

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

VIEW



The Comfort & Hope of Adoption

Is Technology
the Devil?

All I Know
Is Grace

Grow Up,
Will You?!

SPRING 2014
COVENANT.EDU

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COVENANT COLLEGE
VIEW

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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



Students traveled back to the roaring '20s for the Castle in the Clouds dance in Carter Hall.

CovenantNews



Covenant Assisting New College in Indonesia

Covenant College is pleased to assist a brand new, biblically faithful teachers college in Jakarta, Indonesia. Beginning its inaugural year this fall, the International Teachers College at Universitas Pelita Harapan (ITC at UPH) has requested the aid of Covenant College as it seeks to equip local Christian men and women to teach in Asia.

Covenant is assisting by providing a vetting process for the faculty of the ITC, with the final offer of employment coming from the ITC at UPH. Additionally, Dr. Jim Drexler, dean of social science and

the Graduate School of Education, has relocated to Jakarta, where he is putting into place Covenant-like policies, programs, and personnel at the ITC. Depending on the success of this effort, the initiative of the ITC could facilitate the establishment of a branch campus of Covenant College.

A Covenant College Indonesia Task Force is working to identify all of the outstanding issues that would need to be addressed in order to establish a Covenant campus in Indonesia. The task force is approaching the possibility of a branch campus with due diligence.

"As we continue to consider a branch campus in Indonesia, we are excited by the opportunities and possibilities of kingdom work in the educational dimension of Asia," said Dr. Jeff Hall, vice president for academic affairs. "We are committed to ensuring that any initiative there reflects the mission and the quality of the Lookout Mountain campus. With prayer and hope, we are

proceeding carefully to steward the gifts that God has given us so that educational work in Indonesia may flourish."



Programming Competition Success

Covenant College left its mark on the Southeastern conference for the Consortium for Computing Sciences in Colleges at Furman University in South Carolina. Back for the second year, Covenant brought two teams to the conference's programming competition. Out of thirty teams, Covenant's freshman and sophomore team earned a top-ten

finish at the competition after working through problems of varying difficulties together as a team.

“Covenant placed in the top ten, which is really great for a new team,” says Dr. Jeff Humphries, associate professor of computer science. “The students were phenomenal, and I was extremely impressed with their teamwork and problem-solving skills.”



Profs. Corbett & Fikkert Co-Author *When Helping Hurts* Resource

On February 1, Moody Publishers released *When Helping Hurts: The Small Group Experience*, co-authored by Profs. Steve Corbett and Brian Fikkert. The new six-lesson book offers a helpful guide for Sunday school classes and other small groups, presenting the lessons of *When Helping Hurts* in a digestible format. The study is paired with six videos, available online from the Chalmers Center at chalmers.org.

“Since the release of *When Helping Hurts*, churches have been asking us for additional resources to help them disciple the members of their congregations,” says Dr. Fikkert. “*The Small Group Experience* study guide and videos are designed to help Sunday school teachers and small group leaders to facilitate discussions that will introduce people to the basic ideas of the book in an engaging and accessible way.”

Global Gospel Advancement Week

Dr. Cliff Boone served as the guest speaker for Global Gospel Advancement Week. Dr. Boone earned his MDiv from Columbia Bible Seminary and a PhD in theology from the University of Wales, Lampeter. He is the senior pastor of Cedar Crest Bible Fellowship Church in Allentown, PA.

In addition to chapel messages dedicated to the worldwide spread of the gospel, Global Gospel Advancement Week included an international dinner and a missions fair where students interacted with representatives from MTW, the Rafiki Foundation, Wycliffe Bible



onCourse Ethics Committees

Faculty:

Dr. Bill Davis, professor of philosophy

Class:

Bioethics

Method:

Students studying bioethics will encounter a variety of ethical questions and dilemmas. Rather than learning strictly through lectures, students are required to personally enter into ethical decision-making through committees. Students are assigned to standing committees, and each committee is responsible for considering ethical decisions ranging from withholding hydration and food to advanced directives to euthanasia. Committees are required to produce majority reports and present their decisions to their classmates.

Majority reports summarize the facts of the case and the ethical questions involved as well as provide a justification for the committee's decisions. Finally, the majority reports offer recommendations for policy additions or changes that would facilitate the handling of similar cases in the future. A member of the committee also presents an explanation of the decisions reached, issues involved, and difficulties encountered by the committee.

For Example:

Students learn ideas like paternalism in medicine partially through their work in committees. A committee may be given a case where a patient in a crisis medical situation appears to be making decisions irrationally. A physician performs an emergency procedure necessary to sustain that patient's life—against his or her will. Given the facts of the case, including details not listed here, the student committee would review the facts, find the ethical questions involved, make a decision, and justify their decision.

48

States represented
by current students

24

Countries represented
by current students

13

Percentage of students
from the Midwest

703

Instagram followers

752

Prospective students referred
by current students within
24 hours in February

415

Current students receiving Church
Scholarship Promise funds

6

New tennis courts

30

Percentage of current
students who participate in
intercollegiate athletics

4

Snow days in spring 2014

Translators, and the English Language Institute/China.

Listen to the Global Gospel Advancement Week messages at covenant.edu/GGAW.



WIC Lecture Series

Dr. William Hurlbut, physician and consulting professor at the Neuroscience Institute at Stanford University, presented this year's Women in the Church (WIC) Lecture Series at Covenant. Dr. Hurlbut received his undergraduate degree and medical training from Stanford University and was appointed to the President's Council on Bioethics in 2002.

Dr. Hurlbut's WIC Lectures, titled "Biotechnology, Christian Love, and the Human Future," including subsequent classes, examined the societal changes brought about through recent advances in biotechnology. From his standpoint as a neurobiologist and as a Christian, Dr. Hurlbut looked beyond the physical ramifications of biotechnology and asked questions about the ways biotechnology influences the many facets of human existence.

Listen to his lecture on biotechnology and the spirituality of Saint Francis at covenant.edu/Hurlbut.

Theatre: *On the Verge*

Covenant's theatre department presented *On the Verge* or *The Geography of Yearning* this spring. The play followed three female

Victorian explorers traveling through Terra Incognita (and, eventually, through time). Along the way, the troupe encountered a yeti, a cannibal with a German accent, and many more unusual characters.

"The characters use a more sophisticated language," says Kacy Polk '14, who played the role of Mary Baltimore. "There are so many words and phrases that aren't normally used today, so we had to make sure the audience understood."



Prof. Scott Jones Awarded Humboldt Fellowship

This spring and summer, Dr. Scott Jones, associate professor of biblical studies, is spending time at the University of Gottingen with a fellowship for experienced researchers from the Alexander Humboldt Foundation.

Jones' fellowship brings him to Gottingen's theology department where he is working alongside his supervising professor and personal friend Dr. Hermann Spieckermann. Spieckermann and Jones' work focuses on psalms and wisdom literature.

"By working with Dr. Spieckermann, I hope to bridge the gap between ways of speaking about the Psalms," says Jones. "This is a great opportunity to see each other work, question each other, sharpen each other, and create a kind of methodological common ground."

TOP TEN IN 2013

ScotsCasts

covenant.edu/scotscast

Chapel Messages

covenant.edu/soundcloud

Videos

covenant.edu/youtube

News

covenant.edu/news

1

My Experience at Kenya's Westgate Mall

by Andrew Strickenburg '07

Convocation 2013: On the Flesh of Christ

by Dr. Kelly Kapic

Merry Christmas from Covenant College

Covenant Community Mourns the Loss of David Taaffe '15

2

The Super Bowl as a Theology of Women

by Dr. Matt Vos '90

Technology as the "Devil": Becoming More Sinful, Dumb, & Dumber

by Dr. Hans Madueme

Move-In Day

Rev. Grant Lowe Appointed Covenant College Chaplain

3

Professors Who Go the Extra Mile

by Emily Kling Somerville '05

The Unexpected (John 4:1-26)

by Rev. Grant Lowe

Spring Formal

Dean's List, Fall 2012

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Covenant & the Real World

by Susanna Griffith '13 & Anne Marie Rowe '13

Why Are You Downcast, O My Soul (Psalm 42-43)

by Rev. Joe Novenson

Convocation 2013

New Faculty Appointments in Art & Music

5

Vision for Covenant Athletics

by Kyle Taylor

My Train Wreck Conversion

by Dr. Rosaria Champagne Butterfield

Tribute to Prof. John Hamm

Dean's List, Spring 2013

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Taking Core Classes

by Elisabeth Hooker '15

What Are We Becoming?

by Rev. Grant Lowe

Into the Woods

Commencement

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Transferring to Covenant

by Bethany Doster '13

Darkness, Dignity, & Defensive Driving School

by Kate Harrison Belz '11

Noon: Part 2 of a Covenant Alumni Series

Edge Business Magazine Features Impact of Covenant Alumni in Chattanooga

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New Students & Life on Campus

by Julie Moore '01

Christian Storytelling & a Failure of the Imagination

by Jeffrey Overstreet

Studying as an Act of Love

Top 10 Lists for 2012

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Theatre: Waiting for the Paint to Dry

by Kathryn Jenkins '12

C.S. Lewis & the Power of Stories

by Dr. Jim Belcher

'80s Skate Night

Dan Wykoff '01 Appointed Vice President for Business & Finance, CFO

10

Remembering Mandela

by Cathy Scott '94

He Is Able (Eph. 3:14-21)

by Dr. Herb Ward

Mountain Affair 2013

Convocation



Prof. Kaptic Serves as Visiting Research Fellow

This spring, Dr. Kelly Kaptic, professor of theological studies, is serving as a research fellow at Biola University's Center for Christian Thought, and will return to Covenant in the fall of 2014. Dr. Kaptic's research fellowship centers on the topic of psychology and spiritual formation.

"I'm interested in how Christians, in the midst of suffering, maintain and even foster faith," says Kaptic. "I'm hoping to get away from slogans and dig a bit deeper into the complexities and realities that swirl around in our hearts and minds during such difficulties."

Listen to Dr. Kaptic discuss his fellowship at covenant.edu/KapicScotsCast.

Educators Conference

Covenant's education department hosted the 2014 Educators Conference in March, centered on the theme *Teaching the Whole Child: Using Faith, Art, and Purposeful Engagement to Bring Learning to an Urban Setting*.



Speakers at the conference included educators from the Mustard Seed School in Hoboken, NJ. Founded in 1979, the school aims to address the educational needs of their urban community, to stimulate and broaden the experiences of city children, and to educate students in an intercultural, interdenominational Christian setting. This school has an intentional mission to the urban poor.

Following the conference, many educators attended Covenant's Career Summit for education students. The summit provided an opportunity for students to interact with professionals in their field, participate in interview sessions, and network with skilled educators.

Mock Interview Day

This February, students participated in the inaugural Mock Interview Day at Covenant College. Hosted by the Center for Calling & Career, Mock Interview Day gave students the chance to experience

true-to-life mock interview sessions with local Chattanooga-area professionals.

Students met individually with a professional matched to their major and calling, and spent time in a practice interview. After the sessions, their interviewer provided encouragement and helpful feedback on areas for improvement. More than forty students and twenty-six local employers participated in Mock Interview Day.

"It was a low-stress environment and a nice segue to real interviewing," said Grant Thomas '14, an art major with a concentration in design. "It was official enough to want to pour energy into it, but low-key enough that it wasn't stressful."



New Tennis Complex Opens

Scots tennis teams played their first home matches on Covenant's campus this March. After years of hosting home games at local high schools and clubs, the Scots brought their competition up the mountain to Covenant's six brand new tennis courts. Complete with lighting and a new pedestrian path, the tennis complex

ScotsCast

covenant.edu/scotscast



"It's about expanding our understanding so we can approach everything with compassion."

Michael Brown '16
Learning Humility in Covenant's Philosophy Club



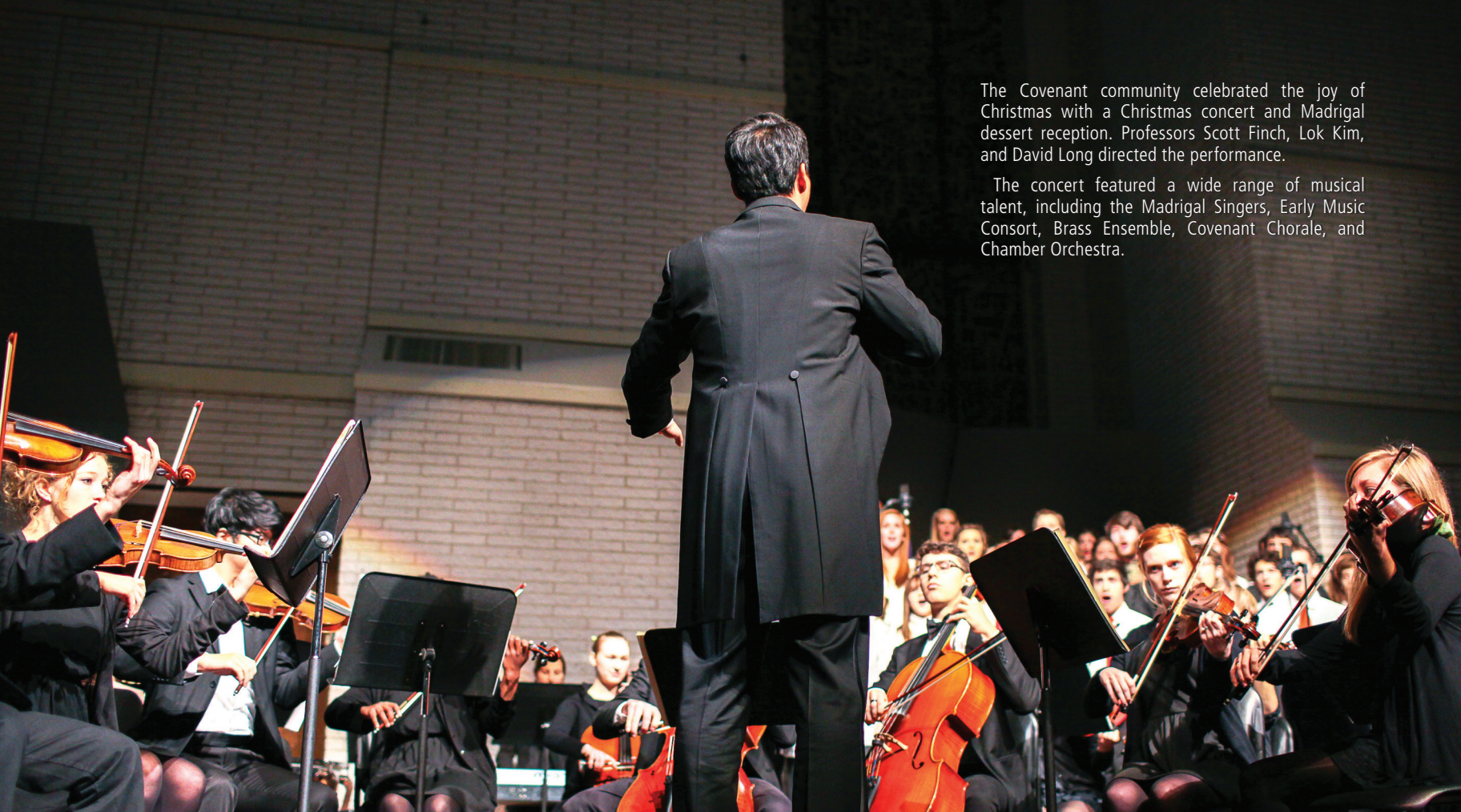
"He emerged from a man who was essentially named a terrorist . . . and he became a man of incredible humility and a quiet strength and power."

Cathy Scott '94
Remembering Mandela



"You can't have convocation without bagpipes."

Emma Beers '14
Playing Bagpipes at Covenant



The Covenant community celebrated the joy of Christmas with a Christmas concert and Madrigal dessert reception. Professors Scott Finch, Lok Kim, and David Long directed the performance.

The concert featured a wide range of musical talent, including the Madrigal Singers, Early Music Consort, Brass Ensemble, Covenant Chorale, and Chamber Orchestra.

enables Covenant's NCAA Division III tennis teams to host home matches on campus.

"We are ecstatic to see the completion of the six new tennis courts," says athletics director Kyle Taylor. "The courts look incredible and add so much to the south end of campus and our athletic facilities. I am thrilled for our tennis student athletes who now can play matches at home. This is a game changer for the tennis program, so I am also excited about the way this impacts recruiting in future years."

Marriage, Family, & Community Conference

Dr. Henry and Mrs. Kelly Knapp served as the guest speakers for Covenant's Marriage, Family, & Community Conference this February.

The Knapps have been involved in ministry together for the past twenty-five years. They served at the University of Pittsburgh with the Coalition for Christian Outreach for many years and are involved in many facets of pastoral, speaking, counseling, and missions work. Henry

earned his MDiv from Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary where Kelly also earned a master's in counseling. Henry went on to receive his PhD in theology from Calvin College.

They spoke in chapel on covenant marriage, eros redeemed, and cultivating contentment. In addition, they shared experience and wisdom with students during a lunch session and an evening seminar. You can listen to the Knapps' lectures and seminar online at covenant.edu/Knapp.

SoundCloud
covenant.edu/soundcloud



"We love when institutions do things for us, but we flinch when institutions ask things of us."

Prof. Jay Green
I Believe in Institutions



"If the spirituals were the quest for freedom, then the blues were the burden of freedom."

Ruth Naomi Floyd
Redemptive Beauty through the Lens of African American Spirituals



"If God's sovereign, and He loves me, and [my depression's] not going away, this is not an interruption in my Christian life; this is my Christian life."

Rev. Joe Novenson
Why Are You Downcast, O My Soul!

InFocus

Short for scrummage, a rugby scrum is the hard-to-miss restart to play in a rugby match. Covenant students have found themselves well-acquainted with rugby scrums since Covenant's rugby club team was founded just two years ago. The Scots rugby team has more than 20 members and consistently plays well against other local club teams in the Chattanooga area, including teams from Tennessee Tech University, University of Tennessee at Chattanooga, and Lee University.

"I missed sports after high school because I don't play a varsity sport," says Bryce Stout '15. "I got a lot of what I missed back in my rugby team. It's a great team of guys who build each other up in community, who seek to glorify Christ and worship through playing sports, and who are all playing a rough sport. It's been one of my favorite things at Covenant—being able to worship through playing hard."







1



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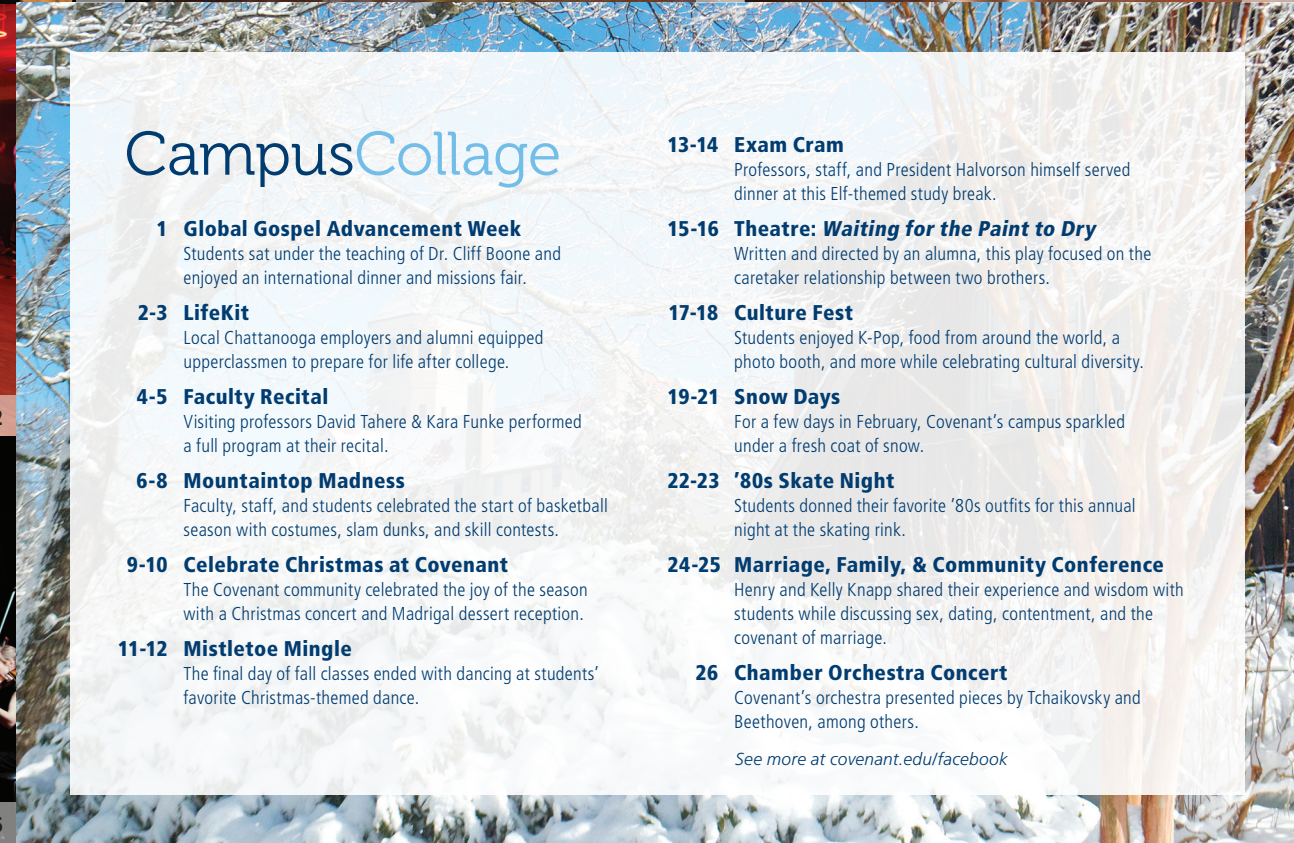


24



25





CampusCollage

1 Global Gospel Advancement Week

Students sat under the teaching of Dr. Cliff Boone and enjoyed an international dinner and missions fair.

2-3 LifeKit

Local Chattanooga employers and alumni equipped upperclassmen to prepare for life after college.

4-5 Faculty Recital

Visiting professors David Tahere & Kara Funke performed a full program at their recital.

6-8 Mountaintop Madness

Faculty, staff, and students celebrated the start of basketball season with costumes, slam dunks, and skill contests.

9-10 Celebrate Christmas at Covenant

The Covenant community celebrated the joy of the season with a Christmas concert and Madrigal dessert reception.

11-12 Mistletoe Mingle

The final day of fall classes ended with dancing at students' favorite Christmas-themed dance.

13-14 Exam Cram

Professors, staff, and President Halvorson himself served dinner at this Elf-themed study break.

15-16 Theatre: *Waiting for the Paint to Dry*

Written and directed by an alumna, this play focused on the caretaker relationship between two brothers.

17-18 Culture Fest

Students enjoyed K-Pop, food from around the world, a photo booth, and more while celebrating cultural diversity.

19-21 Snow Days

For a few days in February, Covenant's campus sparkled under a fresh coat of snow.

22-23 '80s Skate Night

Students donned their favorite '80s outfits for this annual night at the skating rink.

24-25 Marriage, Family, & Community Conference

Henry and Kelly Knapp shared their experience and wisdom with students while discussing sex, dating, contentment, and the covenant of marriage.

26 Chamber Orchestra Concert

Covenant's orchestra presented pieces by Tchaikovsky and Beethoven, among others.

See more at covenant.edu/facebook



The Comfort & Hope of ADOPTION

This is a story of God giving huge blessings, and it is the story of God taking, refining, and showing me that He will go to great lengths to remind me that all I need is to feel my need of Him.

by Sarah Howlett Duple '97





EIGHT YEARS AGO, MY HUSBAND AND I JOINED AN ELITE GROUP. It is a group no one wants to be part of. It is the group of parents who have had to bury their children. Some say that the death of a child is a tragedy no one can recover from—that it is the worst grief any parent can experience. It might be. But I have *hope*, because at the beginning of my own story I was chosen and adopted by God.

I have always been acutely aware that I was blessed in my childhood. I was born into a family of believing parents who loved God and who taught me about Jesus. At an early age I saw the disparity of my life compared to others, and I am truly grateful for my idyllic childhood and for parents who continue to faithfully pray for me to this day. My parents gave me a huge gift, because the biblical truths they taught me were the very things that brought me comfort through some of my hardest days.

After an amazing childhood I found myself at Covenant College. My life continued to be full of great blessings. I met one of those blessings my freshman year: my husband, Troy. We got married and life continued to be easy and comfortable and full of blessings. Troy came to work at Covenant—his dream job. I taught for a few years, and we started to have our four children—right on schedule and according to our plans. We found a piece of land on the back of Lookout Mountain and on those seven acres we built a beautiful house. We got to travel. We were healthy and young. We had wonderful neighbors, a big supportive family, fun friends, an incredible church family, and an easy marriage. We believed that the grass was greener on our side of the fence, and we were incredibly thankful.

The summer of 2005 was typical of most of our summers. We headed up to a lake home in New Hampshire that has been in my husband's family for three generations. We were happy and excited for summer, and I was pregnant with our fourth "perfectly planned" child. The lake beautifully displays God's glory in its scenery, and we spent almost every waking moment outside.

Crisis Pregnancy & Foster Care

by Ashley Baldwin '12

Ashley Baldwin is the executive director of Choices Pregnancy Center in Chattanooga, Tennessee.

Nearly every person I've counseled at Choices has approached their pregnancy with two options in mind: having an abortion or parenting their child. Logically and rationally, adoption seems like the right choice, but many women experiencing a crisis pregnancy do not have a good understanding of adoption. Their only experience of adoption is the foster care system, and that colors their understanding of what adoption could mean for their child. Often these women feel a stigma toward adoption—that it means they aren't willing to take responsibility for their child. We work to educate them and show how it is truly one of the most selfless things they could do for their baby.

I've noticed a trend in Christian circles towards adoption, and while I'm passionate about adoption and so glad that people are being called to adopt, I think we often leave out a whole group of kids who are in the foster care system. These kids need to be part of strong Christian families. We have an unending waiting list of parents who want to adopt newborns, while at the same time we have an entire generation of kids stuck in the foster care system because people don't want to do the hard work of taking these kids in.

I'm 100 percent pro-newborn-adoption, but I think we need to challenge each other as Christians in the area of orphan care. In the same way that we are challenging these women to do the most selfless thing, to make an adoption plan, I think we need to be challenged as Christians to care for orphans who are often forgotten. If we want to change our community and change our culture, we cannot forget these kids. If your passion is to help the orphan, it should not matter if that orphan is a newborn, or a five-year-old, or a sixteen-year-old.

After a couple of relaxing and fun-filled days in our little paradise, we sat on the beach with a few friends and family members watching the kids run and splash in the water. All of a sudden our four-year-old, Noah, started running funny and cried out. Even at that time, when I was still under the impression that nothing bad could happen to us, I knew something was terribly wrong. Troy ran and grabbed Noah before he could go underwater, and we raced to the front of the house while someone called 9-1-1. My husband performed CPR on my son while I prayed and desperately waited for the ambulance. But even the ER doctors couldn't save our sweet Noah.

The next days and weeks were a blur. It was a scary and fearful time because we didn't know what had caused Noah's death and it took months for the coroner to give us the results: Noah had an undetected heart condition that he should have died from before age one. God had given him to us for three extra years, and we were immensely grateful for those three years. But we were forever changed. There was a gaping hole in our lives. I was definitely more fearful for the health and well-being of our other children, and the grieving process was so wearing. We clung to God like never before, and the words of truth that we had been taught for years, along with the prayers of friends and family, carried us and God sustained us. Our eyes and our children's eyes became more focused on heaven, and we clearly understood, for the first time, what God meant when He said that life is a vapor and that this is not our home.

Because I was suddenly so needy, I was reading the Bible like never before and desperately trying to hear God's voice. When I started feeling like God was telling us to trust Him and have more children I was confused and scared and I thought for sure I couldn't be hearing Him right. In our broken state, we realized that it might be wise to listen to God. Shortly after that we found out I was pregnant with our fifth child. We were shocked and confused when, in the midst of another seemingly perfectly healthy pregnancy, I miscarried at seventeen weeks. I remember being overwhelmed with confusion, grief, and doubt. I wondered if God was who He said He was. But at the doctor's office, the only song that kept playing over and over in my head was this passage from Isaiah 43:

Fear not, for I have redeemed you. I have called you by name. You are mine. When you pass through the waters, I will be with you, and through the rivers, they shall not overwhelm you. When you walk through the fire you shall not be burned, and the flame shall not consume you. For I am the Lord your God, the Holy One of Israel, your Savior.

Even in my moments of doubt, I knew the truth—if I rejected God, there was nothing else that could comfort me. And so once again, in our grief and uncertainty, we chose to find comfort in the truths of the Bible. And once again, our friends and family faithfully prayed for us.

In this season of fresh grieving, as I was reading my Bible and praying, I was surprised and very apprehensive when I started to feel like God was still telling us to add to our family. So I decided to make a deal with God. We won't

“Adoption was not our idea, but I fully believe that because of our seriously broken state we were much more willing to listen to the sound of God’s voice, and I’m so thankful that we did.”

even get into the theological implications of this, but I prayed, “God, you are going to have to give us a big sign, because I’m not sure I can handle adding to our family and I’m definitely not sure I’m hearing your voice correctly.” And it was then that I started seeing the word *adoption*, like it was in flashing neon letters. I thought, “Oh, no. Why would God call a wounded, grief-stricken family to adoption?”

But in our total reliance on God and our desire to hear His voice, we started to consider adoption. I’m sure some people thought that we were crazy, or that we were trying to replace our lost children. This was definitely not the case. Adoption was not our idea, but I fully believe that because of our seriously broken state we were much more willing to listen to the sound of God’s voice, and I’m so thankful that we did.

For about a year I was bombarded from every side with information about adoption, and I was feeling more and more compelled to adopt even though it made me nervous.

We filled out initial paperwork early in that yearlong process and Troy didn’t understand why I wouldn’t turn it in. I told him that I felt so strongly that God was telling us to adopt that as soon as I turned in our paperwork I was sure there would be a baby for us to adopt.



Sarah and Troy Duple with their children Kyra, Ezra Derrick, Tess, Cade, and Drew

He patiently told the crazy lady (me) that adoption generally doesn’t work that way, and he reminded me that the timeline to match us with a child was two years to possibly never.

Our dear friends and family prayed and after a year of wrestling with God, I finally

turned in the paperwork to start the process. Sure enough, four days later we got a call that there was a little newborn baby waiting for us at a local hospital. We named him Drew Jonathan, after Troy’s two college roommates. Jonathan means “Jehovah gave.” Drew came into our lives on September 14, 2008, and he has been an amazing gift. He is full of life and energy, and he is loud and has a spark in his eye that so clearly marks him as a Duple.

But that is not the end of our story. I must have been on a spiritual high after we adopted Drew, because I told Troy that I thought we were supposed to adopt again. Troy must not have been feeling quite as spiritual because he sweetly said, “No way.” But after about a year, without me saying anything,

Troy told me he thought we should adopt again. Instead of running out to fill out more paperwork, I told Troy that I thought we should adopt internationally.

For three years we did not fill out a shred of paperwork. In our minds there were three major roadblocks to international adoption:

international adoptions take longer, they are more expensive, and how could you pick a child when there are 143 million orphans alive today. In light of these roadblocks (excuses, really), we couldn't seem to take the initial first step of filling out paperwork. God, knowing us well, and knowing that He needs to make things extremely simple for us, made His will vividly clear.

I got a call from a couple planning to adopt from Uganda. As we talked, I was curious because their process sounded almost too good to be true. They told me they had just met an orphanage director from Uganda in January and they were planning to go over

in July to pick up their two little boys. If you don't know, this is an incredibly short amount of time for an international adoption. They also mentioned that the cost of adoption was

that two other couples from Chattanooga were adopting siblings from the same orphanage and those siblings had a cousin—a five-year-old boy—who they would love to see come to Chattanooga. The couple asked if we would consider adopting this young boy. Our final roadblock, wondering how we could pick just one child, evaporated.

So we said yes. Because if God was going to open doors that wide for us, we needed to walk through them—even if it meant stepping into the unknown. From that point, things happened quickly.

It was overwhelmingly powerful to see how God led us to this little boy, thousands of miles away in Uganda. Out of the millions

“Out of the millions of orphans
in the world, God led us to
Ezra Derrick and said,
“This is your son.””

significantly less, because they weren't going through an agency. Our first two excuses were completely shut down. Finally, they mentioned

Our Adoption Through Christ

by Prof. Jonathan King

Jonathan King is a visiting professor of theology at Covenant during the spring of 2014.

I adopted my oldest daughter, Kahlene, when she was two years old. As part of the bargain, she received my surname, King. Growing up she heard from me regularly, “You are the daughter of two kings; one is the greater and one is the lesser.” My two other daughters, Kristin and Moriah, became regular recipients of the same declaration. They all delighted in hearing it (and still do), and I delight in telling them. My students at Covenant hear something similar from me: “If you are in Christ, then through Him you are an adopted son or daughter of God. You are, and all of us together are, royal priests of the great King. Live your life in the confidence of that identity!”

“The believer's adoption is both a future reality and, at the same time, already true.”

In accordance with God's eternal plan, the Father “predestined us for adoption as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of His will” (Eph. 1:5). While God delights perfectly in the whole of His divine plan, the heart of it seems to be our adoption as sons and daughters through Christ. Elsewhere, Paul expresses the manifest purpose for which God sent forth His Son, namely, “to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons” (Gal. 4:4). The author of Hebrews tells us that Christ's humiliation and death were fitting because this was the effective means of redemption to bring “many sons to glory” (Heb. 2:10). The believer's adoption is both a future reality and, at the same time, already true. For the Christian, then, our adoptive sonship is becoming in the present what it already is in Christ.

of orphans in the world, God led us to Ezra Derrick and said, “This is your son.” That is what I love about adoption and adoption stories. They so clearly show that God orchestrates everything—it is completely out of our control and we so clearly see our need of Him.

Last summer, we brought our new son to the lake home that has been in my husband’s family for generations. Ezra Derrick and I arrived from Uganda at the New Hampshire lake on August 10, the same day Noah went home to heaven eight years ago. Ezra’s homecoming and Noah’s homegoing happened at the same place, on the same date—God truly cares about the details. We were overjoyed to spend glorious moments of last summer with a son that God had perfectly planned for our family. We have been forever changed through hardship and loss, but we have not lost hope. In the midst of our pain, God has remained faithful. And in the sorrow of loss, God has revealed his never-ending mercy and grace.

Please don’t think I’m saying that everyone is going to have something horribly tragic happen and then will have to adopt ten kids. Yes, there will be suffering in all of our lives on earth, to varying degrees. What I want to communicate is how grateful we should be for our own adoptions. As adopted children of the living God, we have a great comfort and a great hope. 🙏

Adapted from a chapel talk delivered at Covenant College in the spring of 2013.

“Maria”

by A.J. Lowe ’16

Sophomore A.J. Lowe wrote “Maria” in dedication to his African family—his mother who died when he was young and his brother and sister whom he hasn’t seen in many years. The song reflects on the distance between A.J. and his African family and his adoption into a new family. A.J. performed the song at Mountain Affair, Covenant’s annual talent show, where he won the People’s Choice Award for best performance.

I was born September 1993. At two years old,
I was lying by my dying mother’s feet.
The doctor said she gave such a fight,
But we all know in Africa it’s a shorter life.

Oh how I crave her bravery,
To have a child in a civil war, what a mystery.
There must have been something she’d seen,
Perhaps a greatness in me.

Oh mother, mother, I hope I haven’t failed.
Know your sacrifice was not in vain.
I dedicate my life to see your dream—
Hoping you’ll be proud of me.

Oh, my brother Timothy,
I dream of you nightly.
I wish I could have taught you all I know,
But we have grown on different shores.

I had all types of luxuries,
You, with no bed and frightening dreams.
And as the bullets flew over your head,
I was throwing my graduation cap in the air.

Tears of joy for me,
Tears of sadness for you.
Oh we lived in different worlds,
Never had a clue.



I still don’t know why I’m so fortunate
I still think you’d be better in my place.
So little brother, hear the truth:
That I will always love you.

Oh, sister, sister, I haven’t seen in 15 years,
My memory of you isn’t clear.
But in 2003, as the war raged,
You were hiding in a jungle cave.

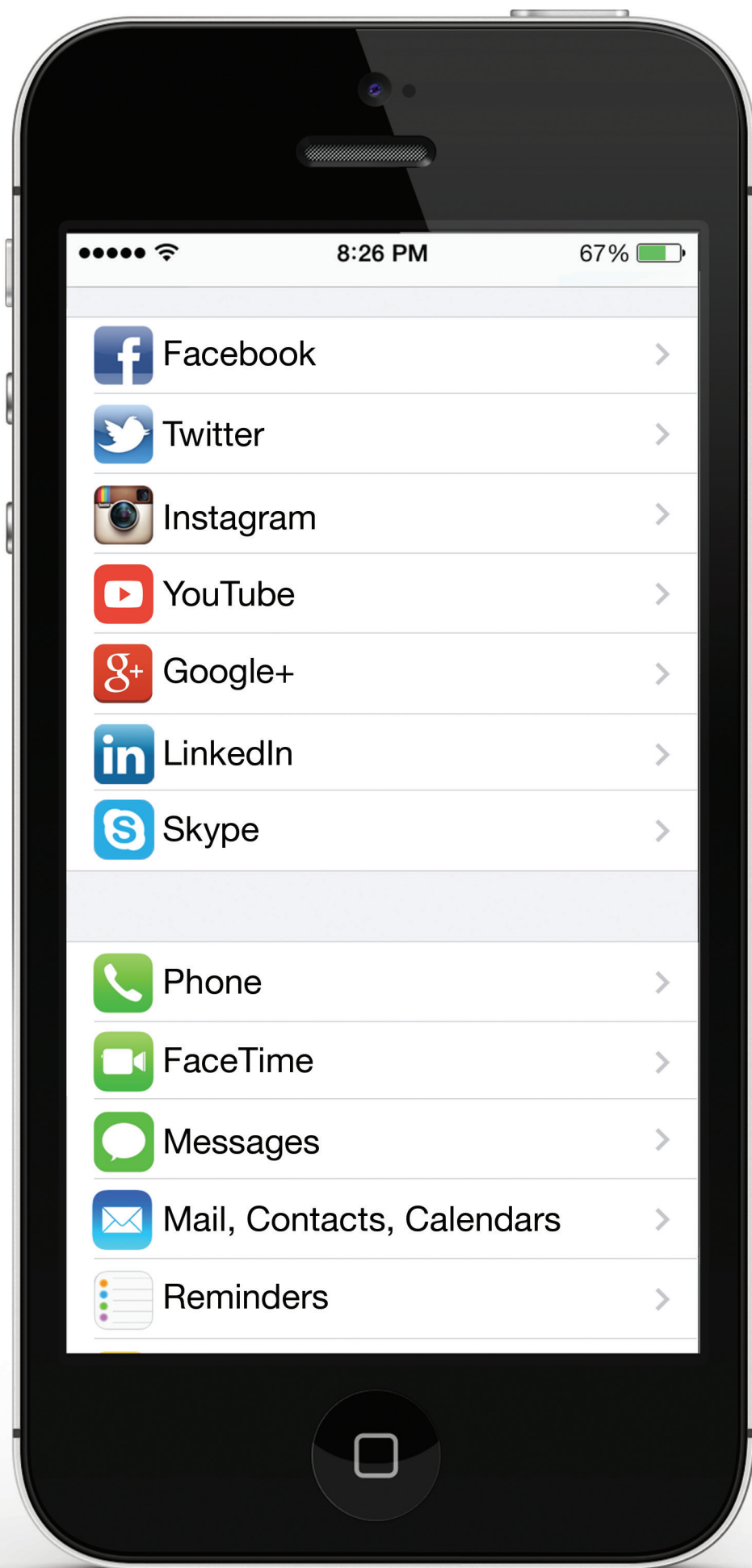
And as I sat on a bench with our brother,
I heard the guns go off in the interior.
Oh how I prayed that day that you were safe,
And that someday soon I would see your face.

But oh, thank God for his mercies,
For giving me this life and a new family.
And I don’t know why but I will hold on,
Knowing though I am weak, he is strong.

But oh my family, I won’t forget,
How your sacrifice was made in blood and death.
And I will hold on to what we have left,
That we may see each other again.

*That we may see each other again,
Oh Lord, again, oh Lord.
Oh Lord, oh Lord.
That we might see each other again.
Oh Lord, oh Lord, oh Lord.
Again, oh Lord.*

Watch A.J.’s winning performance at covenant.edu/Maria



Is Tech the Devil

In the 2013 fall semester, Prof. John Hunt (computer science) and Prof. Hans Madueme (theological studies) gave chapel lectures on technology. Dr. Madueme took a cautious look at the effects of social media and provocatively titled his talk “Technology as the ‘Devil’: Becoming More Sinful, Dumb, and Dumber.” In response, Dr. Hunt spoke on “The Glory of Technology,” highlighting technological innovations that have prompted important medical and societal advances. **We brought the two professors together to discuss their views on technology, social media, and the Lordship of Christ.**

Technology vil?

“The biblical story starts in a garden and ends in a city. You’re not going to have a city without technology, so it seems like technology itself is part of the very movement of redemptive history.”

Technology & Bearing God’s Image

HUNT | Genesis tells us that we’re made in God’s image. That passage comes right after we’ve heard about God creating. So I think part of bearing God’s image is that we are meant to create—that is one way we image God.

MADUEME | I also think it’s significant that the biblical story starts in a garden and ends in a city. You’re not going to have a city without technology, so it seems like technology itself is part of the very movement of redemptive history.

HUNT | In my field, we have the delight of creation in building software. It’s so practical. It’s like poetry, except it does stuff. There’s something I really enjoy about that. As we build software, we act as sub-creators. Frederick Brooks, a famous computer scientist, expressed the idea this way: “As the child delights in his mud pie, so the adult enjoys building things, especially things of his own design. I think this delight must be an image of God’s delight in making things, a delight shown in the distinctness and newness of each leaf and each snowflake.”

Social Media

MADUEME | The book that I’ve found really helpful in shedding light on problems associated with social media is Sherry Turkle’s book *Alone Together*. What has happened with Facebook and Twitter, and now many more media outlets, is that young people tend to spend more and more time enmeshed and immersed in those technologies and less and less time in face-to-face presence with each other. I don’t know if these media were designed with this purpose, but if not, it’s certainly an unintended consequence.

HUNT | Tim Challies’ book *The Next Story: Life & Faith After the Digital Explosion* talks about social media as mediators. The point of mediation is usually to get you to face-to-face contact. The mediator is not the ultimate goal—it’s getting you to something. But we often use technology without the goal of face-to-face contact. I think there is a problem when we could be face to face, but we choose to text or write on Facebook instead. We pick the mediator over the real thing.

MADUEME | There’s a kind of deception or illusion that we’re intimate with each other when we’re texting and when we’re engaged in

these social media. We’re removing ourselves from face-to-face contact as if these other modes of interaction are actually fostering a kind of intimacy. You look around at a restaurant, and you see families having dinner while all of them are looking at their own phones—the kid is playing a game, the dad is checking on a sport. None of them is talking. That’s a problem.

HUNT | What’s interesting to me is that I think the trajectory of these media is somewhat positive—they’re designed to entangle us with other people. The problem is that we use them instead to distance ourselves from other people.

Technology & Sin Nature

MADUEME | My question is—what’s the problem here? Is it that we have original sin and, because of our indwelling sin, we transform the “neutral” technology into something ominous? Or do these technologies have their own sets of values that give the technology a certain trajectory?

HUNT | I think in some ways it’s too easy to say, “The problem is that students text too much, and if we just took away all smart phones, students would work harder and

“We need to ask ourselves—do I use these technologies to build better relationships, or do I use them as an excuse to not work on my relationships?”

families would communicate more.” We can look back at students in the 1700s who rioted and burned down their school. Clearly that wasn’t a texting problem. On the other hand, technology is not simply neutral.

We’re told to look forward to the day when swords will get beaten into plowshares. It’s not that swords have their own volition and go do bad things. But swords do tug at us in a different way than plowshares. I think we need to consider how we use technology. We need to ask ourselves—do I use these technologies to build better relationships, or do I use them as an excuse to not work on my relationships?

Technology & the Lordship of Christ

MADUEME | Our narrative is the story of creation, fall, and redemption. We need to see technology as part of that story. It’s part of God’s creation, and it’s what we have created as sub-creators. So there is goodness in technology. But we also live in a fallen world, so there is always a tendency for technology to let us down or for us to use it to subvert what God is doing in our lives. We need to

stay aware of the ways technologies let us down and then we have to ask how the Gospel, how God’s redemptive story, can turn these things around.

HUNT | I think one of those temptations is the desire for self-sufficiency. We have a large desire to be self-sufficient, and often technology replaces the role of our dependence

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on God. We start to believe that we can fix all of our problems with new technologies.

MADUEME | The technologies may not even be bad at all. They may be good and helpful, but we then use them in nefarious ways. We were designed to worship and love God and seek after Him. But for some reason if I’m in my car, music has to be playing. If I’m alone in my room, I need to be doing something. If I’m alone at home, I need to watch a movie. There’s nothing wrong with all of those things.

What’s wrong is when I use them because I don’t want to face myself as someone who is dependent on God. Technology gives me the resources to insulate myself from God.

HUNT | One problem with our culture is an incredible reluctance to leave silence for God to speak into. We want to fill every moment with noise that drowns out thoughts that could

lead to reflection. Part of it is trying to keep God at arm’s length by having all this noise between us and Him. I find it very hard to relate to God without some silence.

MADUEME | I think it’s good to remember that most people didn’t have access to the internet until the ’90s. It helps to put things in perspective. These things are

still new, and as a culture we’re still trying to figure out how to think about it all, how to live wisely, and how to exhort each other. I think we’re in the early days of understanding the redemptive ways we can inhabit this world with these technologies. Hopefully we’re helping move the conversation forward.

HUNT | Another thing to consider is that we should care about what God cares about and not only what we care about. The founder of Facebook, Mark Zuckerberg, said, “A squirrel



Drs. Madueme & Hunt take time out from teaching to discuss the influence of modern technology.

dying in front of your house may be more relevant to your interests right now than people dying in Africa.” I think we should avoid making what annoys us more important than what annoys God.

A Greater Hope

MADUEME | There are groups striving for immortality through technological innovation. But that’s an alternate eschatology, where your hope is in technology and what it can do for you. Our hope is in the return of Christ and in the renewal of creation, but their hope is in technology and the hope that technology can take evolution to the next level. We have a problem with our finitude. I think it’s a kind of technological Gnosticism—people are trying to escape the finitude of their bodies through technology.

HUNT | Something I’ve been thinking more about is being grateful to God. Most people

in the history of the world, even the richest people, didn’t have access to the technology we have. We need an attitude of gratitude to shape how we view technology.

“We need an attitude of gratitude to shape how we view technology.”

MADUEME | A friend of mine who teaches computer science explained a typology that I find helpful in thinking about how we approach technology. He talked about the two extremes people fall into. First, technological sentimentalism—these people are like technological Luddites. They think technology is the problem. They are scared of everything new, and prefer tradition and the old. It’s

a sentimental view of the past. The second is technological messianism—these people think technology is inherently good and it will save us.

What my friend suggested was somewhere between these two extremes. He recommends that we be technological responsibilists. The creation and use of technology is part of the cultural mandate. We’re made in the image of a creator God. It’s a natural creaturely activity to take things that are created

and transform them. We need to remember that technology is part of a bigger theological picture. Technology can’t save us, so we need to use technology responsibly. We need to look at our theological values and make sure that we’re not being mindless with technology. I think this technological responsibility is what we should strive for. There is no one size fits all—we need wisdom. 🙏

ALL I KNOW IS GRACE

by William Wolfe '10

The simple fact that I am alive and well today is only because of the matchless goodness and amazing grace of Jesus Christ, who ransomed my life from the grave.

LET ME START AT THE BEGINNING. I was raised by two loving Christian parents. We lived in Matthews, North Carolina. I was homeschooled through middle school and then went to a local Christian high school. My family faithfully attended church, and I was there almost every Sunday.

My first “conversion,” which I know now was a false conversion, took place when I was about nine or ten years old at a vacation Bible school. You know how it goes, I was at this weeklong Bible camp and the main pastor of the church got up on the last day and explained to all the kids that all those bad things they have done are sins, and that if you have sinned, you are going to hell. I didn’t want to go to hell! So with all the fear and faith a ten-year-old can muster, I asked Jesus to come into my heart. In retrospect, this was a terrible thing to do. I didn’t need Jesus to come live inside my dead heart, what I needed was an entirely new one. The prophet Ezekiel describes this in Ezekiel 11:19: “I will give them an undivided heart

and a new spirit in them; I will remove from them their heart of stone and give them a heart of flesh. Then they will follow my decrees and be careful to keep my laws.”

I grew up *ingrained* in Christianity, and I never disbelieved what I heard in church, intellectually speaking. I memorized Bible verses, would defend the validity of the faith, with my words at least, and tried to live a good life, for a while. It was quite convenient for me to be a Christian, which is ironic in some ways, as that is not the historical norm. I already pushed the limits of the rules, got in enough trouble as it was, so there was nothing to be gained by not being a Christian. But I didn’t understand the gospel—the most fundamental piece of the Christian faith.

My view of myself as a Christian, along with the next eleven years of youth group, church attendance, going to a Christian high school, and then on to further studies at Covenant, left little doubt in my mind that I was saved. Although the sin and rebellion of what was still my

dead heart started becoming much more outwardly noticeable from about eighteen years old and on. Even more indicting than the sin, perhaps, was my almost complete lack of guilt.

I spent my freshman and sophomore years at Covenant playing soccer, studying history, and focusing on myself. My church attendance was minimal; Christian disciplines were non-existent in my daily life; I had little to no accountability; and I walked around with my chest stuck out and a chip on my shoulder. I was ruled by my selfish and arrogant flesh. Towards the end of my sophomore year things were not going well for me at Covenant. I think I had been on probation every semester, didn’t seem to get along with anyone in authority on campus, and I wanted out (this is putting it lightly). The problem, in my mind, was everyone else, not me. I was a “victim of my circumstances.” Really, I was a slave to my sin.

At the beginning of January 2010, I was halfway through my senior year. Due in



large part to my continued rebellious ways, I had moved off campus and was now living with two older guys who, from what I know, were not Christians, or not living like Christians. I was twenty-one years old. The props holding up my fake faith were finally gone—and the world was very appealing. I hadn't really partied much through college and now before me, in my estimation, were my last few months to live what seemed to be the fun lifestyle I had been missing out on. I started drinking and partying, buying the culture's lie about the purpose of "college life," and honestly, at the start, I found that it was fun. I sinned because I wanted to sin. I was, as Paul puts it in Romans, suppressing the truth through my wickedness.

The next two years of my life were a series of steps down a path to destruction. In my mind back then, my last semester at Covenant was roses. I partied, drank, smoked weed, went out on weekends, and lived an immoral lifestyle. I was a liar, deceived people, but still managed to write my senior integration paper (SIP) and graduate with honors. I felt on top of the world. My plan was to come back to Lookout Mountain, get a job, and keep having fun. This is when things started going more pointedly south.

My first summer out of school was fraught with hardship, heartache, and the beginning of consequences for my foolish actions. I was in a serious car accident, driving drunk up Lookout Mountain without a seat belt on, one which I had no business surviving. I walked away with nothing but some stitches and an enduring testimony to God's grace, despite my rebellion. After that my grandfather died and my uncle began seriously suffering from a failed intestine transplant. Around me I saw death, disease, and uncertainty beginning to plague myself and my close

relatives. Since I was not seeking the Lord at this time, I had nowhere to go and no hope but myself, or, as I increasingly found, alcohol.

I ended up coming back to Lookout Mountain at the end of August. I moved into a house near the College, and started trying to survive life out of school. As I looked for work I also developed a drinking problem, choosing to job hunt for most of the day, but then beginning to drink around 4:00 p.m. My budding alcoholism, compounded by my feelings as a failure, family problems, and my sinful lifestyle, changed my demeanor. I continued to drink increasingly, but now because I felt like I had to, not just that I wanted to. Instead of having fun, when I drank I got angry, mean, and violent. I estranged my friends and ruined relationships. In January of

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‘How in the world did I end up here?’
It should have been a wake-up call.”

2011, I got in another car accident, was charged with a DUI, and arrested. As I was sitting in jail down in Trenton, Georgia, I can remember wondering to myself, “How in the world did I end up here?” It should have been a wake-up call.

Even in all of this, there was some part of me that knew what I was doing was wrong, and I knew that something needed to change. In somewhat of a last-ditch effort to get away from the wreckage of that year, I moved to New York, to sort things out and try to start fresh. After having been there for only three weeks, I received a phone call on the night of June 21, 2011, from my father, telling me that my fifteen-year-old little brother, Evan, had been run over by a four-wheeler in a freak accident and was dead.

Immediately I flew home to North Carolina. We planned a funeral and buried my brother. Dealing with the grief from this heart-wrenching, soul-staggering loss sent me even further down the dark road that I wanted to leave. As I struggled to cope with the bitter and harsh reality that my family had been torn apart and as I tried to face down the darkness of death on my own strength, I failed. I began drinking more and more—five nights a week, if I had to, to try to numb the pain. But it never did. It just made it worse. The loss of my brother, the continued heartache and strife of my failing relationships with everyone in my life, and my drinking soon led to serious depression, a deep sense of daily futility, and the beginning of suicidal thoughts.

In December of 2011, I had come to Washington, DC, for the weekend to visit my sister Danica. I had recently moved up to the Eastern Shore of Maryland. The last straw of hope for something good in my life snapped after a relationship I was desperately holding onto finally ended. This started a three-day drinking binge for me that culminated with waking up Sunday morning, drinking before church, and going to Capitol Hill Baptist for the first time, very much drunk, and very much done with life. I made it through the first three songs, thought to myself, “Screw this,” got up, and walked out. I left, fully intending on finding a way to end my life. It all just seemed like a cruel joke being played on us by God, and I was done laughing.

I left church and wandered over near Union Station. I bought a pack of cigarettes, and sat on a bench on the edge of the sidewalk. I decided I would smoke a few, and then walk out into traffic. I was, in those moments, wholly and completely at the end of myself. As I sat there, I cried to myself in a crazed way, head in my hands, all hope lost. And then my father

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called me. In what was very providential timing, my earthly father's phone call was enough to convince me to continue this life. With a bitter and hollowed heart, I told my dad that for his sake I would stay.

After Danica got out of the service she came to find me. She picked me up and brought me back to the parking lot at the church. Being the loving sister that she is, she asked me if I would talk to the pastor. At this point I did not care, so I said I would talk to him. So Mark Dever came and sat in the car with me. I didn't know who he was. To me he was another Baptist preacher in a business suit, something I have learned to be far from the truth.

We talked for a while, and he asked me some questions about my life. I was, for a change, honest with him, and he very quickly got a good view of the sin-laden despondency that had been my life for the past few years. Mark went to Galatians 5 and read verses 19 through 24:

For the acts of the sinful nature are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery, idolatry and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions and envy, drunkenness, orgies, and the like. I warn you, as I did before, that those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God. But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self control. Against such things there is no law. Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the sinful nature, its passions and desires.

There it was in black and white words on a page. That first list was more or less a checklist of my life. Upon hearing the difference between the lifestyles of the sinful nature and the Spirit, I knew that my life was not one that would inherit the kingdom of God.

So Mark gave me the book *Am I Really a Christian*, and asked me if I would read it and come back that night. I read most of it and came back for service that night. Afterwards I spoke with Mark again, and I remember him saying, “You know, William, there are a lot of good guys here at this church that I think could help you through this.” I remember thinking to myself, “OK, sure, but I am *not* coming to DC.” Well, that shows how I much I knew of how the Lord was working in my life.

I had to go back to the Eastern Shore on Monday night. Danica gave me a ride back, and I remember feeling very lost. I wallowed in my misery for most of the day on Tuesday, but then, through some prompting, I decided the best recourse at this point would be to open my Bible. So I did. It opened to Isaiah 59:1 and this verse will now be forever etched in my memory:

Surely the arm of the Lord is not too short to save, nor His ear too dull to hear. But your iniquities have separated you from your God; your sins have hidden His face from you, so that He will not hear. For your hands are stained with blood, your fingers with guilt. Your lips have spoken falsely, and your tongue mutters wicked things.

While there had been a time of crying out to the Lord during the past six months after

losing Evan, and being crushed by my grief, I was at the same time hiding myself in my sin. My hands were stained with blood. My iniquities had separated me from God. Because sin isn't something the Lord just overlooks. It is an offense against His glory. And when you are buried under the filth of your sin before a holy God, the only prayer that He will hear is “Lord, save me.”

Since I had never read the book of Isaiah before I decided right then and there that I would. So I went back to chapter one and started reading. In a true testimony to Scripture being the living and active word of God, I came across verse after verse that spoke to my heart and soul, rebuking my pride and the lies I had been feasting on, driving me towards repentance, yet at the same time comforting me with the promise of deliverance. Isaiah 1:5, 5:11 reads:

Why should you be beaten anymore? Why do you persist in rebellion? Your whole head is injured, your whole heart afflicted. . . . Woe to those who rise early in the morning to run after their drinks, who stay up late at night till they are inflamed with wine.

Can you imagine how these verses fell on my ears? I had been running to my drinks, and I was clever in my own eyes. Here was my life, being condemned. Then at the end of chapter 30 there is a sweet hope:

In repentance and rest is your salvation, in quietness and trust is your strength, but you would have none of it. . . . Yet the Lord longs to be gracious to you; therefore He will rise up to show you compassion. For the Lord is a God of justice. Blessed are all who wait for Him! People of Zion, who live

“Jesus Christ displays unlimited patience by coming and living the life we could not live, a life free from any sin in perfect obedience, and dying the death we could not die, a death that satisfied the wrath of God.”

in Jerusalem, you will weep no more. How gracious He will be when you cry for help! As soon as He hears, He will answer you.

I paused there for the night. I felt a weird sense of calm—not because I knew what I believed, but because perhaps there was hope. Despite who I was, what I had done, the evil my hands had committed, the people I had hurt, the hurt I had suffered, despite Evan dying, the mess my family seemed to be in, the wreckage of my life, maybe there was hope.

I finished reading the rest of Isaiah the next day. As I finished the book, at the close of chapter 66, there is a vivid description of the end, when all nations stream to the mountain of God, and they go out and look on the bodies of those who had rebelled. I was terrified by the reality of the coming judgment, and right there, by myself, was brought to my knees as a real fear of the Lord entered my heart and I realized, for perhaps the first time, the depths of my offense against a wholly pure and righteous and powerful God. Yet, with Christ, and with belief and true repentance, I could one day stand before the throne of God above and be counted righteous.

I went back inside to email this pastor I had just met to let him know that I thought I had just truly repented for the first time. As I opened my email I had a message from Mark, saying that he was praying for my reading of Scripture that day. I emailed him back, telling him that I had just read Isaiah and it moved me to repentance. He replied and told me that he was about to give his last sermon in a series on Isaiah and that I should come back to church that Sunday.

That began a period of two months of clearly providential circumstances in which the Lord led me to DC, to go to Capitol Hill Baptist. Danica faithfully drove out to the Eastern Shore to pick me up for church week after week. I actually wanted to go. I wanted to hear and learn more about how to live this new life that Christ had purchased for me through His atoning death.

In less than three weeks from that first Sunday, one of the guys at the church offered me a spot in his house. I decided that it seemed, for all I could tell, that the Lord was indeed bringing me to DC. So I moved, joined the church, and was baptized as a believer.

I have been a Christian for about fifteen months now, and I am so very grateful that the Lord does not deal with us as we deserve. Now, instead of the former life I lived, I actually want to read the Bible, I want to pray and talk to my good God, I'm hungry to learn about the life that He has to offer in His Scriptures. I try to die to my sin, and I have been sober for over fourteen months. I seek to serve others, to love the Lord, and to follow Him faithfully. The weight of life cannot be placed on ourselves; we are far too small to bear it. But I have found the one who can bear it, or rather, He found me. 1 Timothy 1:15 says:

Here is a trustworthy saying that deserves full acceptance: Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners—of whom I am the chief. But for that very reason I was shown mercy so that in me, the worst of sinners, Christ Jesus might display His unlimited patience as an example for those who would believe on Him and receive eternal life.

This is a short summary of all who have been saved. In the eyes of our creator, and

our judge, we are all the chief of sinners. A dead heart is a dead heart. There is no mostly dead, or somewhat alive. All have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God. God created us to love and serve Him in perfect obedience, and instead we have rebelled and sought to serve ourselves. The lives we have lived in willful rebellion condemn us all equally, and we are equally deserving of judgment and death.

But Jesus Christ displays unlimited patience by coming and living the life we could not live, a life free from any sin in perfect obedience, and dying the death we could not die, a death that satisfied the wrath of God. Then, proving His power and authority over all things, He rose from the grave on the third day, and now sits at the right hand of God the Father, showing matchless mercy to each person who believes in Him, and giving the promise of eternal life to all who repent and turn from their sins, who stop mocking His cross, pick up their own, and follow Him.

One of my new favorite songs is *All I Have Is Christ*. The second stanza says, “But as I ran my hell-bound race, indifferent to the cost, you looked upon my helpless state, and led me to the cross. And I beheld God’s love displayed, you suffered in my place. You bore the wrath reserved for me. Now all I know is grace.”

Now all I know is grace. Not for anything that I have done—contrary, in fact, to everything that I have done apart from Christ. Yet the arm of the Lord is not too short to save, and He, in His kindness, saved me. 🙏

Originally delivered in chapel at Covenant College in the spring of 2013.

Grow Up, Will You?!

I'VE LONG BEEN FASCINATED BY CHAIM POTOK'S BOOKS *The Chosen* and *My Name is Asher Lev*—both required reading at the Christian high school I attended. Potok's teenage Jewish protagonists—one an academic savant, the other a profoundly gifted young artist—struggle between the entrancing pull to the outside world and the stifling-yet-comforting traditions of the Hasidic communities which formed them. I think I was drawn to these stories because they felt familiar. As a young man, I too was in a sheltering religious community, and I too faced decisions about becoming an adult. If memory serves, I was more drawn to the tradition side of the equation, with its safety, familiarity, and clear boundaries. But the tension was there, and at the heart of Potok's stories, at the heart of my story, was the always-looming question, "Who will I become when I grow up?" And growing up is hard, especially in an ever-changing world where being an adult is never quite what it was for the previous generation.

Now, nearly twenty-five years post-college and terribly mature (just ask around!), I remain interested in the elusive concept of adulthood. As a professor, I sometimes hear students whisper that they want to be "treated like adults." But adulthood is an awfully ill-defined state of social existence. What does it even mean? At present, the primary way we define *adult* derives from the legal conventions of our secular society. Accordingly, adulthood becomes synonymous with little more than the legalized end of youthful restrictions—a kind of unshackling from a community. Adulthood, so conceived, is celebrated by drinking a twenty-one-year-old toast to the "oh-no-you-don'ts" of our childhoods and a farewell to rules. Sadly, what counts as adulthood is often initiated outside the community, disconnected from tradition and care.

"I remain interested in the elusive concept of adulthood."



by Dr. Matthew Vos '90, professor of sociology

But for people of faith, perhaps for all, adulthood should involve a kind of shackling, not a disengagement. French sociologist Emile Durkheim (1858-1917), known for prioritizing the social, explains that the community forms the individual, not the other way around. For Durkheim, human freedom is inseparable from a bond with community. Accordingly, in pursuing adulthood we might examine our posture toward our communities, where

adulthood is more than a chronological achievement. Rather, adults are those who have internalized the traditions of the community, engaged with its institutions, and positioned themselves to

protect its marginal and vulnerable members.

Though I have far to go, I'm most adultlike when bound over to my family, my colleagues at work, and the church where I hold membership. And my enmeshment with these exhilarating, stifling-yet-comforting communities from which I draw breath—though at times more limiting than emancipating—provides me with the strength and vision to continue in those things to which God has called me. I'm an adult. Consider me bound. 🙏

ALUMNI NEWS
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Duplex Truth & the Christian Scholarly Calling

LAST MAY, I SPENT SOME TIME WITH COVENANT STUDENTS IN CHINA. I listened in to their conversation on a Beijing subway as they chuckled about how often they heard “both-and” assertions from one of their professors. It struck me then and it strikes me now that there is a big and important idea represented by this little “both-and” phrase. It’s an idea that makes me thankful for the scholarly work we are pursuing at Covenant College.

One of our core convictions is that our faith, the Christian faith, has implications for every area of our lives, that it matters for everything that we do, that Jesus Christ is preeminent in all things. In particular, in our setting at Covenant, our faith matters for our work as scholars—for the work that our faculty do, in their research and writing and in their teaching and mentoring, and also for the work that our students do.

One way our faith has bearing on our scholarly work is through the shaping of our intellectual habits. The “both-and” phrase students hear from Covenant professors gets at one of those scholarly practices. There are a host of truths taught in Scripture where we might be inclined to want an “either-or” decision, and instead God calls us to embrace a “both-and” coupling, a duplex truth.

What is the crux of the gospel call? Is it to repent of your sins—to confess your failures and to turn from them? Or is it to believe—to place your trust in the Christ who died for you? It is “both-and.” Did Jesus die to save individuals, or to save His church? Jesus died to save both individuals and His church, the universal body that is composed of believers.

Perhaps most significantly for an institution that has Christ at the center of its motto, was Jesus Christ God or man? Our natural inclination would be to regard these as mutually exclusive categories. God is the creator; man is a creature. God is infinite and eternal; man is finite and mortal. How astonishing, and intellectually challenging, is it that Scripture tells us that Jesus Christ is fully God and fully man?

This is the God we serve—the same God who has redeemed us, who is sanctifying us, who promises in Scripture that He is reconciling all things to Himself. And He has called us, as those who bear His image and have been enlivened by His spirit, to see the rich complexities in the world that He has created, not to be satisfied with simplistic or reductionist solutions. He has called us to embrace the “both-and.” For, as He says in Jeremiah 32:27, “Behold, I am the Lord, the God of all flesh. Is anything too hard for me?” 🙏



J. Derek Halvorson '93
President

“One of our core convictions is that our faith, the Christian faith, has implications for every area of our lives, that it matters for everything that we do, that Jesus Christ is preeminent in all things.”



Rachael Luther '15 came to Covenant in 2011 to pursue an art major with a concentration in photography. In the fall of 2013, Rachael took her first painting class from Prof. Jeff Morton. The final assignment for the class tackled narrative painting. In contrast to assignments that focus on technique or art for art's sake, narrative paintings seek to tell a story. In light of the recent passing of classmate David Taaffe '15 earlier that summer, Rachael chose grief as the concept for her painting.

"There is an impact moment of grief, and it's a sharp realization that doesn't just happen once—it happens continually throughout the grieving process," says Rachael. "From the moment you first find out, to the weeks and months and years later, it's the same breaking realization and sharp moment of pain. That feeling is what I wanted to depict through my painting.

"I have experienced such unexpected responses to the painting. My feeble attempt at communicating the sharp pain of grief has touched people. It's very humbling, since it's a medium I don't usually work with. I think that God has allowed the piece to speak to others even though I didn't originally intend that."

Listen to Rachael discuss her painting at covenant.edu/LutherScotsCast.