

COVENANT COLLEGE ■ AUTUMN 2011

THE VIEW



Growing a
Business
Alumni Entrepreneurship

- The Seed Project
- Homecoming
- The Power of Storytelling

FROM THE PRESIDENT

One of the enduring characteristics of Covenant College is creativity. Our campus is alive with student ingenuity and inventiveness – in the arts, in student organizations, in academic pursuits. Many of our graduates pursue creative pathways, teasing out the potential inherent in God's creation for fruitful, gospel-fueled enterprise. In doing so, they bear witness to God's image and they point forward to the consummated realities of the Kingdom to come.



Our Covenant alumni's creative entrepreneurship comes in many shapes and sizes, and bears fruit in many contexts: planting a church, starting a school, founding a ministry. One area in which Covenant alumni have been particularly active is economic entrepreneurship, serving their communities and the wider world with business enterprises that meet needs, provide jobs, and generate profits. A couple of years ago, I gave a chapel address – later posted at itunes.covenant.edu – about God's glorious calling of business, fraught of course with moral and spiritual dangers like every other calling, but capable at its best of producing truly God-honoring and others-serving good:

In my opinion, an efficient, productive, and profitable business is one of the most magnificent demonstrations of the glorious potentialities inherent in God's creation, every bit as beautiful as a symphony or a novel or heart surgery or a literacy program — or even a college!

One of my great joys is to watch Covenant students catch this biblical vision for business, and then venture out to build something that grows and blesses.

In this issue of *The View*, we share stories of several alumni whose entrepreneurial pursuits reflect Covenant's creative ethos and Christ-centered mission. We also share the stories of three local businessmen who, while not Covenant alumni themselves, have given their creative efforts for the sake of the College – in board leadership, in establishing scholarship programs, and in the management of the College's endowment.

In addition, there's a report on The Seed Project – a new initiative to further encourage the creative, entrepreneurial impulses of our students – and its first awardees. From Dr. Gwen Macallister, professor of English literature, there's an essay about storytelling, an apt feature in an issue which recounts and celebrates the unfolding plot lines of alumni enterprises.

And, of course, Homecoming 2011 receives due attention, with photos and accounts of the weekend's exciting events, and you will enjoy catching up on College news and alumni updates.

So please enjoy reading this issue of *The View*, and join me in thanks to God for Covenant's creative community.

May Jesus Christ be praised!

Blessings to you in him –

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Niel Nielson".

Niel Nielson, Ph.D.
President

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

THE VIEW

AUTUMN 2011

THE MAGAZINE OF COVENANT COLLEGE
The College of the Presbyterian Church in America

Published by the Office of College Communications

Editor

Jen Allen

Designer

Tad Ewearitt '98

Contributing Writers

Brian Beise, Gwen Macallister '95

Contributing Photographers

Sam Bestvater '13, Lindsay Burkholder '12,
Juliet Cangelosi '14, Tad Ewearitt '98,
Annie Huntington '13

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 news & photos to:

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

Website: covenant.edu

© 2011 Covenant College
Articles may be reprinted with permission of the editor.

Covenant College complies with federal and state requirements for nondiscrimination on the basis of age, race, color, gender, handicaps, or national or ethnic origin in the administration of its policies and programs.

Opinions expressed are those of the contributors or the editor, and do not necessarily represent the official position of the College.

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



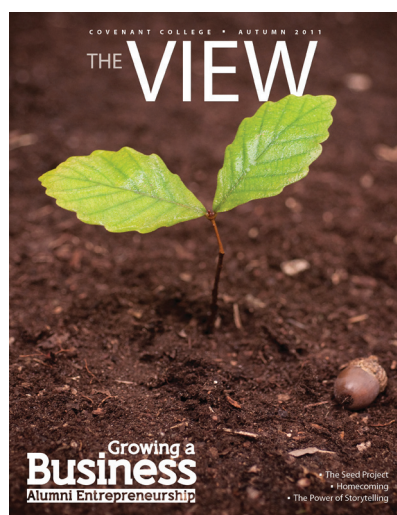
10



20



22



ON THE COVER

With enough time, skill, and care, a seed that fits in the palm of the hand can grow into a tree towering above our heads. Read about the work of Covenant alumni who show the kind of creativity, initiative, and skill required to grow a good idea into a great business.

4 ScotStuff

A roundup of recent Covenant news and events, including a new faculty member, added resources in the library and art department, and national recognition for the College.

10 Building a Business Like it Counts

David Nielson '10 and Ben Wagner '10 have created LikeKraze, a unique social website that keeps people active as well as connected.

12 Active Learners

Since getting married, Eddy '95 and Carlee Hilger '95 have worked together to create two organizations that partner with families in challenges that many face alone.

14 Fancy Rhino and the Seed Project

Filmmakers Drew Belz '10 and Isaiah Smallman '11 won the \$10,000 prize in Covenant's first entrepreneurship competition, the Seed Project, and are hard at work building their company.

16 Initiate by Faith

After buying a pair of good shoes at a discount, Chris Hitchcock '95 had an idea that he has grown into a thriving online business.

18 The Bridge

Isaac Wardell '01 began Bifrost Arts to help churches approach music and worship in a way that unites rather than divides generations.

20 Jolly, Sharpe & Little

Three executives in the carpet industry of Dalton, Georgia, helped start a PCA church, became connected with Covenant, and are now loyal partners in the mission of the College.

22 Homecoming & Alumni of the Year

Alumni, students, and friends alike gathered for a weekend full of celebration.

24 Faculty View: Caught Up In Story

Dr. Gwen Macallister discusses the power of storytelling to shape our understanding of each other, our world, and our Creator.

25 Alumni News

Updates and pictures contributed by alumni.



Covenant's Department of Theatre & Film Studies opened the 2011-2012 season with Luigi Lunari's *Three on the Seesaw*, a farcical meditation on the nature of existence, death, the universe, and God. Visiting Instructor Deborah Kirby directed. You can learn about upcoming productions at covenant.edu/theatre.

Dr. Cale Horne Joins History & Politics Faculty

Dr. Cale Horne '00 has joined Covenant's faculty as an assistant professor of political studies. A Covenant alumnus with a Ph.D. in political science from the University of Georgia, Dr. Horne now helms the College's new political studies concentration and minor within the Department of History & Politics.



"Too often, undergraduate curricula in political studies amount to little more than a degree in current events," says Dr. Horne. "This is a disservice to students in the extreme. Politics is complicated stuff and requires rigorous theoretical, methodological and substantive training if we're to make any sense of it."

"I still think Abraham Kuyper says it best: '...there is not a square inch in the whole domain of our human existence over which Christ, who

is sovereign over all, does not cry: 'Mine!'" With this truth in mind, it's my hope that the political studies program at Covenant College will prepare students to faithfully serve Christ and His Church in government, law, international affairs, academia and elsewhere."

Covenant Community Joins Local Storm Recovery Effort After Campus Evacuation

The severe storms and tornadoes that passed through the local region on April 27, 2011, causing a power outage and limited water supply, led to Covenant's campus being evacuated a week early at the end of the spring semester. We were grateful that all students were safe and the campus escaped direct impact from the storms. Though many in our community suffered loss and significant challenge as a result of the storms, we were blessed to witness the love of Christ through the Covenant community, as, in a matter of hours, faculty, staff, alumni, churches,

parents, and other friends volunteered to house 600 students in their homes.

Many students stayed in the area and joined in the recovery effort, helping our neighbors who were most affected by the devastation. In the days that followed, Covenant students, staff, and faculty logged over 1,000 volunteer hours.

Library Launches World-Class Operating System

In the summer of 2011, Covenant's Kresge Memorial Library was eleventh in the world to go live with the Online Computer Library Center's (OCLC) new cloud-based integrated operating system, Web-scale Management Service (WMS). The library also replaced its old online catalogue with WorldCat Local, a new discovery tool search engine. While WMS streamlines library administrative functions, the new WorldCat Local dramatically changes how members of the Covenant community do research.

Erin Helmly '11, who will graduate in December, notes that almost everything

is searchable through one interface now. “That has definitely been a big improvement,” says Erin, though she cautions that this discovery tool is not a replacement for the work done by Covenant’s research librarian or for more specific electronic resources. “The discovery tool is best for someone just getting started on a topic, hoping to start with a broad search, and then to narrow the search as they hone in on their subject.”

“The product is still technically in beta testing,” says Director of Library Services Tad Mindeman, whose staff has worked extensively with OCLC to refine the new system. “[T]his is a major leap forward for this community.”

Professor Zuidema and Chemistry Students Publish Second Article

The research group led by Dr. Dan Zuidema, associate professor of chemistry, published another article in the peer-reviewed journal *Synthetic Communications*. The article is titled “Deoxygenation of Aromatic Ketones Using Transfer Hydrogenolysis with Raney Nickel in 2-Propanol.”

Four Covenant students, Karin Bosma '10, Abigail Smith '10, Katie Wert '08, and Sarah Williams '09, all made significant contributions to the work and are co-authors of the article. “I count working with these four students a big privilege,” says Professor Zuidema. “It is exciting to see them apply their sharp minds and God-given talent to wrestling with problems that we face in the scientific community. It is also rewarding to see them get their work published.

“I think this goes beyond simply benefitting the students involved, however. When we publish results, we get the opportunity to publicly profess, ‘Look at how gracious God has been to us. Look at what he has shown us about himself and his creation!’”

Career Resources

Covenant continues to build its network of career resources, helping students and alumni connect with interested employers in their fields. At covenant.edu/ccn, employers can post full-time, part-time or one-time job opportunities, and approved employers are also able to search student and alumni resumes. Students and



onCourse | R.E.A.P.

Faculty:

Professor of Sociology Toni Chiareli

Method:

Professor Chiareli leads a group of student sociologists, using R.E.A.P. (Rapid Ethnographic Assessment Procedures), a team-based method allowing them to perform extensive research in a compressed amount of time. Instead of individual students developing isolated research projects, in which they are entirely responsible for the research design, data gathering, analysis, and application of findings, this method calls for the formation of a team with specialized roles. By implementing a rotation schedule and a division of research labor, the students are able to maximize the use of their individual gifts and technical abilities in order to reach the best possible data gathering and analysis results.

For Example:

This summer, Chiareli and the students in his May term course researched the street artist scene in Montmartre, a historic district of Paris, France. The group observed the activities and interactions of the artists, mapped the area, and interviewed local artists and residents. The students moved into the research area (Place du Tertre) and separated into teams of 2-3 for the purpose of data gathering. Every other day or so, the group held strategy meetings, in which they shared and analyzed data, and prayerfully sought wisdom in defining emergent cultural themes that came out of their work. This systematic method allowed Chiareli and his students to complete their research in a shorter period of time and generated much more useful data than if each student had carried out his or her own separate research.

Says Professor Chiareli:

“It is important to note first that this May course is a ‘practice course.’ It is designed to give students a taste and a feel for how to do ethnographic research full-time, but in a concentrated burst of effort. Being on the field is a very challenging and often exhausting proposition. My goal in this course is to enable students to focus their time almost solely on the research process. Because this course takes place within a very restricted time frame, we do not pretend to come out as authoritative experts on a given subculture. Having said that, we often do come up with very interesting findings which, although tentative, do give us a very good glimpse into the cultural setting and members we study.”

Method Used In:

Sociology Field Research Practicum

goFigure

2,149

Feet above sea level
at the Overlook

164

Feet drop in elevation
from the Overlook
to Scotland Yard soccer field

14,955

Times someone entered Kresge
Memorial Library in September 2011

48.5

Years worked by Covenant's longest-
serving employee (and counting)

475

People served in the Great
Hall during the first hour of
lunch one day this fall

86

Students on the spring 2011
athletic academic honor roll

400

Alumni registered with
covenant.edu/ccn

391

Employers registered with
covenant.edu/ccn

alumni can learn more about career resources available to them at covenant.edu/career.

During homecoming this year, the Center for Calling & Career hosted two panels: a writing & communications career panel and a counseling & helping professions panel. We are grateful to these alumni for sharing their experiences and wisdom with students and fellow alumni who are interested in those fields. Other alumni or friends of the College who would like to offer career guidance to students are invited to email centercc@covenant.edu.

New Digital Photo Lab Opens

This year Covenant opened a new digital photo lab, furnished with Macintosh computers and greatly expanding the resources available to art majors.

"Covenant students have to master digital tools to effectively engage in our increasingly digital culture," says Ken McElrath, associate professor of art. "The new digital photo lab is equipped with powerful systems configured with the speed and storage required for digital photography and other media arts, such as film post-production and animation. This new lab, combined

with the digital design lab, takes one more important step toward achieving our longer-term vision for the arts at Covenant."



Covenant Arts: 2011-2012 Concert Series

The 2011-2012 season of the Covenant Arts concert series is well underway, and upcoming guest musicians include Shinnerrie Jackson and the Core Ensemble, the Preservation Hall Jazz Band, and local legends, the Dismembered Tennesseans.

Visit covenant.edu/covenantarts or call 706.419.1453 for more information and to purchase tickets.

Covenant Receives National Recognition

The Princeton Review has recommended Covenant as one of the best colleges in the Southeast in its "2012 Best Colleges: Region by Region" list. Named schools were selected

Presidential Search Update

With President Niel Nielson stepping down from Covenant College's presidency on June 30, 2012, the Board of Trustees is in the process of searching for and selecting Covenant's sixth president.

"On behalf of the Board of Trustees and the Presidential Search Committee," said Marty Moore, chairman of both, "I ask you to join us in prayer for God's blessing upon this presidential search. Though we regret seeing Dr. Nielson's tenure as president come to an end next year, we trust in our good and faithful God to provide his successor, and we look forward to continuing to advance the College's founding mission of exploring and expressing the preeminence of Jesus Christ in all things, by God's grace, for many generations to come."

Visit covenant.edu/presidentialsearch for more information and periodic updates.

based on institutional data provided by the colleges, campus visits by Princeton Review staff, the opinions of college advisors, and the results of a survey given to current students on each campus.

U.S. News & World Report's 2012 Best Colleges issue ranks Covenant among the top ten regional colleges in the South for the ninth consecutive year. Covenant was named seventh in the category. U.S. News ranks colleges based on peer assessment, graduation and retention rates, faculty resources, student selectivity, financial resources, and alumni giving.

Sue Webb Named Head Tennis Coach

Sue Webb has joined Covenant as head coach for the men's and women's tennis teams.

A native of Great Britain, Webb represented her country in the International Tennis Federation World Team Championships from 2009 to 2011 and won the Senior British National Indoor Championships in 2009.

"I'm really excited about coaching at Covenant," says Webb, who most recently served as head tennis coach at Chattanooga Christian School, leading the girls' team to five state championships and the boys' team to four. "While I miss everyone at CCS, I look forward to the future at Covenant and building it into a top-level program."

Visit covenant.edu/athletics for schedules and game recaps for all of our athletics programs.



Katie Stanford Hired as Cross Country Coach

Katie Stanford has been named head coach for the Scots and Lady Scots cross country teams.

Stanford most recently served as the head cross country coach for Chattanooga's Notre Dame High School, following four years as the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga's assistant cross country coach and head recruiter.

"Katie is a great institutional fit for us, and her experience as a runner and assistant coach has prepared her well for this position," said Director of Athletics Tami Smialek. "I am confident she will serve Covenant College and our cross country program well."

Follow us at twitter.com/covenantscots to stay up to date with news about all of our athletics programs.



*In the future there will be
two types of private institutions:*

FORMER & ENDOWED

By including Covenant in your estate planning, you can help ensure that future generations of students will be able to receive the thoughtfully Christian education that Covenant provides.

Your contribution to the endowment supports student scholarships, academic and co-curricular programs, faculty and staff salaries, campus development, and much more.

If you would like assistance with your estate planning, please contact Marc Erickson, executive director of the Covenant College Foundation, at marc.erickson@covenant.edu or 706.419.1645.



THE COVENANT COLLEGE FOUNDATION

COVENANT.EDU/FOUNDATION



Growing a **Business**





Anyone can have a good idea, just like anyone can put a seed in the ground. It takes skill and devotion to nurture that idea out of the ground and into action. Entrepreneurs are noted for their risk-taking and creativity, and many come to Covenant to hone the critical thinking skills needed to turn problems into ideas, and ideas into action.

“Because Covenant is so focused on intellectual curiosity,” says Associate Professor of Management Scott Quatro, “we attract inherently curious students. Entrepreneurs are inherently curious, and driven to creatively meet un-met needs in the marketplace.”

Covenant’s business professors agree that en-

trepreneurs are largely born, and not made. Like their own seedling ideas, though, entrepreneurs benefit greatly from the right nourishment and care. “So while we can’t really teach students to become entrepreneurs,” says Quatro, “we have a broad-based core curriculum and a larger missional emphasis on ‘making all things new’ that fosters the entrepreneurial spirit among our community, and serves to empower the born entrepreneurs that are among us.”

Read on and get to know eight Covenant alumni entrepreneurs, including a musician and the creators of an emerging social media platform, all of whom saw a need and rose to the challenge, creating their own solutions and their own jobs.



Building a Bus Like it Co

With LifeKraze, David Nielson '10 and Ben Wagner '10 have created a rare thing: a website that keeps people active.

When asked for an elevator pitch for their new company, David Nielson '10 and Ben Wagner '10 answer: "We're all about action, and that should excite you." That may not offer details of the business model, but it suits the attitude and passion of the LifeKraze founders. As they begin their second year out of school, David and Ben enjoy the pressure and pleasure of building something from the ground up.

"I'd say it started around February of 2010," says David, "when Ben and I were both seniors at Covenant, playing soccer together, living in the same house. Ben is kind of the guy who comes up with creative ideas a lot, and I'm more the guy who is skeptical and challenges how we're going to do something. One night we were sitting around and Ben had

this idea and told me about it, and we started getting excited about it."

"We actually had other jobs lined up for when we graduated," says Ben, "but it was really when we got into the mechanics and some of the fun stuff behind what we were doing for a project at Covenant that we really got passionate about this idea and decided that now was as good a time as any to go for it." David and Ben opted out of the jobs they had secured, and set about making something new.

The resulting company is LifeKraze, a goal-oriented social website for users to keep each other accountable as they set and achieve goals: anything from jogging with the dog to painting the house. Rather than the "like" button of Facebook, LifeKraze users periodically receive points, which



Business Counts

by Brian Beise

they award to other users for their accomplishments. Those points can be turned in for rewards, such as discounts at local and national retailers. LifeKraze's motto: "Live like it counts."

A beta version of the site is currently live. Tyler Smith '12, a business major, was among the initial testers. "It's definitely cool to see Covenant alumni graduate and already have the tools to start a business," he says. "It gives me hope and gives business majors hope that it is possible in this economy."

For David and Ben, the struggles

"I think we were well equipped at Covenant to pursue this business model as a way to serve God's kingdom and purposes in the world. Our professors and advisors framed their teaching and advice in Christ and the words of Scripture, so it was a natural progression for us to think about LifeKraze that way. Even though our business is not an explicitly Christian entity, it's exciting to see it as a new way for us to serve the Lord."

—David Nielson '10

of bringing an idea into reality far outweigh the convenience of a ready and waiting cubicle. "As most people graduate from school and get jobs at established companies, they step into a company culture, established rules, processes," says David. "One of the things I've enjoyed most is being able to kind of create that, getting to decide what kind of feel we want in our office, what kind of core values we want to establish, defining our team, hiring the right people. It's a unique thing people who start a business get to do."

"My favorite thing is the team we get to work with," says Ben. "We're really focusing on a project that can make a difference." Just as the idea of LifeKraze was conceived and developed at Covenant, many of the people David and Ben have chosen to work with in building LifeKraze come from their alma mater. "They were a great help and aid in getting our feet on the ground, and now that we're off and running, a lot of the principles that we were taught there have already come into play. It was a great training ground, and David and I are excited to have been a part of it."

"I think we were well equipped at Covenant to pursue this business model as a way to serve God's kingdom and purposes in the world," says David. "Our professors and advisors framed their teaching and advice in Christ and the words of Scripture, so it was a natural progression for us to think

about LifeKraze that way. As Christian individuals, we are building a secular business, and the main purpose of this business is to make money. That is LifeKraze's ultimate goal. However, we are pursuing that goal in a way that glorifies Jesus, and our main purpose as individuals is to serve the Lord in all we do, and to use whatever success we have to support others doing the work of the kingdom of the Lord. That is our ultimate goal."

So far, LifeKraze has stayed consistently ahead of its projected user growth and is receiving recognition from the national business community, appearing on Time Magazine online and ranking among Entrepreneur Magazine's 100 Brilliant Companies of 2011. Large advertisers have included brands such as Men's Health Magazine, Rock/Creek Outfitters, and Coca-Cola's PowerAde Zero. While many entrepreneurs feel the urge to move on to another startup once a company is up and running, it seems David and Ben plan to stay with LifeKraze and help it grow far beyond its initial years.

"We're just doing what we can and hustling to build a long-term, successful business," says Ben. "That's the process, and that's ultimately the end goal as well. So our focus has been on keeping the team awesome, improving the chemistry, and making the product better. Honestly I don't think our focus is ever going to get off that." 



Carlee Hilger '95 told herself and God she would never teach. "I think because I knew how grueling a field it is," she says. After graduating from Covenant she was accepted to physical therapy school and had made her deposit, when those plans were interrupted by a job offer from Landmark Christian School in Atlanta. "I really wrestled with the Lord and just felt like he was saying: 'This is what I have for you.'"

She took the job and taught high school science. As she forgot her hesitations and devoted herself to the work, she came to question common education methods. "I think one of the main things I realized is that we have a tendency to teach children what they're supposed to know, and they're supposed to memorize that and spit it back to get the grade. What I try to stress is getting rid of that grade mentality, and learn for the sake of learning. We're created in the image of God as learners, active learn-

ers, and we should be doing that in all areas, not just in a classroom setting."

After three years in Atlanta, Carlee returned to Chattanooga and married Eddy Hilger '95, one of her best friends from Covenant. Carlee was offered another teaching position, but had it on her heart to teach science to homeschoolers. Parents who homeschool often struggle to teach science, considering the equipment and preparation it takes to make a science class hands-on and interesting. She began presenting the idea to homeschooling mothers. "It was surprisingly

exciting to them," says Carlee. "Honestly it wasn't about what I was offering as much as relationships. We just clicked, even though we didn't have kids at the time."

With Eddy's help, Carlee brought the idea into action and began teaching science to her first group of homeschoolers, as a supplement to the work the parents did at home. Be-

"We're created in the image of God as learners, active learners, and we should be doing that in all areas, not just in a classroom setting."

—Carlee Hilger '95

by Brian Beise

ve Learners

Since getting married, Eddy '95 and Carlee Hilger '95 have helped create two organizations devoted to partnering with families striving to care for the children God gives them.

fore long, families expressed interest in supplemental math classes, and the Hilgers decided to hire another teacher. Looking through their list of faculty, it is easy to see where they turn for many of their hires.

"I just don't have to take a long time to interview a person who has their education degree from Covenant, because I know what I'm getting," says Eddy. Carlee agrees, adding: "It's so much more than what we're getting academically. We're getting these real relational people that love Jesus and want to work with the ebbs and flows of life in whatever it brings." Thirteen years later, Hilger Higher Learning serves more than 250 families, with 17 teachers offering over forty classes and workshops for elementary, middle and high school students.

With Eddy serving as the full-time head administrator of Hilger Higher Learning, and as she continued to teach science, Carlee felt another calling on her heart. Watching her friends Troy '93 and Sarah Duble '95 go through the process of adopting a little boy, Carlee saw another good work families often struggle through alone. "I had to come face to face with the reality that I'd never even thought twice about an orphan," says Carlee. "I realized I could not name a single orphan. The Bible specifically says to visit them and to care for them and if I was doing that I would at least know

one orphan's name.

"Sarah and I started dreaming together about raising some money, because we realized through her situation that finances are what keep lots of Christian families from adopting. So we got a vision of raising \$100,000 and giving \$10,000 each to ten families and let them pursue an adoption. So from there the Lord started rallying troops around us and then a donor came along and gave us \$30,000 in seed money."

Together, Carlee and Sarah started Lookout for Orphans, gathering the community on Lookout Mountain to support Christian families considering adoption. "It's an emotional, spiritual ministry," says Eddy, "having a couple over for lunch or going over to their house for dinner, just to talk with them as they're praying through the question, should we adopt?"

"The cool thing about it," says Carlee, "is they have to go choose an agency, choose a country, a race . . . they get to go choose all that, and once they've completed their home study they can apply for funds through Lookout for Orphans." Carlee explains that Lookout for Orphans offers to match grants given by that family's community. "You've got this hub of Lookout for Orphans, but then every spoke of the wheel is that family's community, so you're not always pulling from the Lookout community to fund each



Seen here with their son, Jackson, Eddy and Carlee worked together to create Hilger Higher Learning, where homeschooling families come for supplementary courses and community with other students.

adoption." To date, eight orphans have come home or are on their way through the support of Lookout for Orphans. Carlee and Eddy themselves are also nearly through adopting a young boy from Haiti named Kervens.

Neither Eddy nor Carlee was homeschooled, nor did they have children to homeschool when they started Hilger Higher Learning. Neither was adopted, nor did they plan to adopt when Carlee partnered with a friend to start Lookout for Orphans. Though they now homeschool and are adopting young Kervens, the Hilgers' work has been born out of recognizing the needs of other families. Thirteen years into the life of Hilger Higher Learning, Eddy and Carlee continue to nurture community and support around challenges that families typically go through alone. [fb](#)



Fancy Rhino and

Drew Belz '10 has always been close with his cousin, Isaiah Smallman '11, but it wasn't until they were both at Covenant that they began making films together. They first collaborated on a classmate's project, and soon started their own video production company, Fancy Rhino. As their ideas and plans developed, they received guidance, mentorship and, ultimately, \$10,000 in seed money through Covenant's Seed Project.

Managed by the College's Center for Calling & Career, the Seed Project is an annual event that encourages students to develop ideas amongst their peers under the guidance and mentorship of professors, church members and people of business. The first Seed Project culminated in April 2011 when two sets of finalists, Fancy Rhino and Covenant Connection,

created by Ben Baldwin '12, pitched their business plans to a panel of experienced entrepreneurs.

While the panel eventually awarded the seed money to Fancy Rhino, each finalist agreed that the connections and mentorship gained through the process equal or even surpass the monetary prize in value. "The Seed Project helped us legitimize a brand," says Drew. "It garnered recognition for our Rhino in circles that can help speed it forward into sustainable, even successful, business in the city."

Through those connections made through the Seed Project, Fancy Rhino has established premises in downtown Chattanooga and continues to develop its business, working to emphasize people over any product. "I really like this scene from Jesus of Nazareth as a model for what we want to do," says

Drew. "Jesus is telling the prodigal son parable, and it's really well executed—a great narrative with dramatic pacing—a great piece of art all on its own. But then it gathers all this dimension around it when we notice that his audience is part of the story. The sinners and tax collectors are prodigals; Peter is the jealous son; Christ is calling them all back through a story. The form and content are intimately connected with the audience."

Rather than exploiting people and their stories to make films, Drew explains, Fancy Rhino seeks to use film to honor the people they work with and the people whose stories they tell. A potential client, hoping to produce any kind of video, might read this on Fancy Rhino's website: "Right now your story is a buried dinosaur, a lost symphony. We'll dig it up." 

the Seed Project

by Brian Beise

"The Seed Project helped us legitimize a brand. It garnered recognition for our Rhino in circles that can help speed it forward into sustainable, even successful, business in the city."

—Drew Belz '10



Covenant's first annual Seed Project entrepreneurship competition culminated in a pitch event featuring business plan presentations by two student teams, as well as brief words by local entrepreneurs and by Covenant president Niel Nielson. At the end of the night, the Seed Project panel awarded \$10,000 in seed money to video production company Fancy Rhino.

Selling gently-used shoes on eBay may have been a good idea, but it took someone like Chris Hitchcock '95 and his business partner to commit, contribute, and grow that idea into action.

INITIATE~BY~FAITH

The idea for the Hitch-N-Post came to Chris Hitchcock '95 in 2004, when he visited a local second-hand shoe store and bought a high-end pair of dress shoes for a fraction of their retail price. The store's business model interested Chris, with its inventory made up of worn shoes, overstock, and pairs once used for display at name-brand stores. It was the entrepreneur in Chris that held on to that interest. "I went back to the store a couple of weeks later," he says, "and found the exact same pair of shoes I had purchased on the last visit, and purchased them because it was too good of a deal to pass up." That same day he put the second pair for sale on eBay, at three times the price he had paid.

"I also added a 'Buy It Now' price of about \$20 over that starting price," says Chris, "and within three hours of listing the shoes, someone clicked the 'Buy It Now' button, and a light bulb went off." Back at that same shop the next day, Chris bought the ten nicest pairs, no longer caring if they were his size. "Over the next few months I became more knowledgeable about eBay, shipping, the necessary supplies, and, of course, shoes. As sales grew, I knew that I needed a good supply of inventory, and I also knew that I wanted to buy the shoes at the lowest possible price."

Chris did not take that plunge without hesitation. "Purchasing 51% of a distributorship certainly wasn't the easiest thing I have ever done," he says. "Just being a small business in the current economic climate poses many risks . . . However, 'initiate by faith' is something my dad has said to me since I can remember." Partnering with Rob Woods, a close friend, Chris purchased a distributorship and created the Hitch-N-Post.

Matthew Bryant '00 has known Chris for some time and admires his willingness to take risk for an idea. "I've always been impressed with Chris' fearlessness when it comes to building value," he says. "Risk-taking and entrepreneurship go hand in hand, and Chris' drive to succeed serves him well in such endeavors."

More than five years into its existence, the Hitch-N-Post gets most of its merchandise by buying returns, manufacture defects, and overstock. Some shoes that they do not sell themselves are offered to second-hand stores at a slight markup. "The Hitch-N-Post today looks a bit different from when I started," says Chris. "There is a 10,000-square-foot warehouse, employees, and a wholesale side to the business."

Chris built the business in such a way that it would

"'Initiate by faith' is something my dad has said to me since I can remember."

—Chris Hitchcock '95



accommodate the exploration of other opportunities, keeping the soil turned for new ideas. “Over the last few years we have branched out from just men’s shoes to now carrying women’s shoes, men’s and women’s boots, luggage, accessories, and occasionally handbags for women,” says Chris. “We have even worked with a local vehicle company to re-tail their older model vehicles online. We have a system of selling and shipping in place that is able to be duplicated if there is an opportunity that fits the model. Recently thehnp.com was created to sell new-in-the-box items as well, and that stand-alone site has the ability to grow into many different markets.”

It might be surprising to some that Chris majored in biblical studies with a minor in youth ministry. In many ways, however, this makes Chris a prime example of the flexibility of a liberal arts degree. “It is clear that God used Chris’ time at Covenant to inspire in him a will to think creatively, be curious, and press forward in building a God-honoring business,” says Bryant. At Covenant, Chris was not preparing for a particular job, but for a career spanning any number of ventures. “I am thankful for what I studied,” says Chris. “The core classes and major classes gave me a foundation for entering the working world after college.”

As his company continues to grow, Chris recognizes the challenges graduating entrepreneurs face. “Students face an increasingly difficult financial scenario than I did when the Hitch-N-Post started,” he says. “Many may have to find creative ways to secure capital for starting their own business, as most banks are taking less and less risk.” Despite those challenges, Chris speaks highly of creating a job for yourself. “With a wife and four boys, I am so fortunate to be able to structure my workday around not missing them grow up. My wife also appreciates the fact that her closet is full of some really nice shoes at a price that is impossible to beat.”



The Bridge

by Brian Beise

Isaac Wardell '01 would not have put himself on a list of entrepreneurs with the likes of Chris Hitchcock '95 and Eddy '95 and Carlee Hilger '95, but like those other Covenant alumni, Isaac saw a problem and created something new to address it. The problem he identified was division in many church congregations over the issue of music and worship style—and the common assumption that to be effective, worship must be separated along generational lines. To address that problem, he created Bifrost Arts.

After studying Bible and music at Covenant, Isaac planned to go into urban music ministry. "I was excited about what was happening with Redeemer in New York and that kind of thing," he says, "so that's what I planned on doing." The year he graduated, though, Lookout Mountain Presbyterian Church planted Rock Creek Fellowship, and he was asked to be their music director. He took the job, intending to stay a year, and stayed for five, while the congregation grew from roughly a dozen members to over two hundred.

It was toward the end of that experience that Isaac began

considering the shortage of useful resources for church musicians. "I say that fully aware that there's a billion-dollar Christian music industry out there," says Isaac. "I read so many books on worship over those years, and only one in every five tended to be really enlightening." He moved to New York in 2005 and continued leading worship, learning from other musicians, and "looking for an underlying theology of worship."

"The most fundamental thing we're trying to do is to get congregations speaking to one another, learning how to talk across generational lines, and I think Covenant prepared me very well for that."

—Isaac Wardell '01

"It's no secret that evangelical churches all around the country split along style lines," says Isaac. "Churches do a huge amount of self-identifying based on what kind of music style they have. Is it pop style or something more connected to heritage? It

seems to be deeply unfortunate for churches to split along these kinds of lines . . . What we're really saying is: 'The way we do music and the way we think about what happens in the worship service doesn't really matter; it's just about catering to the demands of a certain demographic.' It's the worst kind of consumer approach to the church, I think."

While the production value of church services improved, Isaac noticed that congregational singing was happening

less and less. Music had become divisive, rather than unifying. The implication seemed to be, he notes, that if a congregation couldn't agree on worship style, it would be impossible to work together. As he continued playing in churches, Isaac began teaching on the subject of music and worship, leading a Sunday school class in Brooklyn and lecturing at conferences. In 2007, he was approached by a number of pastors who wanted to provide funds for him to create worship and liturgy resources for churches, including recorded music, corporate prayers and Sunday school materials. That same year, Bifrost Arts was incorporated. They named the company after the bridge that connects heaven and earth in Norse mythology, "because we think that's what worship essentially is," says Isaac.

Bifrost now works alongside churches from various denominations, guiding discussions of worship and what it means to worship together. They have since produced a twelve-week curriculum for small groups and classes, exploring the question: "What is worship? And how is it that worship is not just music?"

Isaac does not aspire to create other organizations or to grow Bifrost into other ventures. His hope for the company is that it would gather enough artists and believers and leaders that he would be able to give it only half his time, devoting the other half to his church, Trinity Presbyterian Church in Charlottesville, Virginia. "What we're really talking about is trying to come alongside churches and institutions and denominations to think about how to help them with church music, as opposed to a pure entrepreneurial enterprise, which has that primary goal of growing into something bigger." Their largest event to date was a conference on worship in St. Louis, attended by

Bifrost works to bring congregations together through the common act of worship. Isaac believes a sanctuary should be less a concert hall, where the audience is passive, and more a banquet hall, where everyone shares in the feast. The goal is not to optimize cultural relativity in worship, but to use worship as a connection between God and all the people.

more than five hundred pastors in March 2011.

While at Covenant, Isaac benefitted from the mentorship and friendship of several professors, all of whom helped him grow away from the idea that every generation must worship in its own way. "I was prepared at Covenant to see that that's not how the church works, as I saw spirituality and accountability and teaching and learning taking place in the multigenerational context of professors' homes and in small groups and Sunday school classes. And in some ways that's kind of the cornerstone assumption that makes Bifrost dif-

ferent than almost every other one of these projects out there."

Bifrost works to bring congregations together through the common act of worship. Isaac believes a sanctuary should be less a concert hall, where the audience is passive, and more a banquet hall, where everyone shares in the feast. The goal is not to optimize cultural relativity in worship, but to use worship as a connection between God and all the people. "The most fundamental thing we're trying to do is to get congregations speaking to one another," says Isaac, "learning how to talk across generational lines, and I think Covenant prepared me very well for that." 

Jolly, Sharpe & Little

by Brian Beise



In 1983, a new church was formed in Dalton, Georgia, and three of its members, all executives in the carpet industry, devoted themselves to the work of the church and, soon, of Covenant College.

If you happened to buy carpet made in Dalton, Georgia, you likely bought it from a company largely led by Jim Jolly, Norris Little, or Jack Sharpe. While technically these men were competitors in the business, in 1983 Jolly and Sharpe came together, soon joined by Little, worshipping in a small community that would become Grace Presbyterian Church. Their involvement in forming this new church led to an acquaintance with Covenant College that has lasted decades, greatly benefitting the school, its faculty and student body.

The seeds for Grace Presbyterian were planted when a small number of families from various churches began meeting for midweek Bible studies. "Some were Methodist, Baptist, Episcopal, Presbyterian and so forth," says

Sharpe. "All of us at that time were somewhat disenchanted with the churches where we were. We didn't seem to be getting the biblical teachings we needed." Among the Methodists in the group was Jim Jolly, who knew Sharpe from their shared industry.

These Bible studies went on for several months, and soon they began meeting for early Sunday services. Rev. Howard Cross preached to them before returning to his own church in time for the later services. In due time, the group agreed to start a church. "We were toying with the idea of what kind of church we wanted to form," says Sharpe. Possibilities ranged from nondenominational to joining the Presbyterian Church in America. "The Lord brought us together from various churches," says Jolly, "and initially we weren't

too excited about going back into a denomination.”

As prayer and discussions continued, they got in touch with Dr. Kennedy Smartt, then serving the PCA as coordinator of evangelism for Mission to North America. He met with the group for several weeks, and in April 1983, the group agreed to organize and aspire to become part of the PCA. “Smartt was very skeptical about the diversity we had in the group, from all these different denominations,” says Sharpe. “It was always a concern whether we were going to be able to work together or not. I remember one of our last meetings, he was praying for us and said, ‘God, if it’s not meant to happen, let it stop right now.’ Well, it happened.”

In December 1983, with sixty-five members, Grace Presbyterian Church became a part of the PCA. During the search for a full-time pastor, Smartt put the leaders of Grace in touch with Covenant College, and several faculty members filled the pulpit for worship services. These professors included Ray Dameron, Chuck Anderson, Henry Krabbendam, Paul Gilchrist, Roger Lambert, and Ray Clark, whom Jolly and Sharpe note as being especially influential to Grace. Professors also came midweek to lead Bible studies. “Covenant had a really strong influence on Grace,” says Sharpe. “It got us off to a great start.”

Among the early members of Grace was Norris Little, a third competitor in the carpet industry. “I had become concerned with the direction my previous church’s denomination was headed,” he recalls, “and one of my sons was already attending Grace. I of course knew Jim Jolly and Jack

Sharpe, and felt more comfortable worshipping there, with a Reformed theology.” Having found a church with which he could agree, Little joined Jolly and Sharpe in devoting himself to the ministry of Grace.

Even after Grace’s first pastor, Rev. Mark Cushman, was hired in 1985, the church maintained its relation-

“Covenant is one of a few institutions of higher learning that have a Christ-centered focus. Its motto, ‘in all things Christ preeminent,’ just strikes a chord with us. It would be difficult to find a more deserving cause in terms of colleges.”

—Norris Little

ship with Covenant. “We’ve always budgeted funds for Covenant College,” says Sharpe, “right from the first official budget in 1984.” Grace’s contribution to Covenant’s annual fund qualifies it for the Church Scholarship Promise program, which has financially benefitted a number of Covenant students coming from their congregation. For twenty-five years, the partnerships between Covenant, Grace, Jolly, Little and Sharpe have yielded wonderful fruit.

Jolly joined the Covenant College Foundation board and served three four-year terms on Covenant College’s board, including a term as chairman. “When I first got on the board,” he remembers, “I just noticed early on we had so many students graduate with a large amount of debt. What happens is you get kids who really want to go into full-time ministry or service, and those jobs don’t pay as well as some secular jobs, and often they have to go into secular jobs if they have debt. So that’s what my wife and I tailored our scholarships toward: to try to relieve and remove some of that debt.” The result of their efforts and generosity

is the Jolly Scholarship.

Little served on the Covenant College Foundation board until his retirement in June 2011. Among his contributions to the school is the Norris and Billie Little Faculty Endowment, which allows Covenant professors to “take some time off, to study, further their writing and go through a renewal process. Among other things, that’s what we wanted to do for Covenant.”

Sharpe also retired from the Foundation board in June. He also served two four-year terms as chairman of the finance committee on Covenant’s board. Among his and his wife’s contributions to the school is the Sharpe Diversity Scholarship, which benefits Covenant students who are the children of Latin immigrants. Along with Jolly and Little, Sharpe has also served on Dalton’s committee for the Wilberforce Scholarship, which recognizes and supports students who demonstrate leadership in issues regarding biblical justice, particularly for the poor and oppressed.

“I’ve always been a very frugal person,” says Sharpe. “It’s God’s money and I had to be careful where I spent it. I found that Covenant is a place where I can get two things for one; you get a good education and a good grounding in the Bible.” For these men, Covenant represents an avenue by which they can contribute to the coming generations of thoughtful Christians. “Covenant is one of a few institutions of higher learning that have a Christ-centered focus,” says Little. “Its motto, ‘in all things Christ preeminent,’ just strikes a chord with us. It would be difficult to find a more deserving cause in terms of colleges.”

Visit covenant.edu/jollyandsharpe to hear Jim Jolly and Jack Sharpe discuss the importance of endowments for Covenant.

- [1] Soccer game
- [2] Post-game fireworks
- [3] Scots fans
- [4] School spirit at Scotland Yard
- [5] Winning clan of the Highland Games
- [6] Catching up at the cookout
- [7] Alumnus of the year Allen Duble
- [8] Dancing at Jazz on the Overlook
- [9] Alumnae soccer squad
- [10] Breakfast gathering
- [11] Niel and Kathleen Nielson at the Highland Games
- [12] Alumni reception

2011 HOMECOMING





ALUMNI OF THE YEAR



Allen Duble '58

Alumnus of the year

Allen worked for Covenant for years, raising millions for the College. He has worked with many organizations, including Child Evangelism Fellowship, World Magazine, and New City - St. Louis. In 1989 he started the Canaan Group, which fosters a biblical view of "friend raising" for Christian organizations. Those friends encourage others to prayerfully give resources to aid in leading others to Christ and nurturing them biblically.



Christy Norwood '03

Young alumna of the year

Christy was Covenant's first urban community development major. Today she is a community organizer for Focused Community Strategies Ministries, the community development wing of Charis Community Housing. Some days she can be found walking around the streets of South Atlanta checking on vacancies, code enforcement issues, and resources. She also recruits new neighbors to live in South Atlanta and then unites these new residents with the old.



Jenny Cromartie '77

Alumna volunteer of the year

Jenny teaches middle school humanities in Arlington, VA, where she lives with her husband, Michael '76. Jenny and Michael have both cared for Covenant significantly since their time here. They have had at least one Covenant alumnus living in their home for the past three years. Jenny also hosts formal Covenant College gatherings. Their children, students Eric '12 and Heather '14, accepted the award for Jenny.

"The power of story seems undeniable, but why? Narratives have the ability to shape our understanding of the world around us, our relation to that world, and most importantly our relation to God Himself, the Author of all that is."

Caught Up In Story

EARLY IN THE SEMESTER, I usually ask my freshman composition students if they consider themselves to be storytellers. Typically only a handful of students will immediately answer yes. However, I counter this and say, "What if I said that every single one of you is a storyteller?" I go on to explain that whether we realize it or not, each of us lives caught up in stories. We narrate our experiences to our friends or family members on a daily basis over the dinner table, the phone, or even in abbreviated form on our Facebook pages. We relish telling about an unusually funny or strange occurrence, and we find solace in explaining our deepest aches. Not only this, but we delight in hearing the stories of others. Almost all children are easily enthralled with a good tale whether it's the simple rhythms of *Green Eggs and Ham* or the adventures of Lucy and company in Narnia.

The power of story seems undeniable, but why? Narratives have the ability to shape our understanding of the world around us, our relation to that world, and most importantly our relation to God Himself, the Author of all that is. Interestingly, the vast majority of Scripture (about seventy-five percent) is in narrative form, enabling us to be deeply drawn into the various ways God has dealt with His people in the past. The thoughtful reading of Scripture should lead us into consideration of how its stories speak into our particular lives. Literary theorist Paul Ricoeur speaks of "transformation" as being a key effect of narrative. When we engage with a text, whether it's Scripture such as *Esther* or a literary classic like *The Great Gatsby*, we are opening ourselves to the realities



by Dr. Gwen Macallister, associate professor of English

presented there, and ultimately, we are challenged to see how they may shape our ways of thinking, acting, and being in our own present reality. Where in our lives are we called to be as courageous as Esther was going before King Xerxes? In what sense are our dreams as empty and superficial as Jay Gatsby's dream of achieving Daisy Buchanan's approval and love through the pursuit of wealth and status?

Finally, narrating our own experiences helps us better understand their significance to us; just the act of selecting the right word to describe an emotion can be the catalyst for seeing more clearly how an event has impacted us. In fact, I believe that recounting our experiences is a means of spiritual growth. As we narrate the stories of our lives, we are remembering how God has been at work, authoring each particular moment to make us into the men and women He has designed us to be. We can be encouraged then to continue to trust God for all the future stories yet to unfold. Let us live thankfully and filled with wonder that we are caught up in the beautiful eternal Story beyond all stories authored by the Alpha and Omega, He who sees the End from the Beginning. 



IN ALL THINGS CHRIST PREEMINENT

Covenant College

14049 Scenic Highway
Lookout Mountain, GA 30750
888.451.2683
info@covenant.edu
covenant.edu

NON PROFIT ORG.
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
CHATTANOOGA, TN
PERMIT NO. 836

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED



After convocation on Thursday, August 25, 2011, Covenant's faculty gathered for their annual photo in academic regalia. Annie Huntington '13, a student photographer, took this candid shot just before the cue to smile was given. "I just love seeing the faculty interacting with each other," says Annie. "When they come out in these robes I feel like they're my parents. I'm proud of them and I look up to them." Annie received her first camera when she was eleven and plans to make a career of photography. "I've always been interested in the aesthetic side of stories," she says, "just the way you can convey a narrative through sight, even just a still of one moment."

Visit covenant.edu/convocation2011 to see more convocation photos taken by students.