

C O V E N A N T C O L L E G E

VIEW

THE INAUGURATION OF
J. DEREK HALVORSON '93
as Covenant College's sixth president

Contents

4 **Covenant News**

A roundup of recent Covenant news and events, including the appointment of seven new faculty members and the awarding of a Fulbright-Fogarty fellowship to an alumnus.

12 **The Inauguration of J. Derek Halvorson '93**

Dr. Halvorson became the sixth president and the first alumnus president of Covenant College on October 5, 2012.

16 **A Path with Purpose**

President Halvorson's inaugural address.

22 **Q&A with President Halvorson**

Learn more about our new president, from his favorite movies to how his Covenant education changed him.

24 **Mountaintop Experience**

Led by Covenant alumni and hosted on the College's campus, the EDGE conference fosters relationships between junior-high students and leaders from their home churches.

26 **Mending**

After a year at a secular college and another working in NYC, Erin Brinkman '13 came to Covenant to see if she could thrive in the kind of Christian community she once rejected.

28 **Homecoming**

The largest number of alumni in Covenant's history returned to the mountain for this year's Homecoming celebration.

30 **Shakespeare and the Nations**

English professor William Tate explores the theology of grace in *The Merchant of Venice*.

31 **Alumni News**

Updates and pictures contributed by alumni.





VIEW

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MISSION STATEMENT

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



Officially installed during our opening convocation, seven new professors have joined our faculty.

CovenantNews

Seven New Faculty Members Appointed

At this year's convocation, seven new faculty members were installed and warmly welcomed with a standing ovation:

- Dr. Robert Erle Barham, *assistant professor of English*
- Dr. Sarah Donaldson, *assistant professor of education*
- Dr. Jeff Humphries, *associate professor of computer science*
- Deborah Kirby, *associate professor of theatre*
- Dr. Hans Madueme, *assistant professor of theological studies*
- Dr. Nola Stephens, *assistant professor of linguistics*
- Dr. Curtis Stern, *professor of engineering*

Dr. Derek Halvorson introduced each of the new professors, and Dr. Jeff Hall, vice president for academic affairs, offered a prayer of installation.

"Covenant College is supported by a strong faculty with members who love the Lord, are dedicated to students and have a passion for learning," said Dr. Hall. "These seven faculty members are exemplary in those regards and should have a positive influence on life, both in and out of the classroom."

U.S. News Names Covenant #6 in the South

In its 2013 edition of Best Colleges, *U.S. News & World Report* named Covenant College sixth among regional colleges in the South. This is Covenant's tenth consecutive year in the top ten in its category.

"While our aim is not to garner accolades," said President Halvorson, "we are pleased when others recognize the value of a Covenant education and the impact it has on the lives of our

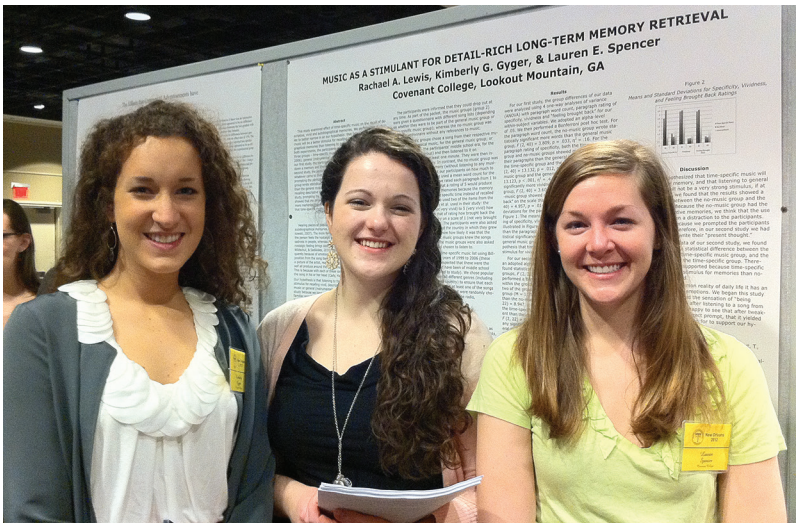
students and alumni, as I personally can attest. That impact is, of course, much deeper than any rankings can measure, as our purpose rests in the equipping of biblically grounded men and women to serve the church and the world as they live out God’s callings on their lives.”

New Scholarship for International Studies Major

Covenant now offers an international studies scholarship of \$11,000. This award follows the creation of Covenant’s international studies program in 2011.

“International studies is new to Covenant,” says Dr. Cale Horne, assistant professor of political studies, “and the addition of an international studies scholarship is one means of increasing the visibility of the program, as well as a means of attracting the best students to Covenant College.”

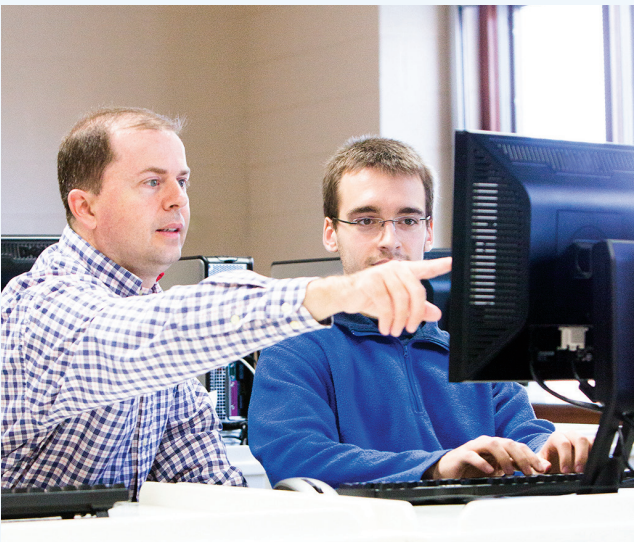
This is one of ten types of major competitive scholarships that Covenant offers.



Students Present Research at Psychology Conference

Nine Covenant students presented their research at the 2012 Southeastern Psychological Association conference in New Orleans. The students with accepted research posters were: Ben Baldwin ’12, Lauren E. Spencer ’12, Kristin Cole ’13, Kimberly G. Gyger ’13, Samuel Al Hakeem ’13, David Korver ’13, Charles Lanum ’13, Charles Lewis ’13, Rachael A. Lewis ’13, Josiah Stanton ’13, Kim Auffarth ’14, Matt Hudnut ’14, and Kelsey Smoke ’14.

The presented research was conducted as part of a research methods class taught by Prof. Kevin Eames, who notes three reasons this kind of work is beneficial to students: “It teaches students the behavioral science research process with hands-on experience in data collection and analysis. It teaches them to differentiate between scientific claims based on evidence and pseudo-science, and it demonstrates to them the value of participating in the larger academic dialogue that is the mainstay of academic work.”



onCourse
Computer Security

Faculty:
Prof. Jeff Humphries

Method:
Computers can do good things, but they’re also used for evil. So, each week, students in Dr. Jeff Humphries’ class “Computer and Information Security” perform lab tests on different online security measures. In the classes leading up to the labs, they discuss specific ways of breaking into computer systems. Dr. Humphries then gives his students real-world assignments, breaking into simulated online systems, and then learning how to protect those systems from attack.

For Example:
In one of his recent labs, Dr. Humphries had students capture and decrypt passwords from simulated websites. They then discussed ways to prevent that kind of attack and to make passwords more secure.

Says Dr. Humphries:
“One way to teach computer security would be to just have lectures. Then the students say, ‘I understand that things are vulnerable.’ But to have them actually do it, they can say, ‘Wow, this is more real than I actually thought it was, because I’ve done it now. I can see it now. I’ve broken a wireless connection.’ We’re definitely not here to create hackers, but we’re trying to engage people so that they learn how to secure systems for industry, government, and the rest. Once they see the tools on the offensive side, their goal is to create defensive mechanisms such that those tools no longer work.”

Method Used In:
Computer and Information Security

goFigure

126

Credit hours required to graduate

11,000

Dollars to be awarded per year to the new international studies scholarship recipient

4,138

Dollars given for the Class of 2012 senior class gift

103,400

Dollars given last year by alumni who have graduated since 2000

545,503

Dollars given last year by alumni

35

Students who serve as resident assistants

10

Years the Mountain Affair talent show has taken place

1,065

Undergraduate students

70

Graduate students

77

Percent of 2012 graduates who utilized the Center for Calling & Career's services



Paul Walters '13 Wins Second Annual Seed Project

In April, a panel of experienced businesspeople awarded the \$10,000 Seed Project prize to Paul Walters '13 for his concert production company Redwood Sound.

Managed by the Center for Calling & Career, the Seed Project is an annual entrepreneurship initiative that encourages students and young alumni to develop ideas amongst their peers and with the guidance and mentorship of professors, church members, and businesspeople.

In addition to the prize money itself, Paul noted that he values the lessons he learned throughout the process.

Likewise, finalist Enoch Elwell '10 said he may adjust his business plan for an online men's formalwear company based on feedback from the panelists. "I intend to continue to pursue this idea, though my approach may change," he said.

The third annual Seed Project got underway in September 2012 with the Idea Farm Blitz, at which nine students from majors as diverse as business, computer science, English, and sociology presented business ideas and sought potential partners. Both of last year's finalists spoke at the event, as did other alumni entrepreneurs. Students have until February to develop and submit business plans that demonstrate feasibility of team, market, and sustainability.

"I never thought I would be doing something like this," said Peter Bradshaw '14, an English major who presented a business idea, "but now I'm really excited about it."

MAT Program Graduates First Class

The first graduates of Covenant's master of arts in teaching (MAT) program received their diplomas in May 2012.

The MAT program offers teacher certification to students who majored in art, biblical studies, biology, chemistry, economics, English, French, German, history, mathematics, physics, Spanish, or theatre and desire to teach their subject area.

"I've known that I wanted to teach Bible for a long time," says Brandon Snipes '11, MAT '12, "and the MAT gave me the tools, skills, and know-how. From unit and lesson planning to assessment techniques and professional growth, the MAT covers all the bases."

"We anticipate the MAT program enrolling twenty or more students each year starting in 2013," says Dr. Jim Drexler, "and we are thrilled that thirteen different undergraduate programs can now offer teaching as an option for their students."



Several student ensembles and the audience participated in a Hymn Festival this fall.

2012-2013 Concert Season

The music department is hosting eight concerts this year, including a Hymn Festival that was held in October and a Christmas Concert in December.

Directed by Prof. David Long, the Hymn Festival focused on the theme “Our God in Ages Past and Years to Come” and featured the Covenant Brass Ensemble, the Covenant Chorale, and the Renaissance Consort, as well as congregational singing.

In place of the College’s traditional Madrigal Dinners, the Christmas Concert this year includes music from a variety of countries and cultures and more traditional carols, with the audience singing along on some pieces. A dessert reception in the Great Hall follows.

See the full concert season calendar at covenant.edu/musicevents.

Alumni Give Input on Vision for Music Department

In August, Covenant hosted a weekend of discussions concerning the direction of the College’s music department. This event followed the recent announcement of transitions in the department, including the departure of Profs. Jeanell Brown and Ken Anderson. Dr. Ginner Hudson, dean of instructional technology, facilitated brainstorming sessions among a group of music alumni, professors, and administrators.

“The meetings were characterized by candor and charity,” says John Wykoff ’04, one of the alumni who participated. “It

was a mark of wisdom for the administration to turn such an intentional and focused ear to the music alumni.”

“I’m very grateful for Jeanell Brown’s continued interest in the program, which she has expressed in a real dedication to helping us through this transition,” says Prof. William Tate. “Largely thanks to her efforts, we have a number of very well qualified instructors and visiting professors in place this year. With the help of our alumni advisors, I have high hopes that we’ll find just the right faculty to develop a strong program moving forward. One of my hopes is that the music program will better serve the church.”

Faculty Promotions

We are pleased to announce the following faculty promotions.

From associate professor to professor:

Dr. Jack Beckman, *education*
 Dr. Jeff Dryden, *biblical studies*
 Dr. Kevin Eames, *psychology*
 Dr. Scott Quatro, *management*
 Dr. Bruce Young, *education*
 Dr. Dan Zuidema, *chemistry*

From assistant professor to associate professor:

Sarah Huffines, *English*
 Dr. Alicia Jackson, *history*

"I am consistently humbled and thankful to serve among a faculty of professors who are passionate about their faith, engaged in their scholarship, and eager to share their lives with students," said Dr. Jeff Hall, vice president for academic affairs.



Jonathan Wilson '06 Awarded Fulbright-Fogarty Fellowship

Jonathan Wilson '06 has been awarded a Fulbright-Fogarty Fellowship in public health, funding nine months of HIV-AIDS research in Durban, South Africa.

Jonathan explains that recent studies have shown that the prevalence of HIV continues to increase in South Africa, despite record-high international aid. In his research, Jonathan hopes to investigate key factors surrounding HIV infection among South African youth, looking for ways to better implement treatment and prevention programs.

"Program approaches guided and directed by indigenous ideas, beliefs, and, ultimately, leadership will lead to a decline in HIV incidence," he argued in his research proposal.

Jonathan is the fifth Covenant graduate since 2004 to receive a grant from the Fulbright Program.



Class of 2012 Gives Fire Pit as Senior Gift

Every graduating class leaves behind a gift to the College community, expressing gratitude and seeking to further enrich the Covenant experience for future Scots. The class of 2012 gave a fire pit that has been installed between Founders Hall and Maclellan/Rymer Hall.

Among the seniors most dedicated to the project was Peter McCrory '12. Peter hopes the gift will become another centerpiece for the kind of community he enjoyed at Covenant. "As alumni, we have a stake in the future of Covenant and the senior class gift is the first opportunity we have to begin that process," he says. "As a class, I think we really understand that vision. We love Covenant and want to support its kingdom work."

Prof. Kelly Kopic Authors & Edits Two Theology Books

A Little Book for New Theologians, written by Dr. Kelly Kopic, professor of theological studies, is not just for students majoring in theology. Published this August by InterVarsity Press, the book defines theology as reaching well beyond academia. "Theology is about life," Kopic writes, "and it is not a conversation our souls can afford to ignore."

Written in concise chapters, the book is enriched by the words of numerous theologians and scholars, from Augustine

and Martin Luther to John Webster and G.K. Chesterton, and while those words are effective and inspiring, "theology is not just about propositions. It's not just about sentences or saying the right words; it's embodied. It has to be embodied," says Prof. Kopic. "The conviction of the book grows out of the belief that the question isn't 'are you a theologian?' but rather 'are you a good one?'"

Earlier this year, *Mapping Modern Theology*, co-edited by Prof. Kopic, was published by Baker Academic. Prof. Kopic hopes that through that book students and professors may learn how theological conversations have taken shape, how various ideas and theologians relate to one another, and how this background relates to current perspectives. Students in his modern theology course assisted him in editing the book.

2012-2013 Art Exhibits

Covenant's art department is presenting three exhibits by visiting artists this academic year, all in the art gallery in Kresge Memorial Library.

The first exhibit featured an installation of works on paper by Dona Barnett titled "now but not yet." In exploring the human longing for completion, she has dedicated much of her recent work to depicting nests, eggs, and birds. "They represent for me human nature," says Barnett, "fallen since the beginning of the world, awaiting redemption in Christ's return."

The second exhibit, "Ideology/Impulse," was an installation of sculptures by Ray Padron. A Chattanooga artist and an adjunct faculty member, Padron uses sculpture to address the human desire to create idyllic visions of religious, political, and social structures.



1955

Slated for a January opening, the third exhibit, "Channel Modules," will feature works in basswood, paint, and flagging tape by Brian Jobe.

Visit covenant.edu/calendar for event information.



Students directed and acted in five performances of *See Rock City*.

2012-2013 Theatre Productions

This year's theatre season opened with five performances of the World War II-era play *See Rock City*, directed by Anne Patterson '13. A tender portrayal of married life, the play shows the best of the human spirit and its ability to overcome obstacles.

Prof. Deborah Kirby directed Shakespeare's *As You Like It*, a tale of love manifested in various forms, set against a subplot of injustice.

Upcoming spring performances include *Two Rooms* under the direction of Prof. Camille Hallstrom and *Into the Woods*, directed by Prof. Kirby.

See the full calendar of theatre productions at covenant.edu/theatre.

Covenant To Join USA South Athletic Conference

Covenant has accepted an invitation to join the USA South Athletic Conference beginning in the 2013-2014 academic year.

Among the oldest conferences in the NCAA Division III, the USA South sponsors championships in fourteen sports, including men's and women's cross country, men's and women's soccer, women's volleyball, men's and women's basketball, baseball, softball, men's and women's tennis, and men's golf.

Covenant is currently in its fourth and likely final year of the provisional membership process to become a full member of the NCAA Division III.

Keep up with athletics news at athletics.covenant.edu, [facebook.com/CovenantScots](https://www.facebook.com/CovenantScots), and twitter.com/CovenantScots.

*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.

COVENANT COLLEGE FOUNDATION
COVENANT.EDU/FOUNDATION





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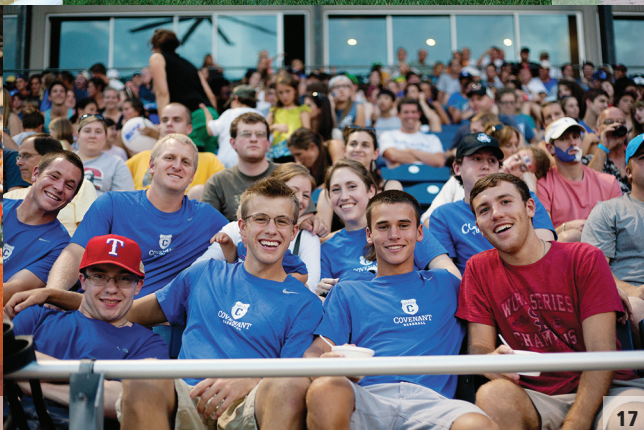
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18



22



26

1-3 Move-In Day

Upperclassmen, staff, faculty, alumni, and parents welcomed new students and helped move them into their residence halls.

4-6 Shadowlands Showdown

New students competed in games as they got to know each other and their orientation team leaders.

7-9 Convocation

The Covenant community gathered to officially begin the 2012-2013 academic year, welcoming the class of 2016 and installing seven new faculty members.

10-12 Covenant.org

Students clubs of all kinds recruited new members.

13-15 Community Picnic

Students, staff, and faculty finished the first week of the academic year with dinner and live music on the lawn.

16-18 Covenant Night at the Lookouts

Hundreds of Scots and Scots fans attended Covenant College night at the Chattanooga Lookouts. President Halvorson threw the first pitch, and Shelby Knapke '13 sang the national anthem.

19 Kilter

Students dressed as their favorite two-dimensional characters at Komic Book Kilter, held at the Creative Discovery Museum in downtown Chattanooga.

20-21 Scotsgate

At Covenant's version of tailgating, Scots fans enjoyed dinner and face-painting before cheering on the Scots and Lady Scots soccer teams.

22 Neal Conference

Dr. Julius Kim spoke at the annual Neal Conference on True Spirituality, with musical guest the Welcome Wagon.

23-24 Day of Prayer

Members of the Covenant community began the College's bi-annual Day of Prayer with worship at the Rock City Overlook. Prayer continued on campus throughout the day.

25-26 Mountain Affair

Students wowed the audience with their performances at this annual student talent show.

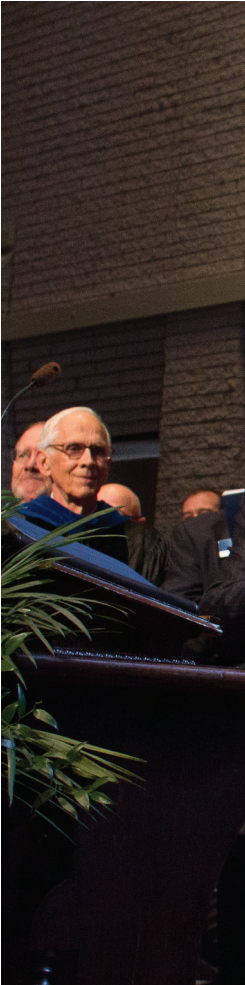
View more photos (and video) at covenant.edu/facebook.



A wide-angle photograph of a large, modern auditorium during an inauguration ceremony. The audience, consisting of many people in formal attire and academic regalia, is seated in tiered rows. On the stage, a man in a dark suit is placing a medallion on the lapel of another man wearing a dark academic robe with a red and gold stole. The stage is decorated with a wooden podium and a small table with a water bottle. The background features a large, curved wall and a balcony with more audience members. The lighting is warm and focused on the stage.

THE INAUGURATION OF
J. DEREK HALVORSON '93
as Covenant College's sixth president

Chairman of the Board Martin Moore places the presidential medallion on Dr. Halvorson.





Dr. J. Derek Halvorson '93 was inaugurated as the sixth president of Covenant College on October 5, 2012, with students, alumni, faculty, staff, family, friends, and delegates from over thirty institutions in attendance.

Dr. Halvorson is the first Covenant alumnus to serve as president.

Charges to the president were given by Dr. Hans Halvorson '95, brother of the president; Miss Susanna Griffith '13, president of student senate; Dr. Cliff Foreman, professor of English and faculty moderator; and Dr. Michael Ross, moderator of the 40th General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in America.

After Dr. Maren Halvorson, the president's mother, read Jeremiah 6:16 and Romans 11:33-12:2, Chairman of the Board Martin Moore led the ceremony of inauguration. Witnesses included Dr. Robert S. Rayburn '72, son of founding college president Dr. Robert G. Rayburn; Mr. Philip Barnes '77, son of second president Dr. Marion Barnes; third president Dr. Martin Essenburg; fourth president Dr. Frank Brock; and Dr. Niel Nielson, Covenant's fifth president. Dr. Robert S. Rayburn offered a prayer of dedication.

The ceremony concluded with a benediction from Rev. Joseph Novenson, senior pastor of Lookout Mountain Presbyterian Church, and congregational singing of the College hymn, "All for Jesus."

Photos, video, and audio of the ceremony are available at covenant.edu/inauguration.





A Path with Purpose

President Halvorson's Inaugural Address

MEMBERS OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES, President Nielson, President Brock, President Essenburg, Mr. Barnes, Dr. Rayburn, distinguished guests, friends, family, staff, faculty and—especially—students and alumni, I want to thank you for being here for this celebration of Covenant College and the Lord's faithfulness to it. It's a tremendous privilege and honor to be called to serve as Covenant's sixth president, and I want to thank the Presidential Search Committee and the Board of Trustees for entrusting me with this weighty responsibility. I'd also like to thank the Covenant family for so warmly welcoming my family and me back to Lookout Mountain, and I'd like to thank the Presidential Inauguration Committee and the other faculty and staff of Covenant who have labored so diligently to prepare for this week's events. Wendy and I greatly

appreciate those who have served to make this day possible.

There are others I must thank as well. While this day marks something of a new beginning for Covenant College and for me, we all know that within the created order new beginnings do not come *ex nihilo*, out of nothing. I'm indebted to a number of people for making this new beginning possible. With respect to Covenant in particular I want to thank and publicly applaud my predecessors for their able leadership in the preceding decades of the college's existence. It's a delight to be called to serve on the sure foundation that you have established.

My path into this role has been shaped by the influence and investment of many people, some of whom are here today. I'm deeply indebted to my parents, Märni and

Steve Halvorson. Among her many other admirable qualities, my mom is faithful, persevering, and forgiving. Whatever inclinations I show toward those traits are to be credited to her. My dad is zealous for the faith—a man with an active mind who loves theology and the Word of God from which theology springs. Whatever inclinations I show in those directions I owe to him. (My dad also taught me to love the Green Bay Packers, so that's his fault as well.) I'm indebted to my three brothers—Hans, Kurt, and Hoyt (all Covenant alumni). Growing up in a house of four boys taught me a lot about teamwork and competition and getting along with fallen human beings, and each of my brothers has taught me invaluable lessons about discipline and service and fun. (Those of you who know them will be able to guess which one taught me what.)

Dr. Lou Voskuil, emeritus professor of history here at Covenant College, inspired me as an undergraduate to consider a calling in higher education. I wanted to be like him when I grew up. Dear and lasting college friends—Marshall Brock, Chris Hitchcock, Adam Neder, and Bryan Pierce—have walked faithfully alongside me, offering counsel, correction, and encouragement, since our days of living together on the second floor of Carter Hall (on a hall that will remain unnamed for the sake of preserving my reputation among this assembly of august guests). The late Professor Heiko Oberman put me through the intellectual ringer in the Division for Late Medieval and Reformation Studies at the University of Arizona, but also introduced me to the beauty of excellence in historical scholarship—an introduction that was expanded on by my dissertation supervisor, Fr. Robert Bireley of Loyola University Chicago, who honors me with his presence here today.

I'm indebted to my wife, Wendy, more than I could ever express in an inaugural address, but I will say publicly that she has taught me priceless lessons about passion for the truth and passion for Jesus Christ and real self-denial for the sake of His kingdom. I've also learned from my children, Banks and Whitman, who have taught me both patience and how to look at the world with wonder and with joy. I have many other debts, to teachers and schools and friends and roommates and coaches and pastors and bosses. These debts are indicative of lessons learned along my path, and those lessons have shaped me and brought me to this place.

Today marks a new beginning for me and my family, and also a new beginning for Covenant College. (For those of our distinguished guests who don't know, I am the first alumnus to take up the presidency.) And these new beginnings take place in an institutional context that is, in the grand narrative history of higher

education in the western world, new. Folks at the universities of Paris and Bologna and Oxford like to bicker about whose is the oldest university. Regardless of which side you take in that debate, all three of those institutions are approaching their 1,000th birthday. In a little over three decades, Harvard College will celebrate its 400th birthday. Covenant College is, in comparison, a very new institution. We were established in 1955. We came to this beautiful mountaintop location only in 1964. At that point, there was just the old, abandoned hotel. (Some of the people in this chapel today helped us to move in.) By the time I arrived at Covenant as a freshman, there were a few more buildings, but this was still a relatively young, or new, college. Now there are more than twice as many buildings on campus as there were when I came. And a lot more new students. And remarkably gifted and committed new faculty. And impressive new academic and co-curricular programs. There is a lot about Covenant that is new and vibrant and young and full of life and loaded with potential. It's exciting, this newness.

I should tell you, though, as a historian, that we modern folks tend to have an obsession with novelty. There's a lot that's appealing to us, as 21st-century Americans, about "the new"—things that are new, experiences that are new. People today like new things. However, that infatuation with the new is . . . well . . . new. At the dawn of the modern era (the period that's the focus of my own scholarly work), 'novelty' was something to be avoided. It was a vice, not a virtue. John Calvin believed the intentional pursuit of novelty to be a failing of weak minds at best, and an evidence of human wickedness. For pre-modern Christians, and even for the sixteenth-century Reformers in whose spiritual and intellectual lineage we at Covenant stand, new things were not good; old and ancient things were good. I, as a historian, like old things. And so, as excited as I am about

this relatively new college, and my new beginning here, and the new faculty, staff, students, buildings, academic programs, co-curricular programs, etc. . . . I'd like to take time this morning to look to, and to celebrate, the aspects of Covenant that are not so new, that are old-fashioned, that might even be characterized as ancient. (And no, I am not referring to senior members of the faculty, though I would look to them for counsel and celebrate their contributions to this college.)

You heard, in the first of the two Scripture passages read earlier, the prophet Jeremiah's admonition to the people of Israel (Jer. 6:16):

Thus says the LORD:

*"Stand by the roads, and look,
and ask for the ancient paths,
where the good way is; and walk in it,
and find rest for your souls."*

I want to talk today about ways in which Covenant is walking in, and should continue to walk in, the ancient paths. Because what we do here at Covenant is, in fact, very old-fashioned. And I think that's a good thing. I think that what we're engaged in here at Covenant could even be described as creative anachronism for Christian higher education—both new and ancient at the same time.

I can see my wife squirming in her seat a little. When she first met me, I was trading foreign currencies, in Chicago, for one of the nation's largest banks. I worked on a state-of-the-art trading desk on the 27th floor of the Sears Tower, and by all accounts I had a potentially lucrative career in front of me. When I told Wendy that I wanted to quit my job and go to graduate school to study medieval history, she responded—gently—with a good degree of concern. Her initial fear was that I was going to start dressing up in armor, jousting on the front lawn, and moonlighting at Medieval Times. I assured her that I was thinking of something more along the lines of a tweed



jacket with elbow patches, a pipe, and the occasional research trip to London or Paris. This vision seemed to assuage her fears.

The creative anachronism that we undertake at Covenant is a little more profound than that which takes place at Renaissance fairs. The “new” side of this combination is, of course, related to Covenant’s relative youth and to some of the exciting new developments at the college that I mentioned earlier—gifted and growing body of new students, talented new faculty and staff, new academic programs, new athletic programs, new facilities, new technologies, etc. The anachronism, or ancient-ness, probably merits further explanation. In my view, it falls under two headings: academic and theological.

What is happening here at Covenant is—and should be—academically old-fashioned. It hearkens back to the pre-modern college and university, to an era that had a different vision for the end purpose of higher education than is common today. What we know today as colleges and universities grew out of the monastic schools of the Middle Ages. For centuries the collegiate paradigm was shaped by the religious and communal character of those early schools. In the late 1800s, with the rise of modernist individualism and of the secular scientific worldview, a new model became dominant in higher education: that of the research university. Research universities are good at some things—

like research—and not so good at other things. These institutions abandoned the notion of an education that would shape whole persons, and that would do so via an academic community that cultivated and practiced particular Christian virtues such as humility, self-denial, friendship, and charity. Instead, the new research universities of the late nineteenth century celebrated the making of knowledge by individuals and virtues such as productivity, calculation, control, ambition, and rationalism. Some of these very modern values are not wrong in and of themselves, but their combination in the research university does not provide for the sort of educational context in which whole Christian persons are intentionally



formed. That's not to say that individuals don't get shaped by their experiences in research universities, but it's not a purposeful shaping, with a particular end in mind. The best scholarship on higher education shows clearly that the research university model is not a good model for intentional, transformational education. By contrast, the old (or ancient) model—the small, residential, liberal arts college, similar in many respects to the colleges and academies of the medieval and early modern eras—is a good model for shaping whole persons. In fact, Alexander Astin, professor emeritus of education at UCLA (a research university) and one of America's leading scholars of higher education, argues that the residential liberal arts college is the best model for

delivering transformational education.

Transformational education—education that is not simply about the transmission of data from one brain to another, not just about the accumulation of facts or the awarding of credentials, but is concerned for the shaping, of whole Christian persons—is exactly what we're after at a place like Covenant. And this approach is perfectly in keeping with Paul's instruction to the early church at Rome, which we heard in the second passage read earlier. Many of you in this room (and under the tent on the lawn) will know the general outline of the book of Romans, and will recognize that this passage is the hinge point in that book. After laying out God's glorious plan of salvation in the first eleven chapters of his letter, Paul concludes with

this wonderful (and famous) doxology (Rom. 11:33-36 ESV):

*Oh, the depth of the riches and
wisdom and knowledge of God!
How unsearchable are his judgments
and how inscrutable his ways!*

*"For who has known the mind of the
Lord, or who has been his counselor?"*

*"Or who has given a gift to him that
he might be repaid?"*

*For from him and through him and
to him are all things. To him be glory
forever. Amen.*

Paul is clearly euphoric about God's saving work in Jesus Christ. There are exclamation points in the text. And frankly, we probably feel like we could stop right

there. But Paul doesn't. He turns in Romans 12:1 and begins to lay out the natural consequences of Christ's saving work in our lives. Here's what he says (Rom. 12:1-2 ESV):

"I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect."

Paul appeals to Christians—the early Roman Christians and to us—to present our "bodies as a living sacrifice." And of course he doesn't just mean our bodies. John Calvin points out that this is a synecdoche (that one's for all of the English majors in the room), a part representing the whole—that Paul is urging Christians to give their whole selves, their entire person, the totality of which they are composed, as a living sacrifice. Paul says (in the Greek) that this is only *logikos*, logical, in light of what God has done for us; that this is our logical, or spiritual, worship.

And how do we accomplish this presentation of our whole selves as a living sacrifice? Well, in verse two Paul tells us that we are to be transformed by the renewal of our minds. We are literally to be metamorphosed. For those of you who don't recall your high school biology class, let me refresh your memory with the Oxford English Dictionary's definition of metamorphosis, which means change "in form, shape, or substance; esp. transformation by supernatural means; a complete change in the appearance, circumstances, condition, or character of a person, a state of affairs, etc." That's pretty comprehensive. And it begins with the renewing of our minds, our intellect. The path we tread, the task we undertake, at a place like Covenant College—and what happens at many of the other institutions

represented in this room—is one that is unmistakably intellectual, or academic. And yet it is, it has to be, more than just that. It has to be intellectual and it has to effect the transformation of the whole person, so that whole person can be presented to God as a living sacrifice.

This goal, or purpose, for education is ancient, old-fashioned, anachronistic. We desire that our students would be shaped, changed, metamorphosed—comprehensively, for the good—through their curricular and extra-curricular activities in the college. And so the model for our education is, and ought to be, ancient. We are, and ought to be, a small college that values personal interaction between students and faculty and between students and other students. We ought to be a place that celebrates intellectual and spiritual discipleship. Ours ought to be a vibrant learning community. The ethos of our community ought to be characterized by the same spiritual virtues (the "monkish" virtues) that characterized the earliest colleges (and that animate many of the colleges represented here today). We are, after all, not only about the transmission of data and the development of skills, though that's certainly part of what we do. We are about the shaping of whole, thoughtful, purposeful, discerning Christian persons, who can function and thrive in a complex world as they pursue God-given callings in both ordinary and extraordinary places, bringing glory to God and benefit to those around them.

I want to add that while this model is perhaps anachronistic, it's becoming increasingly popular as educators and the public become aware of the failures of the research university model when it comes to education that purposefully engages whole persons. It's for this reason that Vanderbilt recently began placing all of their freshmen in residential houses and is building residential colleges for upperclassmen. Likewise, Princeton, Rice, Ole Miss, and others have recently built

new residential colleges. (For those of us already at small, residential colleges, man, it is nice to be ahead of the curve!)

So Covenant is, in important respects, academically old-fashioned. Because of our commitment to an education that shapes lives, not just fills brains with facts, we employ an educational model that is ancient and time-tested. But the ancientness doesn't stop there. In addition, we are—and ought to be—theologically old-fashioned. We, as an institution and as a community, are rooted in the tradition of the Protestant reformers of the 16th century—specifically those of the Scottish persuasion (though one would have to admit that we've borrowed quite a bit from our brothers and sisters of the Continental branch of the Reformation). Now, despite some hype a few years ago about "John Calvin: Comeback Kid" (Timothy George, *Christianity Today*, September 2009), it would be difficult to deny that ours is an old and out-of-fashion tradition. However, that tradition defines in very important ways who we are as an institution and as a community. George Marsden has outlined some of these ways in an essay entitled "Reformed and American," where he identifies three emphases that have been characteristic of Reformed Christianity in America: the doctrinalist emphasis, the pietist emphasis, and the culturalist emphasis. All three of these emphases can be found on Covenant's campus today, and one of my prayers is that we will continue to champion all three—passion for the truths of Scripture; fervent, Christ-centered piety; and the desire to bring the good news of the cosmic, redeeming work of Christ and the truth of His Word to bear on every aspect of the culture in which He has placed us. There's a natural human tendency to exalt one of these emphases over the others, as anyone who knows a bit of church history can attest. However, we ought to be a place where all three are maintained in fruitful tension by virtue of their being rooted in our love for Christ.

“We are about the shaping of whole, thoughtful, purposeful, discerning Christian persons, who can function and thrive in a complex world as they pursue God-given callings, bringing glory to God and benefit to those around them.”

As those of you who are a part of it know, while it's old, this Reformed tradition of which Covenant is a part is still very much alive. It's another of my prayers for Covenant that it would remain so here. I have no interest in falling into what Jaroslav Pelikan has defined as 'traditionalism': "the dead faith of the living." I long for Covenant to cling to a 'tradition'—what Pelikan calls "the living faith of the dead"—that has been handed down faithfully by our forefathers. But how does this happen? How do we ensure that ours remains a living tradition? We can glean one critical piece of guidance from the great Dutch theologian and statesman Abraham Kuyper, who famously declared that, "Stress in creedal confession, without drinking from the Living Fountain, runs dry in barren orthodoxy...." Without a focus on Jesus Christ, the living fountain, without Him as the centerpiece of our mission and Him as the source of our motivation and strength, we will quickly become advocates of a dry, wooden, dead tradition. Jaroslav Pelikan is again helpful when he writes that, "Tradition is like an icon (not an idol or a token) that points beyond itself; we look at it, but also through it and beyond it to the reality it represents." We at Covenant ought to value the good gift that is our

tradition, and we ought to seek to hold its attendant emphases in fruitful tension, but we must remember that it points beyond itself, to the matchless Savior and Lord of all and to His truth delivered to us in Scripture. I think this is part of why I like Covenant's motto so much: "In all things Christ preeminent." Our embrace of our living tradition, with its doctrinalist and pietist and culturalist streams, will be fruitful and nourishing to us and to our witness in the world so long as Christ is exalted as preeminent in all things. When we drink from the Living Fountain, we will bear fruit. When we stop, we will become barren.

And so, as I join the Covenant family in this new endeavor, and as we consider the promise of this new beginning, I would point us back to an ancient path—to the old-fashioned, anachronistic nature of our project, both in terms of the form it takes academically and in terms of the foundation upon which it rests theologically. Let us be ancient even as we are new. Even in our youth, let us walk the ancient path, because it is a path with purpose. Let us be a small, residential college of the liberal arts and sciences that takes seriously the transformation of students in every respect, accomplished through faithful academic rigor and an

ethos of humility, self-denial, friendship, and love. Let us be a college that cherishes its theological heritage—one that loves doctrine, that values piety, and that brings the truths of Scripture to bear on every aspect of life and culture. Let us be a college that is animated by a theological tradition that is alive—alive because it is based on and rooted in and points to the One who is the source of all life. Let us be a college that seeks to honor—in the way we pursue our scholarship, in the way we live together, in the way we serve the church and the world—the Christ who is the image of the invisible God, the first-born of all creation, the sustainer of all things, the first-born from the dead, the reconciler of all things. For in him are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge (Col. 2:3). He is our Living Fountain. He is our life (Col. 3:4).

St. Augustine famously described God as a being of eternal beauty, ever ancient, ever new. Would that this God, our God, ever ancient and ever new, be glorified as we tread an ancient path with a distinct purpose, equipping and inspiring generations of men and women to explore and express the preeminence of Christ in all things.

Thank you. 🙏

Q&A with President Halvorson

FAVORITE BOOK

Mark Schwehn, *Exiles from Eden: Religion and the Academic Vocation in America*

FAVORITE MOVIE

[tie] *Dead Poets Society* and *Red Dawn*

FAVORITE SPORTS TEAMS

Green Bay Packers; Arsenal

FAVORITE ALBUMS

'80s - REM, *Green*

'90s - Dave Matthews Band,
Under the Table and Dreaming

'00s - Avett Brothers,
I and Love and You

FAVORITE MEAL

cheeseburger and fries

FAVORITE HISTORICAL PERIOD TO STUDY

late Middle Ages/
early Reformation

FAVORITE PLACE TO RUN

the Embarcadero in San Francisco



When were you first introduced to Covenant?

The first Covenant alum I ever met was Miriam Malkus Jones '60, who was my VBS teacher at Faith Presbyterian Church (RPCES) on 7th Street in Charlotte, North Carolina. She was only the beginning, though. Through connections at Faith my family met Joel Belz and his family, and in the early '80s we began attending a PCA church plant (Christ Covenant Church, Matthews, NC) on the same Sunday that Harry ("Ike") Reeder '74 took the pulpit as that church's first pastor. We did not know a lot of Covenant alumni, but the ones we did know were persuasive advocates for the college.

What is one of your favorite memories as a Covenant student?

I have many good memories of my time as a Covenant student—some in the classroom, some on the hall, some on the soccer field. I suppose one of my favorites is the time I went to my mailbox in the spring of my senior year and found a nice, handwritten note from my SIP (senior integration project) supervisor, Lou Voskuil (history). I was behind schedule on my SIP, and Dr. Voskuil had decided to encourage me with a personal note, which read: "Dear Mr. Halvorson, If you do not submit your SIP by the Monday after Easter, you will not walk in May. pax vobiscum (which in Latin means, 'peace be with you'), Lou Voskuil" I did not go home for Easter my senior year, but I did submit my SIP, and I did walk.

Why did you choose to study history?

The simple answer to why I chose to study history is because I found that I really enjoyed it, but I suspect that the more meaningful answer is that I found in the study of history the sort of comprehensive treatment of human existence and change over time that satisfied my curiosity about why things are the way they are. I love that history is multidimensional—that human agency and the change it engenders in societies can't be reduced to unitary explanatory causes. This, to me, reflects the reality of my existence, of our existence, and I find it fascinating to dig into the past to try to uncover the almost other-worldly contexts of past periods and the variety of motivating causes for human action in those contexts.

Tell us about the friendships you formed as a student at Covenant.

Like many (perhaps most?) Covenant alumni I formed some wonderful, life-long friendships in my time as a student on Lookout Mountain.

I was already good friends with my brother, Hans, with whom I roomed for one year and played soccer for two. I also developed deep friendships with a few guys—all hallmates—with whom I am still close today. We were determined to perpetuate deep, intentional, Christian friendships into our adult life—recognizing that not all Christians are blessed with such relationships—and I'm pleased to report that we still get together once a year (even though we're spread across the country) and do regular conference calls (how old-man is that?) for the purposes of accountability and encouragement and fun.

What five words would you use to describe a Covenant Scot?

Tenacious. Gritty. Courageous. Faithful. Hairy.

How did your Covenant education change you?

My Covenant education changed me in a lot of ways. It humbled me. It made me a better thinker and communicator. It taught me to connect my faith with my discipline. It instilled in me an alternative definition of success. It helped me develop a greater appreciation for the body of Christ. It exposed me to Moon Pies and Krystal burgers. It helped me find a sense of calling. I could go on and on—Covenant was an important, formative experience for me.

How does your family like being back in the Lookout Mountain/Chattanooga community?

We are thrilled to be back in Chattanooga. We experienced good years in California—years in which we were blessed to be part of a dynamic, growing Reformed college and a vibrant, city church plant—but we have always loved Chattanooga and the community surrounding the college on Lookout Mountain.

How many pictures of the Overlook have you taken since moving back?

I think I've taken at least seven, but I'm not counting. Frankly, I'd like to put a camera on a tripod and take a photo at the same time every day. I love the variation in light and sky and shadow that you get from that vantage point (as you may have been able to guess from the numerous Overlook pictures I've posted online).

Editor's note: You can follow President Halvorson's photos and commentary at twitter.com/derekbhalvorson.

On the rare occasion you have a day off, how would you spend it?

If I were to get a day off, I'd probably get up early so I could read or watch an English Premier League soccer match (preferably while eating an Irish fried breakfast). Once the kids were up, we'd hike as a family (we like to get out into the woods together). And I'd love to finish by taking Wendy out for a nice dinner (she cooks a lot, and I'm terrible in the kitchen, so it would be a blessing to both of us).

How is Covenant's ownership by the Presbyterian Church in America significant?

I think the PCA is a marvelous anchor for Covenant College. It's very easy for Christian colleges to drift from their founding mission, and Covenant's relationship with the PCA provides a guard against that sort of mission drift. It also keeps in front of us the very important role we play in instilling in young men and women a love for the church and in equipping them to serve the church, whether that's in lay or clerical roles.

What changes would you like to see over the next five years? Twenty-five years?

One of my greatest concerns—and I know I'm not alone in this—is affordability. In the coming years, I'd like to see us find a way to keep Covenant affordable for as many people as possible. This is not an easy task to tackle, and everyone in higher education is facing it, but it's an incredibly important one.

I'd also like to see Covenant find a way to attract more students from the PCA and other like-minded ecclesial bodies. There are still a lot of students who are unaware of the distinct benefits afforded one by a Covenant education, and I think that it's a shame—for them, but also for the kingdom of Christ—that those students are missing out.

Name three quirky things about Covenant that you love.

1. Strong hall identities.
2. Standing ovation for faculty at convocation—and rousing ovation for new students at the same.
3. Bagpipes.

What is your prayer for Covenant?

My prayer for Covenant is that she would remain faithful, both in her theological commitments and in her commitment to shaping the lives of young men and women through rigorous, Reformed, residential liberal arts and sciences education, for the sake of the church and the world.

Led by Covenant alumni and hosted on the College's campus, the EDGE conference fosters relationships between junior-high students and counselors from their home churches.



Mountaintop

WHEN JUNIOR-HIGH-SCHOOL STUDENTS and counselors come to the EDGE, co-founder and director Todd Erickson '87 believes that week on the mountaintop is meant as preparation for the rest of the year. "This week with us sets up the relationship with the students and their church leaders," says Todd. "The motto of the EDGE is 'the centrality of Christ and the clarity of the gospel.' So we work hard to make sure everything is Christ-centered."

Every summer since 1997, the EDGE conference fills Covenant's campus with junior-high students and counselors for a week of activities, sports tournaments, worship, and gospel-centered teaching. The EDGE is defined by its Reformed theology and its focus on facilitating relationships between students and counselors from their home churches.

In the early nineties, after working as a youth pastor and planner for another youth camp, Todd and four other Presbyterian youth ministers agreed to work together to create a small conference to serve their churches. "We weren't trying to start a mega-camp," says Todd. "We just wanted to create something that would serve our constituencies."

They started the EDGE in 1996. "We couldn't get here the first year, but it worked out the next year and we've been here ever since," says Todd. The College's residence halls allowed communities to form between groups of students and their home church counselors, and Covenant felt like a refuge. "Even if a kid has never been to Covenant College, coming to Lookout Mountain just sounds really cool. If everything goes right and the Lord does his thing," says Todd,

"for a lot of kids this is one of the greatest experiences in their lives up to this point."

Dozens of PCA churches have sent students and counselors, and many Covenant alumni first encountered the College through the conference. "We estimate that 10,000 junior-high or high-school students (they come here as a work crew sometimes) were introduced to Covenant's campus through the EDGE, and we're now over the two-million-dollar mark in revenue generated for Covenant," says Todd, who currently plans the conference along with two fellow alumni, Greg Marshall '92 and Kevin McQuillen '00. Chris Polski '90, Matt Christian '93, and Gus Diamondidis '86 served on the planning committee in past years, and many other Covenant alumni serve the conference in other ways.



by Brian Beise

Among the Covenant alumni who attended the EDGE is Jonathan Wilson '06, who recently received a Fulbright-Fogarty fellowship to conduct HIV/AIDS research in South Africa. He first attended the camp when he was in seventh grade. "We had an absolutely incredible time," he recalls. "I saw twenty-five of my non-believing friends come to know the Lord. It was so rich. We were surrounded with fun, godly people who loved us and the Lord with great passion.

"The EDGE is such a great tradition for the PCA," Jonathan continues. "It introduced so many of us to the College and gave us such fond memories. Many of my leaders were Covenant grads, men I wanted to be like. After attending as a camper, I served on work crews, and later was a counselor while in college. Many of my best buddies in college I met at these camps. My mom served as the

"It introduced so many of us to the College and gave us such fond memories. Many of my leaders were Covenant grads, men I wanted to be like." - Jonathan Wilson '06

camp nurse and my dad ran tournaments. It was our family's favorite event each summer, a true mountaintop experience."

That mountaintop experience is, in Todd's view, an extension of the experience Covenant students find on the same campus. At Covenant, Todd learned to apply practical theology principles to youth ministry and

youth culture. "We have to minister to junior-high students in a different way than with high-school students," he says. "This is about engaging and redeeming culture, and our professors at Covenant taught us how." 🙌

To hear Todd further discuss Covenant and the EDGE, visit covenant.edu/theedgepodcast.



After a year at Sarah Lawrence College, Erin left to work and write. When she decided to finish her college education, she sought a place where she would be challenged and her faith nurtured. She found Covenant.

Mending

by Brian Beise

WHEN SHE FIRST CHOSE A COLLEGE, Erin Brinkman '13 prioritized one criterion over any other: "I wanted to be at the least Christian school possible, basically," she says. The daughter of missionaries, Erin grew up in the tightly-knit Christian communities that often exist among missionary families overseas. When she graduated from high school in Germany, she was concerned that her faith would not stand up on its own. Erin is a poet, and she worried then that her voice would never grow strong from within a Christian community.

"I was a little bit disenchanted with the Christian community," she says, "and I also really wanted to test myself. I had a lot of friends and a boyfriend who all lost their faith around the same time, and I was like, 'How do I know that this isn't going to be me? How do I know that this is real?'" Erin applied to five decidedly secular universities, and soon enrolled at Sarah Lawrence College.

She had not been a student there long before her fellow students made it clear what they thought of her faith. "It was really intense," she says. "In the first week, I remember people coming up to me and saying, 'What are you doing here? What makes you think you can come to this school and make it?'" Erin spent most of her energy that year working to disprove a stereotype that Christian students were stupid. "I was trying to earn respect," she recalls.

More importantly, though, she found that her faith was able to withstand considerable adversity. "My faith definitely survived. In most ways, it only strengthened it. I felt such intense loneliness at the beginning, but it really drew me closer to God." Erin began carrying a book of Psalms with her, and read from it when she felt overwhelmed. "Feeling like I was looked down upon and alone in my faith made me rely on God to get through every day."

When her first year at Sarah Lawrence ended, Erin had to decide where to spend her summer. Her family was serving in France, and because she was not close to any extended family that lived stateside, she took an opportunity to work on a ranch in Wyoming. She made a few friends there, but as the summer ended, her financial aid fell through and she dropped out of Sarah Lawrence. She prayed about what she should do next, and within hours received a call from a friend, Jenna, who was a Christian, and who was moving to Brooklyn to attend film school. Erin decided to move with her.

When they arrived in Brooklyn, though, their housing turned out to be unavailable. Erin and Jenna slept on the floors of friends' apartments, and soon moved in with a small collective of artists. "It was rough," she says with a laugh. "It felt like a really fast-paced world and I felt really small." She attended church at first, but quickly stopped. "I knew a lot of brokenness and emptiness during that time, and I knew it was because I was trying to live separate from God and his church."

As she kept writing and considered what to do next, she thought back on one of her friends from the ranch in Wyoming, a girl who had attended Covenant. "She was very honest about having her own set of anxieties and struggles, but her faith was so sincere," says Erin. "Her testimony was just amazing to me. I looked at people I had gone to school with at Sarah Lawrence who were brilliant but really empty. Then I looked at this girl who was kind of a normal girl on the outside, but who really knew the grace and love of God, and who really relied on God for all of her strength, and I could see that her

After a year at Sarah Lawrence, and another year in New York City, coming to Covenant was an adjustment. In a strange reversal of dynamics, Erin found herself judging younger students, whose faith perhaps had not yet been challenged intellectually. "But those people turned out to be the people at Covenant who taught me the most," she says. "It was really humbling and really wonderful, and they're some of my best friends, now."

As an English major, Erin continues her work in poetry and intends to pursue a master of fine arts in creative

"I've found that the core of
Christian community
is unconditional and
unrelenting love, and
there is nothing more
freeing than that."

relationship with Christ was alive. I knew that's who I wanted to be."

Erin applied to Covenant as well as several other schools, but "before I heard from any other schools, I knew I needed to go to Covenant," she says. The moment she spoke to an admissions representative at Covenant, she felt things were different. While other schools wanted her to see that they were bestowing an honor upon her by allowing her to come to their institution, "with Covenant, it was much more that they value you and your story, and I felt like I had never been valued like that before. I began to see the difference in what the different schools were hoping their students would become. I knew that what I needed was Covenant."

writing after graduation from Covenant. From there, she may teach high school English. Looking back at her courses here, she remembers learning that art is born out of something that is broken. "That was lovely," she says. "Then, realizing that one day it will be mended, and that we're writing to bear witness to that, that was a really beautiful thing. Knowing why writing is so important to me has been really valuable, and Covenant gave me that."

Erin has come to love Covenant's community, even serving as a resident assistant to her hall. "I saw Christian community as being limiting," she says, "but I've found that the core of Christian community is unconditional and unrelenting love, and there is nothing more freeing than that." 





Homecoming 2012

The largest number of alumni in Covenant's history returned to the mountain this fall for Homecoming. We had a lot to celebrate! From the introduction of President Halvorson '93 at the Scots Celebration Dinner to the Highland Games to a night of soccer and fireworks, it was a full weekend celebration.

You can see more Homecoming photos and video at covenant.edu/homecoming.



David '62 & Eleanor Rowen Fiol '63
Alumni of the Year

David and Eleanor have served as missionaries to India for forty-eight years. Affiliated with Mission to the World, they have been influential in the ongoing work of Presbyterian Theological Seminary, Bhogpur Children's Home, and Grace Academy, a day/boarding school that David founded to facilitate Christ-centered education for the children of national missionaries. The Fiols are also actively involved in the life of their local church.



Sheldon Grizzle '03
Young Alumnus of the Year

An entrepreneur, Sheldon recently worked for CreateHere, a non-profit organization advancing the arts, economic, and cultural development of the city of Chattanooga. The success of his work inspired him to found the Company Lab, a resource for Chattanooga's entrepreneurial community. Sheldon has also been a key figure in the founding of the Chattanooga Football Club and Blank Slate Ventures.



Sarah Jane Creech '07
Alumna Volunteer of the Year

Sarah Jane has served as a member of Covenant's young alumni board for two years and truly exemplifies what it means to pray for, represent, and give to Covenant. The assistant director of student ministries at Orangewood Presbyterian Church in Orlando, Sarah Jane has provided youth ministry internships for dozens of Covenant students. She helps recruit students to Covenant by being a representative at college fairs and by traveling with prospective students to visit Covenant.

“It isn’t *race* but *grace* that makes a person a true child of Abraham.”

Shakespeare and the Nations

IN *THE MERCHANT OF VENICE* Shakespeare draws on a dense network of biblical allusion to dramatize the complex history of relations between Christians and Jews. One important strand of criticism understands the play as an allegory of the superiority of grace over law. Other critics, however, reject this allegorical reading because of the undeniable and ugly hypocrisy of the Christian characters of the play. My own view is that the play simultaneously affirms a theology of grace *and* calls for deeper Christian reflection on the implications of a theology of grace for Christian treatment of the racially “other.”

At least some of Shakespeare’s contemporaries grappled with the problem. A famous theologian of the English church, Richard Hooker, introduces an interpretation of Romans 9 (one of the key biblical passages concerning Christian understanding of Jews) by reminding his readers “that God hath made of one blood all mankind.” (See Acts 17:26.) Hooker understands the election of the Jews as a means of God’s grace for the nations. The Jews, he says, are “a people that had been the wellspring of life to all Nations” (156). Shylock’s remark that “the trade and profit of the city [of Venice] consisteth of all nations” may register Shakespeare’s awareness of this point. More clearly relevant for the play, however, is Hooker’s suggestion that God has “made of one blood all mankind.”

In act three, Shylock refers to his daughter Jessica (who has eloped with the Christian Lorenzo) as “my flesh and my blood” (3.1.32 and see line 30). Salerio, a hypocritical Christian, absurdly claims that “There is more difference between thy flesh and hers than between jet and ivory” (suggesting that Jessica is more fair-skinned, and therefore more attractive, than Shylock) and also that there is “more [difference] between your bloods than there is between red wine and Rhenish” (a white wine; lines 33-35). Shylock’s response to Salerio includes the famous line: “If you



by Dr. William Tate, professor of English

prick us do we not bleed?” (line 54). His point, of course, is that Jews are as human as Gentiles; they are of one blood.

In the crucial courtroom scene which makes up most of act four, Shylock’s intention to take a forfeited pound of Antonio’s flesh is thwarted because their contract has not given him the right to take any of Antonio’s blood. Portia warns him that he will be subject to punishment “if thou dost shed / One drop of Christian blood” (4.1.304-305). But the passage we have noticed from act three makes it clear that there is no such thing as specifically “Christian” blood. To state the point another way, it isn’t *race* but *grace* that makes a person a true child of Abraham. God has “made of one blood all mankind.”

Taken together, these passages suggest that the Christians in the play, though they rightly (but abstractly) understand themselves as recipients of grace, have failed to understand that one of the implications of that grace ought to be expressed in a charitable hope for the conversion of all nations, including the Jews. 🙏

This essay is adapted from a lecture delivered by Prof. Tate in honor of President Halvorson’s inauguration. You may listen to this and the other three inaugural faculty lectures by Professors Jay Green, Tim Morris, and Rebecca Pennington at covenant.edu/inauguration.



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When Viking warriors under King Haakon IV invaded Scotland in 1263, one among them stepped on a thistle. His cries of pain alerted the Scots, and the invaders were beaten back. Because of that, the thistle has long been a national symbol for Scotland. In keeping with the Scottish heritage of Presbyterianism, the thistle has also been a part of Covenant's identity since the College's earliest days. It is featured in Covenant's shield and on the presidential medallion.