christ in all that I do and am." –Brenda Nelson '11

Andreas Hall

With student enrollment high even in difficult economic times, our newest residence hall is a welcome asset. Completed in August 2007, Andreas Hall is now home to a lively community of students who have continued the tradition of close-knit hall life at Covenant College, christening their halls Bloodfield, Ithaca, Kallah, Ruhama, Imani, and The Fritz. With 38,390 square feet and four stories, Andreas sits between Maclellan/Rymer Hall and Ashe Activity Center, and can house 116 students on three residential floors. The building's location has fostered a close, walkable campus while better connecting our gym and activity center to the rest of campus.



"After two years in other residence halls, I have really come to love Andreas and the people here. I was placed as an R.A. in Andreas during my junior year to a hall that needed an identity and a new name. The Lord was gracious to all of us that year and we came out naming the hall 'Ruhama,' which is taken from Hosea 2:1, meaning 'She has received mercy.'" –Olivia Perry '10



Athletic Facilities

Athletic facilities are a key part of Covenant's strategic plan to strengthen student life. Construction of a baseball and softball complex was completed in time for the 2009 season. These new fields have proven to be a tremendous asset to our young teams, allowing flexibility in practices for both teams as well as local recognition provided by the new home field. A new intramural soccer field was added, and the Barnes Gym basketball and volleyball court was refinished and painted during the summer of 2008. Renovation of Scotland Yard was completed in July 2008 and provides improved field drainage for a quicker return to play after rainy weather. As the main soccer game field for both men's and women's teams, Scotland Yard also requires new field lights, which will allow more flexibility for the programs to practice after dark and host night games, enabling the academic core of our mission to function with less co-curricular interruption during the day. The lights will also allow our student body and local community to participate more actively in game-time activities.

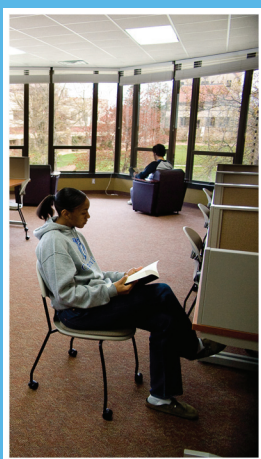
"Every time I walk onto our baseball field for practice or a game, I am proud to be a baseball player at Covenant during the early stages of the restart of the program. Seeing a beautiful, brand new field that was built for a relatively new program communicates strong support from the College and a genuine desire for baseball to be a successful program." –Andre Glover '11

**Covenant's board of trustees has led by pledging \$5.5 million.
The trustees' personal networks have contributed \$2.3 million.**

Covenant Fund

By God's gracious provision, our annual \$2.2 million goal for the Covenant Fund has been met each year, and we press forward to meet ongoing needs, funding the day-to-day workings of the College through a wide array of means—student scholarships, faculty and staff salaries, art and athletic programs, academic enrichment programs, and much more.

The Covenant Fund covers 17% of the actual cost of tuition, thereby making it possible for hundreds of students who would not otherwise be able to attend Covenant to receive the academically rigorous, Christ-centered education that Covenant provides.



Kresge Memorial Library

Renovations to Kresge Memorial Library, built in 1972, were completed in 2008, and have made the library a more central academic hub for the College community, with a significant increase in students who find it a great place for study, research, and group interaction. New furnishings, shelving, reading chairs and tables, study carrels, and study areas have made the entire building a more welcoming, functional space.

With the relocation of faculty offices to Brock Hall, space was opened up for new rooms on the second floor, housing audio-visual collections, College archives, a campus art gallery, a retreat/reception area, a new seminar classroom, and the Writing Center, as well as several group study rooms. Large windows open up beautiful views of campus on the second floor's wide, well-lit study area, allowing students a comfortable place to learn and interact.

"As an art major, the art gallery just may be my favorite place on campus. There's always something beautiful and interesting in there, and I like to use it as a study break." – Molly Wilkes '12

Dottie Brock Gardens

The Dottie Brock Gardens has become a central part of the everyday life of the College community. This inviting green space stretches between Carter Hall and Brock Hall and facilitates more interaction between students, faculty, and staff, as well as providing a venue for events and enhancing the north entrance. The Gardens are named after Mrs. Dottie Brock, Covenant College's former "first lady" who invested herself in the beautification and landscaping of a growing campus.



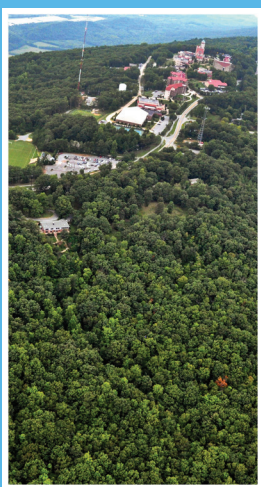
"The Dottie Brock Gardens ties the campus together beautifully by its amazing landscaping. This space has been used for many things, from impromptu snowball fights to the annual Baker Tree Festival."
– Molly Wilkes '12

Brock Hall

Located across from Carter Hall, between the Overlook and the chapel, our new academic building consists of approximately 24,000 square feet on three floors. Named in honor of former president Dr. Frank Brock, Brock Hall opened in August 2008 and houses the community development, economics, education, foreign languages, history, interdisciplinary studies, and sociology departments, along with the Chalmers Center. It adds significantly to the academic space on campus, featuring classrooms, a lecture hall, a seminar room, faculty and staff offices, a faculty lounge, two conference rooms, and both indoor and outdoor common space where students and faculty gather. Wireless Internet is available throughout the building. All classrooms feature enhanced technology, including a new curriculum lab for the education department and a state-of-the-art language lab. Built to complement and mirror the architecture of Carter Hall, the building features an arched breezeway and an overlook that provides beautiful views of the eastern vista.



"As a history major, I spend most—if not all—of my academic time in Brock. One thing I like about Brock is that it facilitates being with the faculty more often. We have a history major commons, and the professors often come out of their offices to hang out for a bit and joke around." – Timothy Van Vliet '11



New Property Acquisition

An exceptional piece of property recently became available to the College and was purchased in December 2009. This property consists of 33 acres with beautiful views of the valley, and it borders College-owned land and Scenic Highway on the southeast end of campus. Across the road from New Scotland Yard soccer field, this property presents incredible opportunities for future campus growth. Over the years, the College had built a relationship with the owners and watched the property's price and availability fluctuate. Originally listed at a selling price of nearly \$2 million, the property was sold to Covenant for \$1.2 million. The 5,000 square foot residence currently located on this 33-acre property could be utilized by the College as administrative and storage space, housing of special guests, a venue for special functions, and a future access point to the developing public trail system on Lookout Mountain. The ongoing campus planning process will shed more light on what the College will use this property for in coming years.

"The opportunity to purchase land that in future years will allow the College to expand its facilities is exciting. I am confident that we will make good use of the 33 acres and house. I'm grateful for those who have given unrestricted funds that can be used for such a purpose." –J. Render Caines '69

**571 churches gave nearly \$1 million to Covenant in 2009.
219 churches qualified their students for the Church Scholarship Promise.**

Donor Profile: Rachel George '00

When Rachel Gleason George's faculty advisor, Dr. Bill Davis, asked her to consider the possibility that "Christian" and "lawyer" weren't exclusive terms, Rachel began a professional journey that has taken her from Emory University School of Law to a successful law practice in Washington, DC.

Rachel, a philosophy major, is now a senior associate in the Financial

Markets Group at Orrick, Herrington & Sutcliffe LLP. She lives with her husband, Tim—also a practicing lawyer—and 20-month-old daughter, Kate, in Falls Church, VA.

How did Covenant impact how Rachel approaches her calling to practice law?

"To help maintain civility in a fallen world, lawyers advise folks in the midst of their greed and selfishness every day," explains Rachel. "It's

hard to imagine a better place for a Christian with a heart and mind for redeeming the day-to-day workings of our culture. At Covenant, I learned that God calls Christians to serve Him by proclaiming His pre-eminence in all that we do. Law is a noble labor for Christ in a complex field with a dubious reputation—at

"We give to Covenant because we have great expectations for what God will do in and through the lives of Covenant students."

Covenant, we call it an extraordinary calling in an ordinary place."

Why do Rachel and her husband give to support the BUILD campaign?

"We give to Covenant because we have great expectations for what God will do in and through the lives of Covenant students," says Rachel. "Because Covenant is focused on both academic rigor and the integration of faith into every aspect of life, Covenant graduates are equipped in



a unique way to transform the world for Christ.

"Covenant doesn't churn out widgets who all think alike! The College is in the business of preparing a new generation of young people to become the next great Christian leaders."

Join the Covenant College community in a celebration of God's goodness through the BUILD campaign.

President Niel Nielson and Campaign Chairman Joel Belz invite you to celebrate with us as we give thanks for God's provision and look ahead to new goals.

BUILD:
{ A Covenant Campaign }

Heavy hors d'oeuvres

Dancing to Sweet Georgia Sound in the Dottie Brock Gardens

Dessert



Friday, April 30, 2010

6:30 p.m.

Covenant College

Please RSVP to 706.419.1439
or jenny.gienapp@covenant.edu



“REAL LIFE” CHURCH

Laura Kaufmann '05 had fairly traditional plans when she graduated from Covenant—move with friends to a new city, go to graduate school, and experience life on her own. But she also dared to picture herself in a church plant in a diverse neighborhood “where the opportunities seemed endless.” Little did she know how close her dream was to the reality God was preparing in Dorchester, Massachusetts.

Dorchester is one of America’s oldest neighborhoods, a community of about six square miles in metropolitan Boston. Both its history and population are interesting and diverse. From Captain John Smith’s arrival in 1614, Dorchester has been home to many a visionary and activist. Generations of immigrants from all around the globe have made their residence in Dorchester, and presently African-Americans, Hispanics, and Asians make up nearly

two-thirds of its population. Dorchester continues as it has for decades to attract a large working class community, and even as many have been hurt by the economic downturn, in recent years the community has welcomed many new residents including young professionals and artists.

When she arrived in Boston, Laura began attending Christ the King Presbyterian Church in Cambridge, and joined a small group in the



"At Covenant I was immersed in the study of the sovereignty of God, and in these last few years I have learned how much he loves it when we as his creatures trust boldly in him."

Heidi Kaufmann '05

Dorchester home of Megan and Paul Sonderegger. The couple's neighborhood felt distant and distinct from their church community, however, and this created in the Sondereggers a growing desire to establish a church closer to home—living, working, and worshipping with their Dorchester neighbors. Among other efforts, Megan established a series she called "Dine Around

Dorchester," inviting Cambridge church folk to become acquainted with the rich diversity of Dorchester through its restaurants. Through that

experience, and more significantly, the Sondereggers' vision and encouragement, Laura joined the effort to establish a church plant.

Just a year later, Heidi Kaufmann '05 joined her sister, to pursue a master's degree in mass communication at Boston University, with the added appeal to share in the life of the Dorchester neighborhood. That same fall, Covenant graduate Evan Donovan '06 also moved to Boston to work for TechMission Corps as an after-school tutor.

"We want our neighbors to know the members of this church are here for 'real life' in Dorchester; we are not migrants."

Evan Donovan '06

Like the others, Evan found a warm welcome both at church and small group, and like the others, gained the vision. "It was no great

initiative on my part," he says, "but through the relationships built in our group, it was the next thing to do."

Heidi agrees, recalling a fundamental truth reinforced at Covenant, that ideas have consequences. "At Covenant I was immersed in the study of the sovereignty of God, and in these last few years I have learned how much he loves it when we as his creatures trust boldly in him. I am learning to look for that balance between careful, prayerful planning and just taking the next step."

Some of those steps included walking door to door of businesses and schools, looking for a place

to worship—a long walk on a hot summer day which resulted in "rejection at every corner," Laura says, "until we found a perfect match, a school that charged almost no rent and

expressed desire to support us in ministry." As the core group began Sunday evening services with leadership from Cambridge, such

provisions from God along the way emboldened each one as they stepped forward together in faith.

Meantime, another Covenant alum, Sarah Funke '04 moved to Boston to be near Evan (the two will be married in May), taking a job as a TechMission grant writer. "I was a little concerned that I would just be known as 'Evan's girlfriend,'" she recalls. "But there's always a need in a small church for everyone to get involved in everything, and I was soon able to meet and interact with people." Sarah appreciates the way the mission of the church and TechMission overlap—and the leadership has come to depend on Sarah's and Evan's experience as they seek to become a holistic community church. She says "Covenant made cross-cultural experience a requirement as well as fostering a spirit that inquired past one's own inherited beliefs, so it set me in a direction that would eventually lead to Dorchester."

When Pastor Dan Rogers arrived on the scene in 2008, he was delighted to find this core group who were deeply committed to both the church and the neighborhood. "Dorchester can be a hard place to live," he admits. "It is a wonderfully, beautifully broken place." And for such a place, the Dorchester congregation aims to be a "7-day-a-week church," seeking not simply to provide goods and services, but rather seeking the transformation of their community through the preaching and living out of the Gospel.

All the hours spent together in prayer, in fellowship, in getting acquainted with one another and with their neighbors, in meals shared and ideas pursued, have turned out to be healthy roots for the Dorchester plant. Evan says "I have learned that serving God is not part of my life, it's everything. My work, my church, my neighborhood, and my personal life are all about serving God."

Pastor Rogers sees his "four Scots," as he refers to the Covenant alumni, living this out day by day, and "loving people well," both on and behind the scenes. Heidi and Laura are deeply involved in a burgeoning GED program, staffed by church volunteers, welcoming students from the community, and providing childcare for them while they study. Evan's gifts in technology have been put to good use in many ways, including the development of the church website. Laura now leads the "Enfolding Team" which is responsible to connect church members with new folks now attending, and Heidi helps to administer the benevolence fund, used to help those in need both in the church and neighborhood.

"We want our neighbors to know the members of this church are here for 'real life' in Dorchester," says Evan. "We are not migrants." As they approach their life together, Evan and Sarah see relationships with neighbors as the core of their ministry and

"Our four Scots bring a deep understanding of the gospel of grace. All four do a wonderful job of initiating with others."

Pastor Dan Rogers

feel in some ways that they are just getting started in developing and maintaining those friendships. "Our pastor often says that our neighbors . . . are our neighbors!" he says. "These are the people that live near me, and sometimes for all sorts of reasons they are the hardest to love and to help."

"Our four Scots bring a deep understanding of the gospel of grace," Pastor Rogers says. "All four do a wonderful job of initiating with others." Assistant Pastor Logan Keck agrees. "One of the sacrifices of a church plant is that we don't have much to offer them except the opportunity to serve. It's all about where their hearts are, and the draw for them is community." All four connect that with their Covenant experiences in and out of the classroom. "English, history and philosophy classes challenged me to step into other people's perspectives, both fictional and true, and wrestle with views that challenged my own, but always with the anchor of the gospel," Laura says. "Classes established the concepts," Evan adds, "but relationships on campus were where interest and inspiration were kindled." As a music major, Sarah observes that "Dr. Steele's classes helped to formulate my ideas on music, ideas which would later shape how I would come to view other cultures in general."

The core group takes part in block parties, has a summer softball team, offers hospitality in their own homes, and recently even hosted a shopping trip to Goodwill. But while they acknowledge their investment in the community, they agree with Pastor Keck who says that "God has done as much with our inability as with our ability." They speak often and freely of the blessing of their calling, and of their increased appreciation and understanding of the church, "not a static activity or just a Sunday thing," Heidi comments, "but a constantly evolving work of the Holy Spirit in people's lives."

"It's all God's plan, not our plan," Laura says, now five years later. "God's way is so much better than my expectations and ideas—the church is so much bigger than what happens within four walls on Sunday, and he orchestrates all of it." 

A Conversation about the Church

with pastors Harry Reeder '74
and George Robertson '88

Two of Covenant's alumni who pastor PCA churches speak about the church today, their hopes for the future of the PCA, and memories from their college years.



Dr. Harry Reeder '74 is the senior pastor of Briarwood Presbyterian Church in Birmingham. He graduated with a degree in history and Bible, and has since authored *From Embers to a Flame* and *The Leadership Dynamic*.



A former president of Covenant's Student Senate and a biblical and theological studies major, **Dr. George Robertson '88** is now the senior pastor of First Presbyterian Church in Augusta.

■ Tell us about one of your most vivid memories from your time at Covenant.

Robertson: I lived in Second South, and so once I got some seniority, I moved away from the window that looked over the dumpster to windows that had better views of the valley. After breakfast I always had a little bit of a break before my next class. Those were times for my devotions, and the Lord met me at very crucial, critical times in those times of prayer looking out over His creation. And every time I come back to the College, I literally go and stand under one of those windows and thank the Lord for meeting me in those times.

Reeder: My most vivid memory of Covenant was my first encounter of being in chapel, standing with my newly found fellow students and

singing *All for Jesus*. My thoughts were simple . . . any college who would mean this and sing this and have the sincere desire to promote this in my life . . . then I wanted to be there and harvest everything I could from all of my time there!

■ Describe one of the greatest challenges facing the church today.

Reeder: One of the greatest challenges facing the church today is an increasing neopaganism and to respond with truth and love. It is the challenge of being *in* the world but not *of* the world. The church cannot be a subculture in the name of truth nor can it become simply part of culture in the name of love. We must not assimilate to the point of conformity nor separate in the name of purity into isolation. We must be in the world but making sure the world is not in us so

that we might move throughout the world with a commitment to truth and love. As one divine said, "truth without love is cruelty; love without truth is barbarity."

The greatest challenge today will be met if the motto of Covenant College is kept! "In all things Christ might have the preeminence."

Robertson: If I were to isolate one that would capture a whole lot of others, it would be that we are distracted. We are bombarded by so many different stimuli and there are so many opportunities to do so many different things. And technology, with the promise of making life simpler, has made it more complicated and distracted us away from the one thing needful, as the Lord said to Martha. The one thing needful is to live in

fellowship with Jesus. And living in that vibrant, centering fellowship with Christ would answer so many other challenges of communication. . . .

If we weren't so distracted, we would know God's word better and hear God's word more clearly and be able to make so many better decisions and not take so much time and energy in untangling the messes we get into by making unbiblical decisions. So, I think the church needs constantly to hear more clearly the voice of Jesus in the midst of all the cacophony of voices that they're getting bombarded with. And that takes great effort to simplify a life, to create margin in life, to unplug, to tarry.

■ **Do you think Christians today recognize the importance of being part of a local church body?**

Reeder: I believe that there is a serious shortfall in disciple-making in general in the church today and the importance of understanding the doctrine of the church and one's relationship with it. Churchmanship in its highest noble biblical form seems to be a note seldom sounded in the process of developing young Christian men and women. Suffice it to say the church of Jesus Christ is the one institution in this world that is headed to the New Heavens and New Earth—the glorious bride and magnificent body of Christ purchased by His own blood.

Robertson: I think there is an encouraging renaissance of interest in being churchmen, seeing the need to be connected to a local church body. It seems to me, and greater experts than I have noted, that the trend in American evangelicalism is toward smaller churches rather than the mega-church syndrome. I pastor a large church now, but I interact with young people especially who really hunger to be part of a small fellowship they can get deeply involved with and be nurtured by, and given the breakdown of the family structure, I think the Xers and Millennials really hunger for the kind of covenant family nurture that can occur in the local church. I think those trends of people wanting

smaller churches and people who talk a lot about the desire for community with other Christians, I think that all bespeaks a heightened view of the importance of being committed to a local church.

■ **How would you encourage Covenant alumni to become more involved in the church?**

Robertson: It's interesting, I just had this conversation with some alumni, and I said to them, "You need to go to your pastor and say 'I'm here to help you,' not in a proud way, but just let him know you're there and you want to be a help. You've been given a great gift, the exceptional gift of a Covenant College education. You've lived in it, you've soaked in it for four years, so it's possible to take it for granted, but you can't underestimate the blessing it can be to your local church and the world. And so, go make yourself known to your pastor, and then just serve wherever the need is."

Reeder: I believe that every professing believer graduating from Covenant should, even now, make sure that they are engaged and embedded in the life and ministry of a local church. I would encourage them to find one that is engaged in God-centered worship, the exposition of the Word from the pulpit, the lectern, and the small group, embracing a fellowship of intimacy and integrity and manifesting the power of the Gospel through evangelism and disciple-making, church planting, church revitalization, developing Gospel leaders and engaged in Gospel deeds of love, mercy, and justice. In summary, find a Christ-centered, Gospel-driven, spiritually healthy and growing church, then do not play "drive-by church" on Sunday mornings. Actually do what the Scriptures say you are—"members of the body of Christ."

■ **What are your hopes for the future of the Presbyterian Church in America?**

Reeder: I believe the PCA has been uniquely gifted and called of the Lord to make an impact for the kingdom of God in fulfilling the Great Commission

and the Great Commandment in a manner perhaps out of proportion with its present size. I believe God would call us to provide leadership and, by God's grace, hopefully manifest evangelic breadth and theological depth that the PCA might promote the church of Jesus Christ that is not five miles wide and one inch deep nor one inch wide and five miles deep but five miles wide and five miles deep and growing in the love of Christ.

Robertson: The PCA was founded on this motto of true to the Scriptures, the Reformed faith, and the Great Commission. I can't think of anything more exciting than that. If we stay true to the Scriptures and all that that means—in declaring them, applying them, living them out—true to the Reformed faith as it is an interpretation of the Scriptures with all of the richness it has to offer in a transformational approach to culture, and if we remain a church that is intentional about giving away the good news and leading people to a personal relationship with Christ in word and deed, I can't think of anything greater to dream about.

I would say additionally that it is my dream that we would be a leader denomination in evangelicalism, and in so doing, a real influencer of our culture, so that people of North America would look to the PCA for resourcing or guidance. . . .

Finally, I'd say that I really dream of a denomination that exemplifies Christ-centered, Gospel-oriented community, so that we deal with each other in our denomination in a pastoral and gracious way. 

To continue reading
the conversation with
Harry Reeder and
George Robertson, go to
covenant.edu/pastorQandA.

Train Up a Child in the Way He Should Go

by Rachel Tilley Witherow '00



An eternal substance. Robin Gorab '76 claims to have not only found it, she says she's surrounded by it. But what is it? The fountain of youth? A sorcerer's stone? No, what Robin has discovered is vastly more significant than any elusive panacea: Robin spends every day watching kids learn about Jesus. "It really doesn't get any better than this," she says. "Watching these children grow to love Christ is the greatest blessing I could imagine." Of course, she does much more than just watch.

Robin has been the director of children's ministry for Village Seven Presbyterian Church in Colorado Springs, Colorado, since 1995. In this role, she has found herself as a writer, a consultant, an administrator, a teacher, and a party planner. But regardless of whatever hat she has on, Robin has one mission: to train up the children in the way they should go, so that when they are old, they will not depart from it.

"The statistics are not in our favor," she states. "So many children who are raised in the church stray away when they reach young adulthood." This regrettable fact became the impetus for Robin's approach to children's ministry: don't separate church from life. Create memories, create habits, create

relationships! Make church an unforgettable part of life. "If we don't allow fun to be a part of a child's experience at church, then the message we're really communicating is that church is sober and serious and the world is the place to have fun. As the church, we need to create an environment where children want to be—where learning about Jesus and learning how to serve Him is exciting!"

With that as her goal, Robin has created a ministry that focuses on family involvement in programs that range from visiting Jerusalem the day after the Resurrection and fleeing religious persecution with the Pilgrims to outreach sports camps for the community and ice skating parties (that's when she puts on her party planning hat). What Robin is most passionate about, though, is facilitating the development of a worldview that

"If we don't allow fun to be a part of a child's experience at church, then the message we're really communicating is that church is sober and serious and the world is the place to have fun."

Robin Gorab '76
children's ministry director at
Village Seven Presbyterian Church

will carry children from the classroom to the courtyard. "It became so much a part of who I am, as a student at Covenant, to look at the big picture; to know that every moment of life is about Christ. My desire is to help children understand that God cares about every aspect of their lives."

Robin considers herself blessed. She says that every day she is amazed that her job is to be surrounded by children who are learning how to love and live for Jesus and by grown-ups who share her desire to serve His little ones. "It is easy to feel passionate about a substance that is so eternal." 

I Attend Chapel; Do I Really Need To Go To Church?

For many students the pattern of self-questioning is all too familiar, “Do I really need to go to church this morning? Isn’t my life here at Covenant College a sufficient experience of ‘going to church?’ After all, I am taking Bible classes every day, I attend chapel multiple times a week, and as part of my life at the College I experience Christian community everywhere I turn. Doesn’t my daily experience at Covenant fulfill my need to go to church on Sunday?”

This common internal argument raises an interesting set of theological questions, and as a Christian liberal arts college and an official agency of the Presbyterian Church in America, these are questions Covenant College takes very seriously. At Covenant we find that we are called to continually rearticulate the nature of the relationship between the College and the local church to our students. Although there isn’t sufficient space here to fully unpack our understanding of the nature and necessity of local church, I would like to briefly share some of Covenant’s core commitments in this area.

The point of first importance is that Covenant College is not the church. Covenant is an educational ministry of the church and hopefully our ministry is a blessing to the church, but we are in no way, shape, or form a replacement or substitute for the local church in the life of the believer.

Our belief that Covenant College is not the church, despite the similarity of certain activities, is rooted in our con-



by **Rev. Aaron Messner**, college chaplain

viction that the local church is not an informal community of human origin defined simply by individual participation in common activities, but rather it is a divinely established, tangible community where members take vows and participate in sacraments which publicly declare that they are spiritually yoked to Christ and to one another under the authority, discipline, and shepherding of a body of elders who derive their authority from Christ himself according to the Word of God.

It is our prayer that a student’s experience at Covenant would help them to see church not simply as a set of activities to be engaged in, but as the necessary community to be a part of. Our prayer is that during their time here, Covenant students would begin a life-

long pattern of active church membership where they would make vows to belong to particular churches, submitting to particular leadership who calls them to particular communal responsibilities and affords them particular benefits.

At Covenant, we love the church of Jesus Christ, and we are so thankful for the abundance of faithful local congregations all around us. And we believe we are most useful to the church when we realize that we are not called to replace the local church for these years in a student’s life, but rather to use these years to equip students to understand the nature and necessity of the local church and help them to establish patterns of lifelong commitment to and participation in local congregations. 

Alumni News Not Available Online

Alumni News Not Available Online

Alumni News Not Available Online

Introducing the Covenant Caroler

Handcrafted in suburban Philadelphia by Byer's Choice, this unique caroler dons the College's tartan fabric and holds a copy of *All for Jesus*, the College hymn.

A limited quantity of Covenant Carolers is now available for pre-order at \$60 each, plus shipping.

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“Thicket” by Professor of Art Ed Kellogg

“The glory of leaves in color is short-lived, but while they’re in color there’s something beautiful and rich about them that I find compelling,” says Professor Ed Kellogg, who was inspired to paint “Thicket” by autumn leaves on Covenant’s campus. “Like all creation, they point back to the Creator.”

Though he didn’t take an art class until he was in college, Ed got started painting when he was young and peddled his artwork in high school so he wouldn’t have to work construction.

“Early on I was impressed by the understanding that the reality of God’s creation is rich in meaning, so it’s not

so much a matter of imposing meaning as of discovering meaning. That’s been an ongoing interest of mine.”

Ed retires this May after serving on Covenant’s faculty for 37 years. Yet he is quick to point out that he will continue painting “until I can’t hold a brush anymore!”