

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

VIEW

Business *as* Redemptive Work

The Ripples of
Covenant's Community

Generous Giving:
Investments with Impacts

To the Ends
of the Earth

AUTUMN 2024
COVENANT.EDU

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

VIEW

THE MAGAZINE OF COVENANT COLLEGE

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View's purpose is to:

- Encourage alumni, parents, and friends to keep Christ preeminent in all areas of their lives.
- Offer alumni, parents, and friends—our most important ambassadors—stories and information about the college and its students, alumni, faculty, and staff.
- Foster in alumni a sense of pride in Covenant College and connection to the Scots community.

**COVENANT
COLLEGE**

IN ALL THINGS CHRIST PREEMINENT



The incoming class poses together for a group photo during New Scots Orientation.

CovenantNews

Welcome Incoming Class!

Over 300 new Scots joined the campus community in August. This incoming class has the highest number of students in 10 years, which makes this our largest overall enrollment in five years! The college has prayed diligently for an increase in enrollment, and the Lord answered our prayers in abundance.

Psychology Students Recognized and Present Research

Twelve high-achieving psychology majors were inducted into the international honor society in psychology, Psi Chi. These new lifetime members of the Covenant chapter were honored on the basis of academic performance within and beyond their psychology courses. In addition, **Melvin Hamdani '25**, **Samuel**



Weller '26, **Tucker Russell '25**, **Joshua Crisp '24**, **Shannon Wilkie '24**, **Paloma Bavcevic '24**, and **Ralphael Graulich '24** were each recognized with annual awards from Covenant's psychology department, funded by contributions from alumni and friends of the department.

In March, 16 psychology students traveled to Orlando, FL, to attend the annual convention of the Southeastern Psychological Association (SEPA). These students participated in a signature psychology course offered by Covenant

College and led by Dr. Carole Yue. Almost all of these students presented research at the professional meeting.

Covenant College Hosts Gordon H. Clark Symposium

Philosophy students from all over the country gathered to discuss ethics, philosophy of mind, philosophical theology, and more during the Gordon H. Clark Symposium in Philosophy hosted by Covenant College in March. Many of the presenters made the trip to discuss philosophical issues with other followers of Christ. The keynote address was delivered by James Anderson (RTS Charlotte) on an argument for God's existence from the possibility of human knowledge.

Our Town

Covenant's theatre program produced *Our Town* by Thornton Wilder, directed by Professor Camille Hallstrom, in April. The moving performance featured the talent of Covenant's student actors and actresses.



Celebrating Culture in Community

The Intercultural Program hosted Culture Fest, the annual celebration of the diverse variety of cultures represented on campus. Students sang, performed dances, read poems, and shared Scripture in their native tongues. After the show, students and other guests were invited to the Great Hall to enjoy dishes from all over the world.



Scots Showcase Musical Gifts

The Covenant College Chamber Orchestra and the winners of the Concerto Competition performed a concert featuring student violinist **Ellie Shank '27** performing Mozart's "Violin Concerto No. 5," student pianist **Noah Shelden '24** performing the "Ravel Piano Concerto in G Major," and a special performance of "My Jesus, I Love Thee" with soprano Claudia Ramirez-Treiyer and Adjunct Professor Roy Treiyer on piano. The music department's Spring Concert featured soloist Dr. David Tahere, assistant professor of music, student soloist **Olivia Vande Kerkhoff '27**,



onCourse

Department: Biblical and Theological Studies

Faculty: Dr. Clifton Ward, Associate Professor of Church History and Theology

The Course: BIB 360 Christian Spirituality: History, Theology, and Practice

An in-depth exploration of the history, theology, and practices that have shaped Christian spirituality, this course focuses on reading from classics that epitomize the diversity and depth of tradition and considering potential insights and possible challenges such works present. The course also seeks to provide reflection on key theological ideas that should govern, chasten, and encourage Christian growth. Students spend significant time discussing what is being read and reflecting on various practices, such as silence and self-examination.

The Trip: Retreat to a Monastery

As part of the course, students and professor made a retreat of silence and solitude at Saint Meinrad Archabbey in Saint Meinrad, IN. Over a period of three days, the class spent a considerable amount of time in silence and contemplation, offering an opportunity to listen and practice any number of the spiritual exercises discussed in the class. Since it took place at a Benedictine monastery, the retreat also provided the students an opportunity to pray the Psalms alongside the monks of Saint Meinrad. While only one prayer service was required, it was common to see most of the class at each of the hours set aside for prayer—from the 5:00 am Vigils and Lauds to the 5:00 pm Vespers.

Says the Professor:

"Are we supposed to imitate Christ? How should we pray? Are there spiritual practices that might help us along the pilgrimage of the Christian life?" I'm grateful for the opportunity to wrestle with these questions alongside students in the Christian Spirituality class as we seek to discern how the Spirit is refashioning us into the likeness of Christ—and how we might participate in lives of humility and hospitality. I'm very grateful that this course provides me with the opportunity to learn from students as well!" Dr. Clifton Ward

Says the Student:

"I learned in a new way the power of silence and how God can move in it both through the Christian Spirituality course and our retreat to Saint Meinrad Archabbey. These experiences moved me spiritually in a way I had never felt before in a time of my life where I needed it the most. The Lord is so gracious and kind, and I felt a renewal of those truths in my heart in the learning and application of early spiritual practices to my own life." **Lindsey Cuellar '25**

Covenant Chamber Orchestra, Covenant Singers, Covenant Chorale, Chamber Singers, and many others.

Alumni Perform on Campus

Covenant alumni and faculty performed in *See Rock City*, a play written by Arlene Hutton, produced by the Blank Page Theatre Company, and directed by Jonathan Goff, on campus in April. The performance featured alumni **Sammie (Brown) Waller '18**, **Matthew Mindeman '17**, **Amy (Austin) Upton '09**, and **Claire (Larson) Slavovsky '03**.



Bakertree Art and Music Festival

Covenant's annual outdoor art market, the Bakertree Art and Music Festival, provided a welcome break from finals prep at the end of the spring semester. Held on the chapel lawn, this event provides an opportunity for Covenant students and alumni to sell their homemade artisanal goods, including hand-drawn art, prints, pottery, and plants. To round out the fun-filled day, the musical group Zion Goins hosted an evening concert in the chapel.



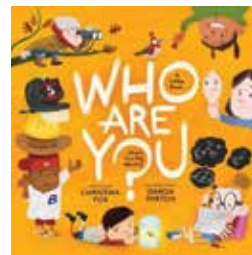
The above students were selected to give their senior testimonies in the spring semester.

Senior Testimonies

Noah Sweatman '24, **Matilda Green '24**, **Casen Bailey '24**, and **Stephanie Smole '24** shared their senior testimonies with the student body during chapel at the end of the spring semester, reflecting on their journeys of spiritual formation throughout their time at Covenant. Recordings of these testimonies can be viewed on Covenant's YouTube channel.

Faculty and Staff Publications and Accomplishments

Christina (Apperson) Fox '96, assistant director of constituent and alumni relations, recently released *Who Are You?*, a children's book



about finding identity in Christ. Her book was written to help children understand who they are and their purpose in the world.

Dr. Robert Rayburn's book, *Fight the Good Fight*, was featured on episode 443

of the *Jocko Podcast*. Retired Navy SEAL and writer, Jocko Willink, talks about leadership and military history on his podcast, and the popular program has 1.89 million subscribers on YouTube.

Dr. Arwen Matos-Wood, assistant professor of marketing, successfully defended her PhD dissertation in April at Kennesaw State University. Entitled "Consumers' Assessment of Retailer Donation Types: Labor, Product, or Money," Dr. Matos-Wood's dissertation examines the corporate philanthropic activities of a national retailer and tests whether specific donation types impact consumer outcomes. Congratulations, Dr. Matos-Wood!

Dr. Kelly Kopic is a co-editor for several volumes in the new authoritative *Works of John Owen*, including 40 volumes when the set is completed in the coming years. The last collection of Owen's works was published in the early 19th century, but this edition is expanded, freshly edited, and includes a full scholarly apparatus for each volume. Kopic's volume, *Sin and Temptation* (Vol 15), was just released.

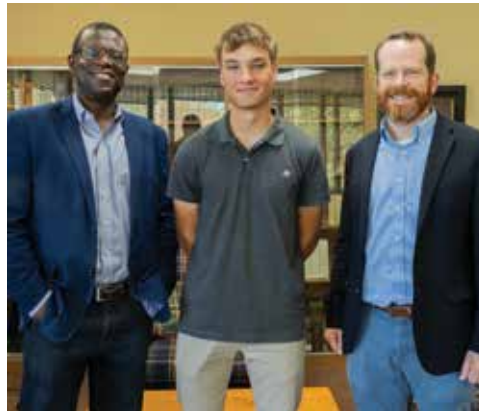


ScotsGive 2024: A Recap

Covenant College's second annual ScotsGive day occurred on May 14-15, 2024. A day dedicated to raising support for the college, ScotsGive is a chance for the entire Covenant community to celebrate the many wonderful things about being a Scot and help secure the college's future. The event provided eight specific giving opportunities and raised over \$270,000 for athletics, the performing arts, scholarships, and more.

New Hires in the Development Office

Development recently hired three new major gift officers. **Chris Cox '18** is a familiar face as he formerly served as the assistant tennis coach at Covenant. He and his wife **Mackenzie (Jones) Cox '18** live in Flintstone, GA. Jeff Hooker is a current Covenant parent and parents council member who most recently served as the senior pastor of Grace Covenant Presbyterian Church in Athens, AL. Jeff and his wife, Nancy, have three children: **John '21**, **Lucas '23**, and **Mary Liles '25**. Lastly, Aaron Spragg previously coached baseball at Covenant and at Harding Academy in Memphis, TN. Aaron and his wife, Amber, have three children and live on Lookout Mountain.



Nicholas Barker Short Fiction Award

Jacob Eldridge '26 won this year's Nicholas Barker Short Fiction Award for his science fiction short story "White Lights." The prize is received annually by a student who submits a thoughtful story rooted in the Christian faith. The intention behind the prize is to inspire Covenant students to share creative works of fiction that are imaginatively informed by a Christian worldview.



Francis Schaeffer Conference on True Spirituality

The Schaeffer Conference on True Spirituality, titled "What If I Don't Experience What I Believe? How to Feel Like Your Faith Is Real," featured a

three-day guest speaker, Dr. Zack Eswine, who uniquely called attention to Dr. Schaeffer's legacy.

A Welcome Addition to the Chapel Department

Edith Dryden joined the chapel team as the assistant director of women's ministry and discipleship. She comes to us after ministering for the last 20 years at L'Abri in Hampshire, England. Edith holds an advanced master's degree from Free University in Amsterdam, where she studied philosophy, and a masters in theology from Covenant Seminary.



Vice President of Operations and Finance Hired

Rob Wynkoop, new vice president for operations and finance, comes to Covenant after 11 years at Purdue University in West Lafayette, IN. Previously, Rob also worked at the Indiana Department of Administration under then-Governor Mitch Daniels, where he served as commissioner. He received his bachelor's degree in business administration from Taylor University and his master's degree in information and communication sciences from Ball State University. Rob lives on Lookout Mountain with his wife, Corrie, and their two children, Robbie (7) and Scottie Ruth (4).



2024 Student body by the numbers

952

Undergraduate and
graduate students

92%

College-wide retention rate
(a record high!)

86%

Students who live on campus

67%

Undergraduate students
from out of state

42

States represented by
undergraduate students

21

Countries represented by
undergraduate students

36%

Undergraduate
student athletes

29%

Undergraduate students
who were homeschooled



Political Science Events and Research

The Honaker Family Public Service Endowment has sponsored several events for the department of history, politics, and international studies. In September, former senior CIA officer, Keith Hansen, visited campus to provide a week-long condensed course on intelligence and a stand-alone talk on the Russia-Ukraine war. Alumna **Morgan (Barney) Calhoun '18** also came to campus to share her research with the department.

Additionally, over the summer, eight students, half of which were freshmen, had the opportunity to participate in a research internship with professor of political science, **Dr. Cale Horne '00**. They studied forecasting political events with Artificial Intelligence, spending three weeks learning about data collection, management, and detailed research design. The students presented their first paper at the Southern Political Science Association 2024 Summer Virtual Meeting in June and will present ongoing research involving several spin-off essays on a panel later in the fall semester at the Georgia Political Science Association 2024 Annual Convention.

International Film Festival

The world languages department, Intercultural Program, and Being Human Conference, with participation from faculty in the history, sociology, and

international studies departments, are collaborating to put on an International Film Festival series throughout the semester. The five films offer a series of stories intended to help viewers identify their neighbors, look at their own cultures, and find ways to be faithful in loving God through love for neighbor in different cultures and vocations. This festival was made possible by a generous matching grant from the Pragda Spanish Film Club.



Dordt University Articulation Agreement

Covenant's sociology program recently partnered with the Master of Social Work program at Dordt University. Graduates with a sociology degree who have passed certain sociology courses at Covenant will receive a waiver at Dordt for equivalent foundational courses towards a Master of Social Work. Dordt's program is completely online and accredited by the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE).

The Southeast Conference on Christianity and Literature

Covenant's English department hosted the Southeast Conference on Christianity and Literature in October, which included panels relating to the theme of "'Growing Younger': Literature and Childlike Faith." Participants and members of the community were invited to attend presentations, including some by Covenant students and professors,

and a workshop, chapel talk, and keynote address by Malcolm Guite, a poet, priest, and Life Fellow of Girton College in Cambridge. Professors and students from 35 different colleges and universities were in attendance.

Covenant's Inaugural Worship Leaders Summit

The inaugural Worship Leader Summit took place from October 17-19, hosting worship leaders from 51 churches across 16 states and Canada. The conference invited current or aspiring music directors and worship leaders to learn, network, and fellowship over the course of two days. The event also involved concerts by various artists, including the Gettys, Matt Papa, and The Choir Room.

New Pickleball Courts

Pickleball courts have been constructed on campus across from the Ashe Activity Center and behind the commuter lot. These courts were made possible by the class gift from the graduating seniors of 2024 and donor contributions.

Athletics New Hires

Tonya McIntosh was recently announced as the new head coach for Women's Basketball. With many years of coaching and administrative experience, her most recent college job was at her alma mater, Louisiana Christian University, where she was ASC Eastern Division Coach of the Year twice.

Dr. Bill Higley was recently announced as the new Softball head coach, coming to Covenant after 20 years as head coach at Clarks Summit University in Pennsylvania, where he was also a professor and the VP for academics. Higley is a five-time Conference Coach of the Year and was inducted into the Clarks Summit Hall of Honor.

Isaac Bouton, new assistant Baseball coach, comes to Covenant after a successful playing career at Columbus State and Kennesaw State. While at Columbus State, he was a D2 All-American.



Athletics Highlights

Men's Tennis won the 2024 CCS Tournament in April for its second consecutive conference championship.

Brock Boehling '27 and **Solomon Crouch '24** were named to the CCS All-Tournament Team while **Ben Onufrock '26** was named Tournament MVP.

Track and Field had three different student-athletes finish in first place at the 2024 CCS Outdoor Championships. On the women's side, **Emma Christensen '25** won the high jump while **Sarah Holler '25** was the conference champion in the pole vault. On the men's team, **Riley Everett '27** earned first place in the shot put event.



In Memoriam

Merlyn Belle Lindley, Covenant's longest living donor, passed away at 100 years of age in September 2024. She was not only

a faithful giver, but a faithful member of Mountain View Presbyterian Church and a devoted wife, mother, and grandmother. She leaves behind a Covenant legacy that includes her son and his wife, **Gary Lindley '72** and **Patricia (Sussman) Lindley '73**, her daughter and her husband, **Joan (Lindley) Stanton '75** and **David Stanton '72**, several grandchildren and their spouses, **Matthew Lindley '97**, **Melissa (Stanton) Long '00**, **Philip Long '99**, **Aaron Stanton '04**, and **Joy (Ray) Stanton '06**, and a great-grandchild, freshman **Teya Long '28**.

Recent Full-Time Hires:

Dr. Philip Bunn
Assistant Professor of Political Science

Byron Carle
Campus Facilities Improvements Manager

Sarah (Withers) Erickson '17
Title IX Coordinator

Mako Gilchrist
Health Services Office Coordinator

Gretchen Herwig
Assistant Professor of Education

Jonah Hitchcock '24
Admissions Counselor

Will Holland '24
Admissions Counselor

Brian R. Jobe
Associate Professor of Art

Maddie Mason
Admissions Events Coordinator

Nicholas Maxwell '24
Building Services Coordinator

Matthew Mindeman '17
Technical Director in Theatre

Rachel (Lester) Staven '02
Library Public Services Coordinator

Noah Sweatman '24
Admissions Counselor

Abby Yorke
Social Media Content Creator



12



13



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CampusCollage



1-2 2024 Move-In Crew

An energetic team made Move-In Day a breeze for new and returning students.

3 Leaving a Mark

Freshmen toured Carter Tower during O-Week, leaving their signatures on the walls alongside names of past and present students.

4-5 Connected on Campus

CovCon gave students the chance to get to know Covenant's clubs and organizations, including the Outdoors Club and Student Senate.

6 Singing in Spring

Musically gifted Scots serenaded the campus community at the annual Spring Concert.

7 Exam Cram

During the *Teen Beach Movie*-themed Exam Cram, students chilled out with popsicles while signing each other's yearbooks.

8-9 Celebrating Culture

At Culture Fest, students shared their cultures through Scripture readings and moving musical and dance performances.

10-11 Spirited Scots

Students showed off their school pride by dressing in blue and white to celebrate the beginning of the semester.

12-13 We Come from the Mountain!

The Men's Soccer team played an electric Homecoming game for an eager crowd of students and alumni, scoring the winning goal during the final five minutes of the game!

14 Engage and Explore

Each summer during Covenant's pre-orientation event, Engage, incoming students bond while whitewater rafting on the Ocoee River.

15 Colorful Competition

Freshmen colorfully concluded New Scots Orientation with a friendly competition during the annual Color War.

16 Puttin' on the Ritz

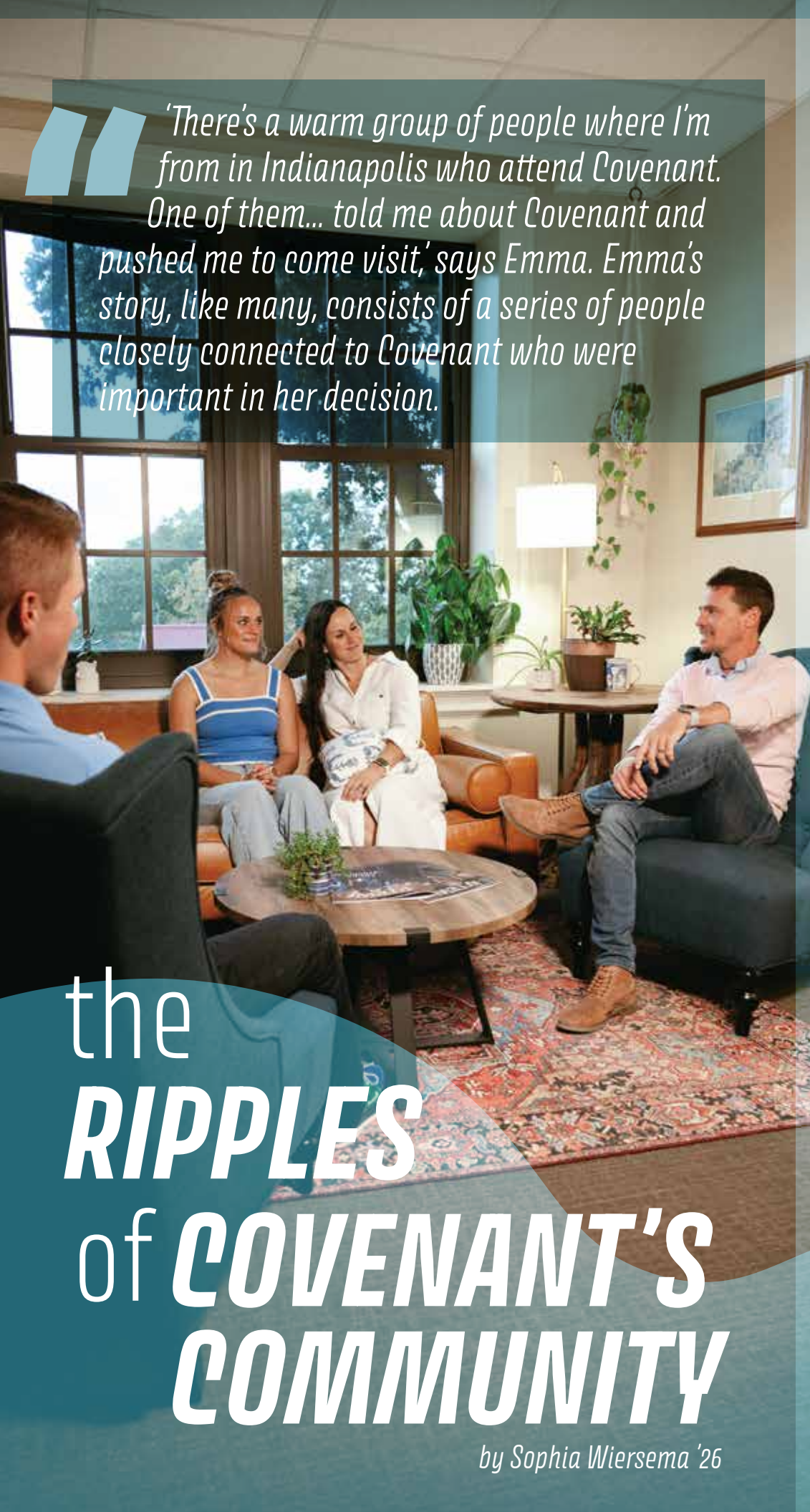
Jazz on the Overlook provided the chance for students to show off their swing dance skills while listening to a lively jazz band.

17 Our Town

Covenant's talented actors and actresses performed in *Our Town*, a touching play about family and community.

18 A Prayerful Tradition

A rainy morning did not stop the campus community from gathering early to praise God together on Day of Prayer, a cherished Covenant tradition.



“There’s a warm group of people where I’m from in Indianapolis who attend Covenant. One of them... told me about Covenant and pushed me to come visit,” says Emma. Emma’s story, like many, consists of a series of people closely connected to Covenant who were important in her decision.

the RIPPLES of COVENANT’S COMMUNITY

by Sophia Wiersema '26

DURING THE FIRST WEEK of the semester, freshmen and returning students meet each other for the first time over meals in the Great Hall. Across dozens of tables and new introductions, a question that comes up often is, “How did you hear about Covenant?” For a college on top of a mountain straddling Georgia and Tennessee that is home to students from all over the world, there’s always an interesting answer. In many answers given, the impact of Covenant’s community—exceeding the boundaries of halls, dorms, classrooms, and campus—becomes obvious.

Tracing the ripple-effect of students’ stories often leads back to people who care deeply about Covenant or have seen its impression on others. Covenant has been so impactful on people that even students like me, who came from over 600 miles away, heard about it through personal connections. Although I knew some Covenant alumni, it was during high school that my youth pastor, Brad Lucht, a graduate of Covenant Theological Seminary, mentioned Covenant College in passing. This small, seemingly inconsequential conversation eventually led to my decision to come to Covenant, and as I followed my story back to where it started, I was amazed to find out that President Brad Voyles was previously the youth pastor for my youth pastor, Brad Lucht. The echoes of Covenant throughout my story of coming to this mountaintop are not an uncommon occurrence in many students’ lives.

CHURCH IMPACT

For many students, their church community is their introduction to Covenant. Emily Voss, a junior from Chicago, first heard about the college through her church, Covenant OPC in Orlando Park, IL, because it supports Covenant. However, this alone wasn’t the deciding factor that led her to apply to Covenant. During Emily’s senior year, her grandparents were the ones who first visited the campus while in Chattanooga for a wedding. It must have been a good visit because, soon after, they texted her about the beautiful campus,

encouraging her to check it out. Emily eventually felt led to attend Covenant due to their encouragement, though she had originally heard about it from her church.

Ethan MacCaughelty, a freshman, was most influenced by his pastor's wife who talked about how much she loved Covenant as an alumni. "I had known about Covenant since middle school when I came to a summer camp, the Edge, for a couple of summers—I actually became a Christian in the chapel on campus," Ethan recalls. "But, I was also influenced by my pastor's wife who only ever told me good things about student life and how much the professors and faculty care about every single student." Ethan's decision to come to Covenant has been impactful because of his prior experience on campus: "I have an attachment to Covenant since I accepted Jesus in the same chapel I get to be in three days a week."

Often, stories and encouragement from familiar faces lead a student to consider Covenant as a serious option, but then a church member says something that seals the deal. For example, senior Seth Bergeron heard about Covenant in 2013 when his older brother was searching for colleges, but to Seth, this was not the biggest part of his final decision to attend Covenant. "More relevant to my decision was finding out that a pastor friend of the family and his wife had graduated from Covenant in the 2000s," Seth explains. This connection led him to apply and then visit over scholarship weekend, during which he "fell in love with Covenant." Seth's decision was not made because of a single person convincing him, but because of a string of connections that eventually led him to his visit, which was the deciding factor.

While Emily heard about Covenant through her church but made her decision due to her grandparents' encouragement, both Seth and Ethan were led to the college through connections in their churches. However, the church is not the only point of community to which Covenant extends.

ALUMNI STORIES

One of the closest forms of community is alumni, especially alumni who are family members. The campus is filled

with second-, third-, and even fourth-generation students, siblings of graduates, and others with family members who have been impacted by Covenant. Stories have been passed down through family and friends, professors have seen two generations in their classrooms, spouses have met during campus events, and deep friendships have formed in residence halls.

Cody Goertemiller, a junior whose mother and siblings attended Covenant, heard stories of their time at school throughout his life. "I think my mom told me stories about her time at Covenant because she wanted me to know how great of a school it is and how much it helped her grow her faith. It definitely impacted my decision to come here because I have heard so many good things, and not just from my mom," Cody says, "but also from my aunts and uncles who came here." Cody grew up enjoying the stories of people close to him who had graduated from Covenant so much so that he chose to come make his own memories.

Though family and alumni can have a big influence, they are often just a window of opportunity for a student. Junior Hannah Oosting is also the child of an alumna. Even though her mom graduated from and loved Covenant, Hannah didn't immediately consider Covenant. However, because her mom is a guidance counselor, Hannah had tagged along to visit campus multiple times, and Covenant ended up making her top two schools. After that, "It was nothing but open doors to Covenant," says Hannah.

Many current students and recent alumni have influenced their peers to consider Covenant through conversation. For Emma Nottingham, a senior, it wasn't a parent, pastor, or grandparent that first led her to Covenant. "There's a warm group of people where I'm from in Indianapolis who attend Covenant. One of them was a girl I grew up with who just graduated. She told me about Covenant and pushed me to come visit," says Emma. Her visit then led her to sit in on a class with Dr. Lance Wescher who, according to Emma, was one of the driving forces in helping her transfer to Covenant. Emma's story, like many, also consists of a series of people closely connected to Covenant who were important in her decision.

THE EDUCATOR'S VOICE

Outside the church and alumni, an influential role in many students' lives is an educator who they look respect or admire. Sandy (Gillen) Snuggs is a guidance counselor at Evangel Christian School in Alabaster, Alabama, and a 1983 Covenant grad who has played a role in students' lives—one student being Ethan MacCaughelty. "As students consider their post-school plans, it is my privilege as a high school guidance counselor to talk to them about Covenant," says Sandy. "When discussing college options, many students focus on cost and scholarship potential," she explains, "But when I ask about their vision for their lives and hopes for college, it often opens the doors to tell them about Covenant." Sandy feels as though Covenant's values are important for students to consider.

As these stories are traced back to family members, pastors, alumni, and educators—like Sandy Snuggs—there is a trend that Covenant extends to other areas of their lives. Sandy Snuggs' husband, two of her children, a daughter-in-law, and one of her closest friends are all also graduates of Covenant, so the college is important to all of her family. "I continue to talk about Covenant because it is the instrument God used to show me that I'm made in His image and His world is a glorious, exciting adventure where He is revealed everywhere," she says. "Covenant continues to be true to its mission, welcoming new students and alumni and fostering growth, authenticity, love, and joy."

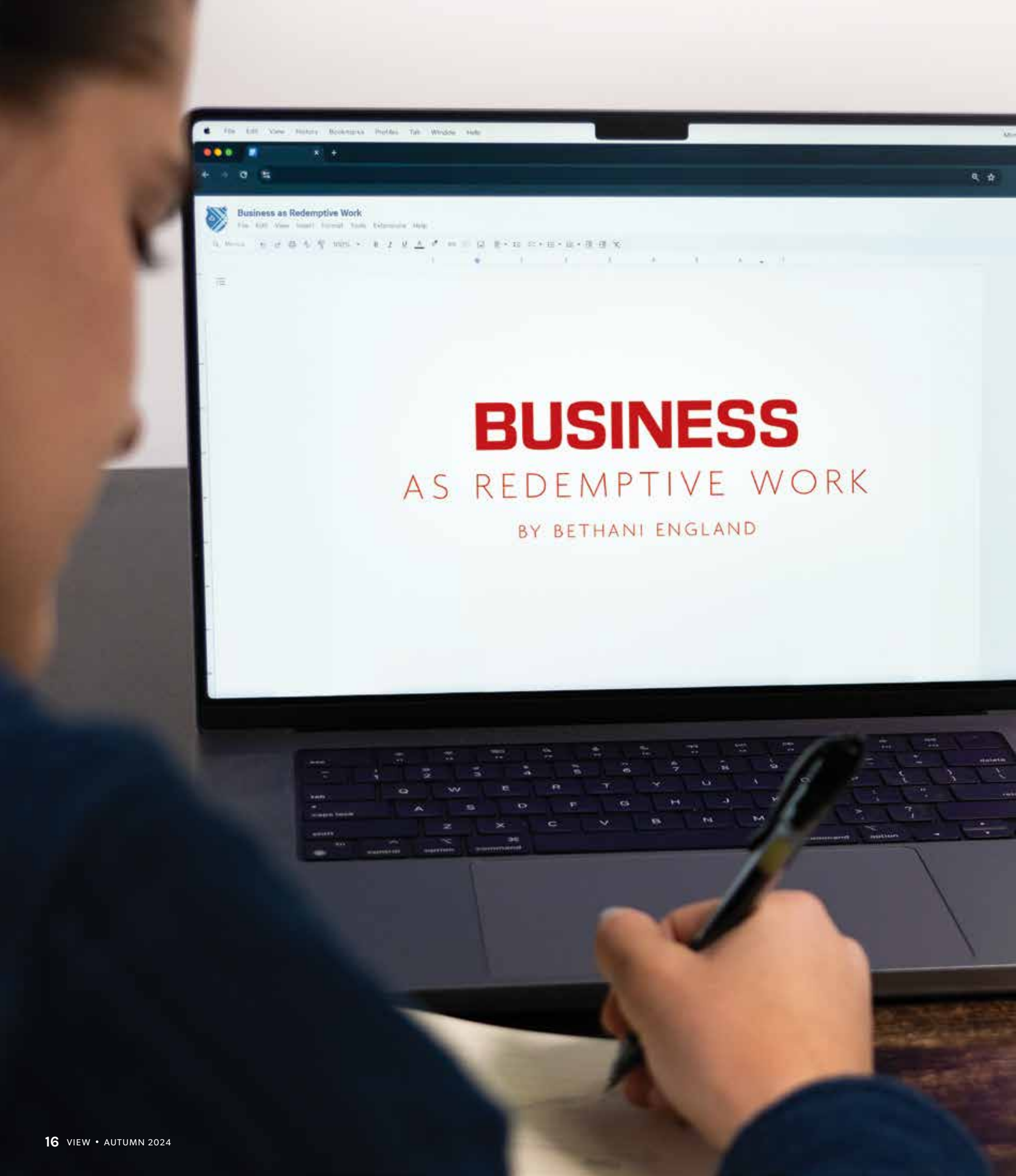
Throughout students' stories, their ties to Covenant speak to an important element of the college decision. Just as the community is a huge part of student life on campus, a community outside of campus also plays a role in students joining this campus community. As people talk about what they love, their excitement has an effect, so in this way, the Covenant community spreads like ripples out from the mountain. These are the stories that we hear in the Great Hall. Maybe next year there will be new stories exchanged about students who came because someone read this piece and decided to tell a friend, family member, student, or church member about this wonderful college on the mountain. 🙌

Do you know someone who you think would thrive at Covenant? Fill out our Refer a Scot form at covenant.edu/referascot.





"From the rising of the sun to its setting, the name of the Lord is to be praised." Psalm 113:3 (ESV) Sunrises and sunsets are a unique aspect of living on the mountain. From the dorm windows that overlook the mountains, such as those in Carter Tower, the views often become spots of solace. Rather than taking these views for granted, Covenant students can often be found studying while enjoying the sunset or even waking up early with the sunrise to spend quiet time in God's Word. These stunning bookends to the day stand as reminders of God's faithfulness through His creation.



BUSINESS

AS REDEEMPTIVE WORK

BY BETHANI ENGLAND



IN 1977, after only 13 years of existence on Lookout Mountain, Covenant College conferred its first business degree. Today, housing two out of the top six majors chosen by Covenant students, the business department serves 138 business majors and 48 sport management majors of the 943 undergraduate students at Covenant College this academic year. In fact, this fall, the department welcomed 62 incoming students of the class of 2028 as majors—which is around 20% of the 306 students.

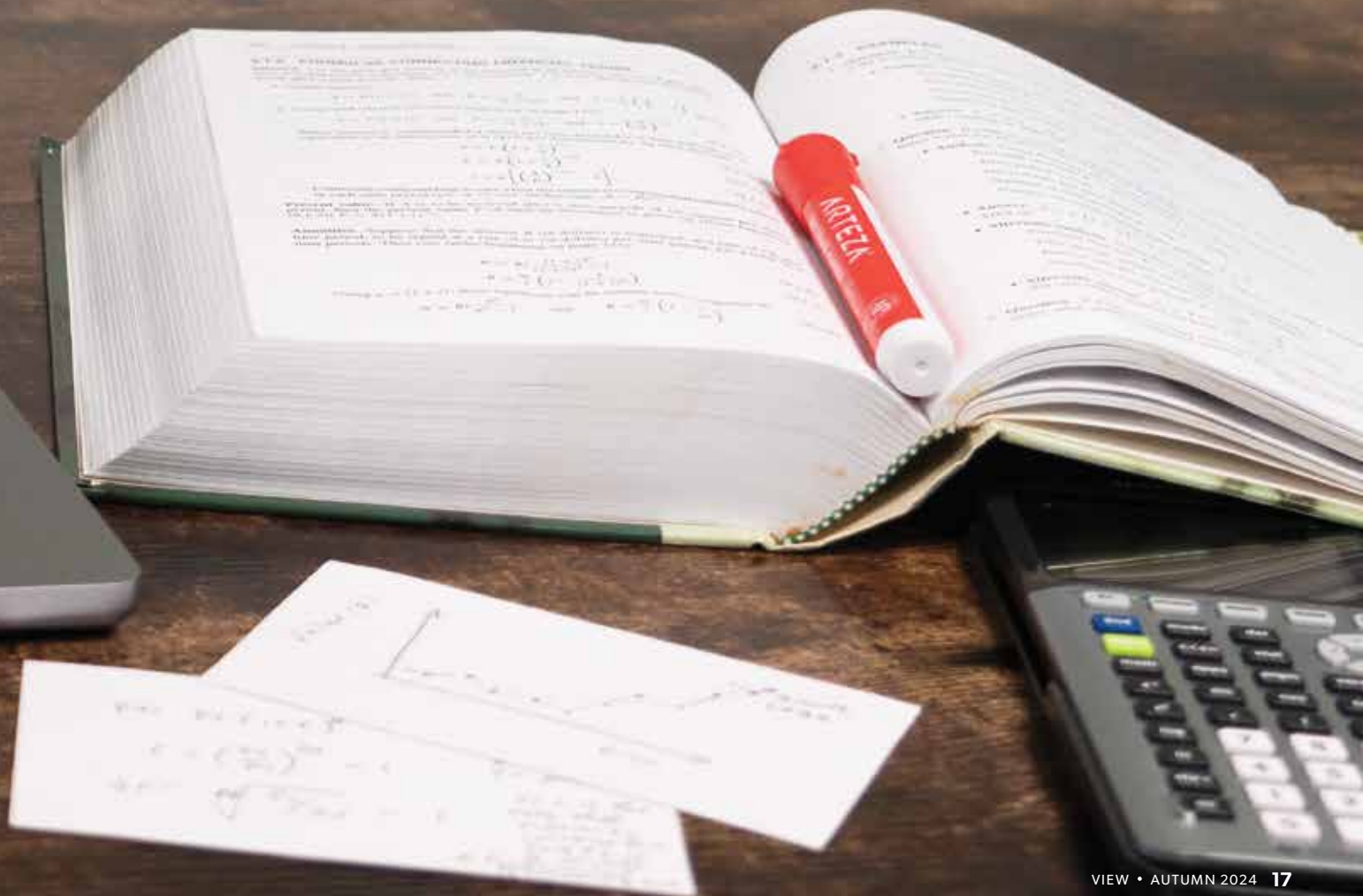
There are five full-time faculty in the business department, three adjunct professors, as well as occasional visiting professors. Dr. Scott Quatro, the department chair and professor of management, says, “It is an impressive team, really, since all of our professors have industry experience, qualifying academic credentials, and solid biblical faith that influence and guide their work here.”

Although it is exciting to crunch the numbers and see the positive statistics in our business department, “It’s really not about the numbers at Covenant,” says Dr. Paul Babin, assistant professor of business. “God has blessed us with a healthy incoming class, for which we are truly grateful.” What makes the business department distinctive are its mission and values, which are taught by accomplished Christian faculty who take their jobs seriously and work to nurture, challenge, and teach students business concepts, preparing them to enter their callings.

COURSES OF STUDY WITH A BIBLICAL PERSPECTIVE

The business department offers five major courses of study: business, business accounting, business finance, business marketing, and sport management. Two minors

“What makes the business department distinctive are its mission and values, which are taught by accomplished Christian faculty who take their jobs seriously and work to nurture, challenge, and teach students business concepts, preparing them to enter their callings.”



“I wanted to convey to my students that their work would be a spiritual matter, as Christians are needed to be salt and light in the marketplace.”

PROF. CHRIS DODSON, PROFESSOR EMERITUS OF BUSINESS

are also available. Business majors take courses in economics, mathematics, and statistics, and sport management majors additionally take courses in sociology as part of their core requirements. Majors and non-business majors can also pursue a course of study in entrepreneurship. The sport management major differs from the business major and concentrations in that it focuses solely on business in the sports industry, such as ticket sales, sponsorship sales, and revenue generation.

Students are challenged by their course material, but often, a discussion from a class reading or a specific project requires them to wrestle with hard ideas. “In Principles of Marketing we have a whole chapter on ethical theories and corporate social responsibility,” explains Dr. Arwen Matos-Wood, assistant professor of marketing. “I teach my students to be above reproach in everything they say and do, because as Christians in business, their testimony could be damaged by one slightly unethical decision they make.” In his Principles of Finance course, Dr. Babin gives his students a project which he describes as one of his favorite assignments. Students are required to solicit three biblical financial principles from Christians in their lives and then write an essay and present at least one principle with the class. Even in introductory courses like Principles of Marketing

or Principles of Finance, professors take every opportunity to enable deep discussion about business from a biblical perspective.

Chris Dodson, professor emeritus of business who served as faculty from 1982 to 2020, confirms that biblical principles and lessons of integrity were always taught in his classroom as part

of students’ rigorous education. He says, “I wanted to convey to my students that their work would be a spiritual matter, as Christians are needed to be salt and light in the marketplace.” In his class on investing, Chris recalls discussing how one cannot serve two masters: God and riches. “This warning was especially important in a class that was designed



DAVID CAINES '02
CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER
KENCO

My Covenant classes prepared me to think logically and critically, the environment taught me how to take initiative and lead, and the personal relationships with teachers and administrators guided my steps. President Frank Brock invested in me personally and explained to me, a sophomore, that accounting is the ‘language of business,’ and because of that I concentrated my electives in accounting. Professor Dodson brought an amazing balance of ‘no-nonsense hard-knocks’ mixed with humor and a demand for excellence without exception. This foundation has been a huge blessing in my career as I began managing a P&L [Profit and Loss Statement] within a few years of graduation and continue that responsibility to this day.

720 Chapter 9 Financial Analysis

9.1.2 FORMULAE CONNECTING FINANCIAL TERMS

Interest: Let the principal amount P be invested at an interest rate of $i\%$ per time period (expressed as a decimal), for n time periods. Let A be the amount that this is worth after n time periods. Then

- Simple interest:

$$A = P(1 + ni) \quad \text{and} \quad P = \frac{A}{(1 + ni)} \quad \text{and} \quad i = \frac{1}{n} \left(\frac{A}{P} - 1 \right)$$

to teach the principles of acquiring and managing wealth,” he states, “but we are to serve God with our possessions, as the scripture says to instruct the rich to be generous and ready to share.”

Covenant stands out from the several academic institutions I have attended because of the college’s deep commitment to its students. My professors knew my name and personified an unwavering faithfulness to the gospel. The rigor of the courses combined with the quality of the instructors prepared me to excel in both my professional and academic careers. My accounting courses went a long way in helping me pass the CPA exam—more so than my graduate classes. After receiving my master’s from the University of Virginia, I worked as an auditor at Ernst & Young before going back to school for economics. Because of Covenant, I felt the conviction to do for others what my professors had done for me.

BRUNO KÖMEL '17

PHD STUDENT

UNIVERSITY OF PITTSBURGH



KAITLYN PURDY '17

**ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR
OF COMPLIANCE**

DUKE UNIVERSITY ATHLETICS

While at Covenant, the mentorship I received gave me a love for college athletics and affirmed my calling to pursue a career within the sports world. After graduating, I enrolled in a sports management graduate program and was later given an opportunity to work at Duke University as the compliance assistant. I have since served as the compliance assistant, compliance coordinator, and assistant director of compliance, to finally the associate director of compliance. Covenant prepared me not only for my career but to be a source of the gospel in a secular work setting.

“I felt a strong pull to help provide individuals with a biblical foundation who could then go out—or be sent out—into the sports world to make a positive impact for Christ.”

PROF. MICHAELA KOURMOULIS, ASSISTANT PROFESSOR OF SPORT MANAGEMENT

ACCOMPLISHED AND EXPERIENCED CHRISTIAN FACULTY

The faculty in the department approach their disciplines with a biblical perspective in mind, yet they also bring their education and field experience to their classrooms, making them well-equipped to teach in their areas of expertise.

Nearly all of the full time professors have either completed PhDs or are in the process of doing so. They are

also publishing in journals, such as *The Global Journal of Management and Business Research* and *Journal of Biblical Integration in Business*, as well as serving on boards and presenting research at conferences. However, it is their backgrounds in industry that lend a real-world edge to the material they teach.

“Because of my experience in the sports industry, when I saw the opportunity to work at Covenant, I felt a strong pull to help provide individuals with a biblical foundation who could then go out—or be sent out—into the sports world to make a positive impact for Christ,” says Michaela Kourmoulis. Assistant professor of sport management, Professor Kourmoulis

brings a breadth of experience to the classroom, including working with the Tampa

9.1.3 EXAMPLES

1. Question: If \$100 is invested at 5% per year, compounded for 10 years, what is the resulting amount?

• Analysis: Using Equation (9.1.2), we identify
Principal invested, $P = 100$

9.1 Financial Formulae 721

Bay Buccaneers, Jacksonville Jaguars, and Talladega Superspeedway.

Assistant professor of accounting, Mark Slavovsky, is a CPA with a focus in taxation who worked as a tax manager and senior tax accountant for nearly 20 years before joining on as faculty at Covenant. Dr. Quatro, even after coming to Covenant, remained an active consultant to industry with current and past clients including Chattem/Sanofi, Southern Champion Tray, Signal Energy, Johnson & Johnson, and M&M Industries.

Dr. Matos-Wood's experience in brand management and product management of over 30 years provides her with many stories to tell her students. In one story, Dr. Matos-Wood describes a shoot for a sleep aid commercial that involved a

Business is a very practical major. I loved how my Covenant professors incorporated their professional experiences from the business realm into the classroom. It made the concepts easier to understand and more desirable to learn when I knew that they were actually used in the business world. Dr. Quatro and Professor Matos-Wood impacted my thinking greatly. Taking Business Ethics with Quatro constantly challenged me to consider what it looked like to be a Christian in the realm of business. Both of these professors shaped my thinking by providing real-life applications of topics in business while incorporating our higher calling in them.



**CAMERON
CORTMAN '22**

**DIRECTOR OF DIGITAL
MARKETING**

GREAT AMERICAN MEDIA

Covenant's education was rigorous and prepared me for that next professional step. During a May term one summer, I took an investments class and we went to New York City for three weeks. We were in class from around eight to noon each day, and then we had afternoon field trips to banks, investment shops, and financial institutions. It was both fun and educational to have that exposure. I feel so fortunate to have my faith in my career and to have learned about the creation mandate at Covenant. We, image-bearers of God, should bring order to chaos, and the financial markets are no different.

WILL DYER '11

PORTFOLIO MANAGER, UNUM

"I thank God daily for my calling to Covenant College... I prayed for this for years and now see God's hand in each step."

DR. PAUL BABIN, ASSISTANT PROFESSOR OF BUSINESS

married couple's nighttime routine. After half a day of work, she realized the actors had not been wearing the wedding bands. While the agency partner was eager to move forward, Dr. Matos-Wood pushed for a reshoot, standing by her principles and the principles of the company. "I share my experiences to convey to my students that you can be a Christian in marketing," she says.

Dr. Babin, the department's most recent full-time hire, has 40 years of industry experience. His professional background includes working in product optimization, innovation, and sustainability. "I thank God daily for my calling to Covenant College," he says. "I prayed for this for years and now see God's hand in each step." With their many skill sets and wisdom they have acquired as Christians

in their fields, our faculty make it their personal calling to equip the next generation with relevant, quantitative skills.

EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING AND CAREER PREPARATION

Throughout each semester, their experiences in industry lead the business department professors to encourage—and often require—their students to participate in experiential learning opportunities as well as hear from other professionals in the field to complement their classroom curriculum. This may look like presenting at conferences, participating in research, touring local facilities, listening to guest speakers, interning with relevant companies, or working sporting events.

Last year, the department took a group of students to the Kingdom Advisor Conference, where they heard from Ron Blue, Alistair Begg, John Cortines, and other leaders who spoke about integrating faith into their financial planning practices. Business majors also participate in the Chartered Financial Analyst (CFA) research challenge, where student teams evaluate a single stock, as well as the TVA investment challenge, where student teams manage a portfolio of \$500,000 of asset retirement trust funds. Through these opportunities, students experience real-life portfolio management and trading with real money.

I received my MBA and masters of sport administration at Ohio University and then took a full-time position with the Hall of Fame Village before transitioning into my current role. Covenant helped prepare me by cultivating opportunities for me to grow inside and outside the classroom. Professors crafted challenging course materials, but also equipped me with connections and tools to be successful. I really appreciated the faculty and staff who truly cared about my personal, professional, and spiritual growth. Covenant helped me understand that my role in the sports industry is an incredible platform to serve clients, coworkers, and fans with whom I would not typically cross paths or share the gospel.

COLBY PEPPER '20
BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT MANAGER
SPORTING KANSAS CITY

Covenant was a great place for me, an international student from Kazakhstan. Faculty like Professor Dodson and Dr. Fikkert were exceptional and personally invested in me. Professor Dodson always helped students identify career paths, connecting us to other graduates. He even made the call to Chattanooga's Ernst & Young office, encouraging them to consider hiring me. It is unusual for EY, a global accounting firm, to have people in tax without a graduate degree. However, I was successful due to Covenant's liberal arts foundation where I learned to process information, think critically, and write well. It helped me confidently navigate the ever-changing global tax landscape and adapt to emerging technologies. I started with EY right out of Covenant, made partner in 2016, and now work with multinational clients coordinating broader teams across the globe. I also have the chance to shape our strategy and market activities around tax and finance managed services.

Sport management majors not only get to hear from guest speakers, most of whom are Christians, from world-renowned companies and teams like Under Armour, Chicago Bears, Miami Dolphins, and NASCAR, but they also have the opportunity to work at some of the largest sporting events in the country, such as the Daytona 500, the NCAA Men's Final Four, the CFP National Championship, and even the Super Bowl. At these, students get hands-on experience working



**ANYA (RUSSINOVA)
PARKHURST '04**
AMERICAS TAX AND
FINANCE OPERATE LEADER
ERNST & YOUNG



ticket sales, fan fests, 5k runs, sponsor-related activities, and other events leading up to the game. Throughout a given year, sport management students have the opportunity to volunteer at around 64 unique, local sporting events—this number increases to over 100 including all University of Tennessee at Chattanooga sporting events, which students have the opportunity to work—as well as two week-long trips, which require an interview with the department. “These are great opportunities for them to get their hands in all the different elements that surround sports,” says Professor Kourmoulis. “I also try to coordinate tours or opportunities to network with professionals in those areas when we’re not working.”

Business majors are also highly encouraged to pursue relevant hands-on experience through internships during their undergrad. Business students have completed internships at well-known institutions like Unum, Ernst & Young, Merrill Lynch, and Disney. Apart from these opportunities, Covenant has a business club, sport management association, and economics club where students can remain involved in their fields and continue learning and challenging themselves outside of the classroom. Covenant professors go out of their way to help students make connections with local and national organizations for possible internships and career opportunities.



**EMILY (LODERHOSE)
BANTOLA '06**
INTERNAL AUDIT DIRECTOR
FOR GLOBAL FINANCE
CRU INTERNATIONAL

After graduating, I did two years of campus ministry with Mission to the World in East Asia, although I had thought I would go into business. I began to do some accounting for Cru, who we partnered with, and soon became a finance manager for East Asia, Hong Kong, and Macau. Later, I returned to the US and became the internal audit director for Cru’s global finance division. I have 200 plus different entities that fall under my scope and about 40 auditors around the globe. I really loved all of my classes at Covenant, but the focus on having a holistic worldview was very impactful. I learned about how Christ influences not just your relationship with Him, but everything, including worldview.



Through my interactions with faculty and students at Covenant, I was taught how to think, which prepared me for my work in a Fortune 500 company, an advertising agency, the athletic department of a major university, and a CPA firm, as well as pursuing my PhD. Business isn’t just about making money, although there is nothing wrong with making money since it’s the love of money and not money itself that is the root of all kinds of evil. But accounting is very orderly, and ethics are extremely important. Understanding this helps me view my role in terms of how I can help people manage the resources God has given them.

STEVE DAVENPORT '92
ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR OF ACCOUNTING
UNIVERSITY OF TENNESSEE
AT CHATTANOOGA

MISSION-MINDEDNESS IN BUSINESS

The department’s mission statement is to prepare students to fulfill the cultural mandate and the great commandment through business, which is to love God and love neighbor. Dr. Quatro expounds, saying, “We celebrate God’s good design in business as the major means by which the world is prospered in a holistic way—not just financially, but including financially.”

As part of its theology for the Christian study of business, the department holds to the mandate in Genesis 1:28 as God’s creation of an economy through which



daily needs are met. “Profit-seeking businesses are fundamentally a part of what makes that economy optimally run,” states Dr. Quatro. People all over the world receive their daily bread needs through business. In that sense, business is a major means by which God showers goodness on the world.

This biblical view of profit is taught across the department. For example, in Dr. Babin’s Cost Accounting class, students use the cost-volume-profit equation to model companies that produce a good product, serve mankind, and sell for profit. “When we break even and make a profit, great things happen!” Dr. Babin says. “Profits matter! Past breakeven, you have a business that can sustainably provide jobs for employees to feed their families.”

Often, the idea of profit-seeking tends to make Christians uncomfortable. “But God’s good design includes profit!” Dr. Quatro exclaims, “Not in the sense of a ‘someone wins, someone loses’ or an ‘I get as much out of the other party in the transaction as possible’ way, but profit in a mutually beneficial way.” The focus

in the business department is that when a business profits, everybody who is touched by that business benefits. And if the owner happens to be a Christian, benevolence can flow out of that profit. “If God’s people in profitable businesses hold what’s given them with open hands and let God work through those resources, then amen, right?” declares Dr. Quatro.

In Matthew 25, Jesus sits on the Mount of Olives, encouraging the disciples to anticipate the Kingdom of Heaven. In this teaching, He tells the parable of the talents, advising his disciples to be wise—yet bold—with what they have been entrusted. “The parable of the talents applies to all humans, but squarely to God’s people who are called to work in business,” says Dr. Quatro. “A talent is a big sum of money, like a capital investment, that God has entrusted to us. The steward who is told ‘away from me’ is complacent, fearful, and risk averse.” With this in mind, the business program guides students in making sure they are confidently serving God with all that they have, being agents of prosperity, stewardship, and renewal in the business sphere of God’s world.

“God’s good design includes profit! Not in the sense of a ‘someone wins, someone loses’ or an ‘I get as much out of the other party in the transaction as possible’ way, but profit in a mutually beneficial way.”

DR. SCOTT QUATRO

PROFESSOR OF MANAGEMENT
& DEPARTMENT CHAIR

“The Bible has a lot to say about finance, our heart position about money and riches, and practical advice about risk, stewardship, and commerce,” says Dr. Babin, “From what I’ve seen, our students are here for the right reason—to share in our mission.” As a part of God’s creation, business is essential as it runs our economy and connects the world through trade, causing the global market to thrive. The Covenant business department prepares students to make the world more accessible and prosperous by loving God and neighbor through business—which is a remarkable calling. 🙏

It was at Covenant that I realized how much I loved the financial and commodity markets. Managing market risk is often overlooked on farms, but it can be the difference between a livelihood and bankruptcy. I was well-prepared by Covenant to enter a career in the cutthroat field of finance. I learned to ask questions, think critically, communicate well, and use my gifts to serve God and His kingdom. This has been invaluable in my career. When I help farmers adopt a sustainable business plan, I’m contributing to the flourishing of those farmers and their families and the millions of people who eat the food they produce.



**SARINA (DEN DULK)
SHARP '08**

FINANCIAL RISK MANAGER,
AG BUSINESS SOLUTIONS
DAIRY ECONOMIC ANALYST,
DAILY DAIRY REPORT

GENEROUS GIVING:

Investments with Impact

by Bethani England

EVERY GIFT—whether large or small—has a story behind it. When it comes to scholarships at Covenant College, generous people with generous hearts from all over the country and all different backgrounds have decided to invest in Covenant students and have seen compelling returns on these investments. Sometimes, these donors did not attend Covenant or know anyone who did, but upon hearing about the college, they were intrigued by Covenant's mission and vision for Christ-centered education. By using their resources to support students through scholarships, these donors provide a way for more students to access this type of education. It is an investment in the future of Christ's kingdom and Church. Many of the scholarships that bless our students are a direct result of the Lord taking a generous investment and doing abundantly more with it than imaginable.

The Way Ahead Scholarship

Ted Aven and his late wife, Frances, have a long history of giving to orphanages. "When I was young, our church would visit an orphanage every year," recounts Ted. "I ended up becoming friends with some of the kids there." Ted's father was in the cattle business, and since orphanages often raised cattle at the time, Ted's family decided to donate a calf to the orphanage. This was when Ted's heart for giving began to grow.

Ted soon met Frances, and after getting married, they too entered the cattle business, moving from Alabama to California and later to Texas, where Ted resides today. Along the way, they met Taylor McGowan, who directed the Palmer Home for Children in Columbus, Mississippi. "When we heard about the Palmer Home, we were broke. We didn't have any money," Ted explains. "But, we had a heart for orphanages, and we had some bulls." When they told Taylor they could give him a bull, he joyfully accepted the donation. "From then on, we gave what we could to the Palmer Home—and still do," Ted states.

Covenant College has a way of stepping into people's lives and leaving a memorable impression. Though neither Ted nor Frances attended Covenant, Ted admired the "castle on the mountain," now Carter Hall, well before he knew Covenant existed. "The castle has been in my mind since 1945 when I was four years old," he says, chuckling. Driving back and forth from Virginia to Alabama to see family, Ted describes how he and his little sister would see who could spot the castle first, saying, "We'd shout 'There it is! There it is!' when we saw it."

Fast forward to the early 1990s, Ted and Frances met Dr. Frank Brock, Covenant College's fourth president, at their church, where he talked about how Covenant provided a college education from a biblical perspective taught by Christian professors. "This resonated with me," says Ted. "I dropped out of college twice, but when I heard about Covenant, I thought, 'If I'd had an opportunity like that, I probably would've stuck with it!'"

The Avens began giving Covenant what little they could, and as they gave, the Lord began to bless their business. "We never had children, so we decided to help children—specifically those without parents or financial stability—receive an education that gives them the tools to go out and live a Christian life in a fallen world," Ted explains.

This is how The Way Ahead Scholarship, named by Frances after her husband whose initials are T.W.A., began—from a young calf given to an orphanage in Alabama and a bull donated to the Palmer Home in Mississippi, to now a robust scholarship that provides financially disadvantaged high schoolers a chance to attend a Christian college. "We had no idea 30-something years ago that we would be able to do what we're doing today, but the Lord has done a mighty work," exclaims Ted.

Covenant Church of Naples Scholarship

The Covenant Church of Naples Scholarship based out of Naples, Florida, was established by an anonymous family that valued education and had also



benefited from the generosity of others. “We had been bemoaning the state of our society and how often young people walk away from their faith after leaving home and attending college,” explain the donors.

Like The Way Ahead Scholarship, a church visit by a college president was one of the factors that influenced the establishment of this scholarship. As Dr. Derek Halvorson, sixth president of Covenant College, explained the college’s mission to the congregation, the donors realized that a Christ-centered college education was just the thing they had been looking to support. They began to prayerfully consider starting a scholarship through their church in order to encourage the high schoolers, many of whom they knew and loved dearly, to attend Covenant and soon felt the Lord’s affirmation.

“The cultural pressures are strong in early adult years, especially at a secular college,” the family writes. “We believe Covenant College offers the opportunity to grow [one’s] faith even deeper while expanding life skills and vocational training.” This anonymous family’s prayer for students who receive their scholarship is that the Lord would mold them into servant leaders in whatever path He leads them. Already, they have been amazed at the Lord’s goodness that many students from their church have chosen to attend Covenant and benefitted from their giving. “It is God who deserves the glory, not us,” they state. “It was His idea in the first place, and He gave us the means to fund it.”

The Montana Scholarship

Ray and Ladeine Thompson heard about Covenant College through good friend, graduate, and college board member, Joel Belz. Ray was on the board of WORLD publications, called *God’s World* at the time, and Joel suggested that Ray and his wife visit the Christian college on the mountain. The Thompsons were already devoted advocates of Christian education as they were supporters of Stillwater Christian School in Kalispell, Montana.

After visiting Covenant and meeting former president Dr. Frank Brock, Ray and Ladeine were captivated. “I found it to be just a wonderful and very distinctive, unique college,” Ray recalls. “There were so many things I liked, and the location was wonderful.” As students graduated from Stillwater Christian School and began their college searches, the Thompsons recognized an opportunity to help them continue receiving a solid Christian education in college. “I so appreciated and respected the whole environment of the college,” Ray recalls. “Covenant was the real thing, and we felt it was a great place for God to develop younger people to do His work.”

One of the high schoolers the Thompsons knew was Jane Berry, now Jane Turner, a 2003 graduate of Covenant. Jane received financial support from the Thompsons to attend Covenant, where she met her husband, Josh Turner. It was through Covenant that she connected with 1995 graduate Carlee (Bevis) Hilger, who founded Hilger Higher Learning, a Christian homeschool program in

Chattanooga. After working at Hilger some during college, Jane decided to return to Kalispell, where she and her husband founded their own Christian homeschool program called Heritage Academy.

As Ray and Ladeine Thompson look back on the impact their scholarship has had, they are not only grateful for the Christ-centered education the students have received, but they are humbled by how their gifts have been multiplied due to the Lord’s work in one graduate’s life. “The Heritage Academy has very much been a remarkable return on investment,” describes Ray. “It has had a huge influence on this community and is a reflection of what we’re admonished to do as we live the Christian life.”

This idea of a worthwhile return on investment is not uncommon for those who faithfully give to Covenant College. When it comes to investing in education, the impact is often apparent in the short term and lasts for generations, influencing more than just the graduates but also their families, churches, and communities. The Giver of good gifts provides for our needs, blesses our generosity, and does miraculously more with our gifts when we come to Him with open hands and open hearts. Through these good gifts, the Lord has used these friends of the college to ensure Covenant is a place for students to receive a quality, biblically based education for decades to come. 🙌



The Redeemer of My Cynicism

THE BEGINNING of my college career was not actually spent at Covenant. With high hopes after high school, I began college after participating in a gap year program; however, a series of concussions from unrelated experiences and a lack of time to heal from each one compounded into a major mental health decline towards suicidal ideation. I spent a year at home to heal, and it was then that I was encouraged to apply to Covenant for a fresh start. Though I visited Covenant in high school, it had seemed much too small, and I initially thought it might not be a good fit. But this time around, for some reason I had an immediate peace about Covenant and quickly made the decision to enroll.

I came to Covenant expectant for what was to come but ended orientation week feeling confused and frustrated. I did not understand what my purpose was here and felt lonely and out of place. It felt like a bubble of students who said they loved Jesus but hadn't experienced the practical life struggles of grappling through faith to account for an indwelling desperation for Jesus. I craved authenticity, yet I was pretending in my own life that everything was okay when in reality I was struggling through my slow healing process. I desired revival in my life but felt like all I could see around me was a focus on intellectual and theological understandings rather than heart formation.

My cynicism remained, and loneliness seemed to follow me. It began to seem as if transferring here was a terrible decision. The mental health issues I dealt with a year prior began to come back, and, as a transfer student, I felt like I was in the midst of processing something that other first-year students could not relate to because they had just come from high school. I felt far from God, yet I kept clinging to the promise of His presence in Matthew 28:20. I knew God was with me, but I felt I had nothing to give and no energy to invest in others.

One day, I was on the Bluff trail talking with a friend on the phone who said, "If you aren't thriving there, why are you staying?" He encouraged me to transfer somewhere else or start full-time work. Meanwhile, my parents were encouraging me to push through and just get through the semester. They saw that Covenant's united theology with regular gospel-centered teachings created a sweet community and desired for me to experience this. The testimonies of older students gave me hope that my understanding of this college was just a partial

image of the community at Covenant.

That first year, I was surrounded by girls in my hall who were going through similar mental battles that I had gone through the year before—I just didn't know it. The roommate of the girl across the hall from me abruptly left, so my roommates and I invited her to move in with us. We all became fast friends, and suddenly our room was a revolving door to many of our hallmates. We all experienced how vulnerability created a tight bond, and slowly, the Lord showed me how to be a vessel for His redemptive work. Although I wanted to go straight into ministry, knowing there was much work to do in this broken world, I realized I needed to develop here at Covenant.

The Lord began to give me contentment in my heart through the protectiveness that this campus provided. Covenant proved itself to be a safe place to mess up, question theology, analyze faith, and rebuild that faith with a stronger foundation. I was welcomed by all my professors into their offices as they committed to faithfully pray over and for me. The friendships on my hall were joyful and silly and provided a sweet sisterhood. Deep, lasting friendships took time to form, which was often tedious, but with Bible studies, prayer and praise, and other hall events, I began to create natural bonds. I was also intentionally sought out by upperclassmen who were faithful in mentoring me and caring for me. I am richer because of these friendships and hope to keep many of these sweet friends for the rest of my life.

I look back on these two years and understand why the Lord has protected me from myself. I was selfish in my understanding of growth and not mature enough to see the work of the Lord in the mundane moments of life. Instead of leading me to jump to the next thing, like what I wanted to do, the Lord brought me to Covenant to wrestle through my faith in this greenhouse environment. He has given me time to dwell in His Word and to live it out, however imperfectly, through campus life. He has redeemed my very view of redemption and has met me here, at Covenant, in ways I do not know how to describe or comprehend. Time and time again, I was brought back to Isaiah 54:5 where God is proclaimed as the Defender, Redeemer, and Ruler to go before, behind, and beside us. He has redeemed me and is sanctifying me through my time here at Covenant, and for that I rejoice! 🙏

By Julia
Michael '25



“Inconsequential” Decisions in Light of Our Reconciler

IN JUNE 1942, US Navy Commander Wade McClusky led a formation of dive bombers searching for the Japanese fleet in the Pacific Ocean near Midway Island. Months earlier, the Japanese had devised a complex plan designed to devastate the US fleet based at Pearl Harbor, but American codebreakers had intercepted that plan and set in motion a counterattack that would catch the Japanese completely by surprise. McClusky’s small force was part of that counter, but dependent on eyesight—and not radar—to find the enemy fleet. Running low on fuel, McClusky made one last turn as part of his search before calling off the hunt and moments later spotted the wake of enemy vessels. He ordered his flight to attack, catching the aircraft carriers at the worst possible moment when aircraft were being refueled. What ensued was complete chaos, rendering three of their four carriers useless. Yes, in a five-minute span, the tide of the entire war in the Pacific pivoted dramatically.

Why do I share this story, and what does it have to do with teaching history at Covenant? I share it as an example of how the course of human history often pivots on a very narrow fulcrum. To be sure, McClusky and his men were tiny parts of mammoth forces locked in global conflict, but the seemingly random decision that day to extend his search with one last turn resulted in the decimation of the enemy fleet. Thankfully, most of us do not live where life or death is an immediate result of our choices, but that does not diminish the significance of those day-to-day decisions. True, the course of world events does not hinge on which toothpaste I brush with or if I choose to blare my car horn at the person in front of me at the red light who’s busy texting when the light turns green. Compared to Wade McClusky, all of those things seem inconsequential, and yet the Lord in His Providence has chosen to work through the billions of decisions made by humans every day to carry out His purposes in some mysterious way. Allow me to be a little more personal.

In September 1991, I was in the Air Force and stationed at a base in Phoenix. While there, I joined a Bible study with other Air Force 20-somethings and was invited to a cookout with a couple I met. They thought I would like to meet their friend who was visiting—a young woman named Paula—and so plans were made for me to stop by for a casual hangout. Suffice it to say, my life would never be the same after that day because I fell head-over-heels in love



By Dr. John Plating, Director of the Center for Calling & Career and Adjunct Professor of History

with Paula pretty quickly. We were engaged in the next six months and married less than three months after that. The Lord blessed us with a family, and after countless military moves and a 25-year Air Force career, we arrived on Lookout Mountain a decade ago where we enjoy nearby in-town children and our two grandsons who live right around the corner. All that to say—I cannot imagine a life other than the one I’ve had with Paula for the last three-plus decades. And when I think of all the seemingly random factors that converged to the point where she and I would meet, that alone is mind-boggling to consider.

What’s the point of all of this? One could look at this from the vantage point of a mere series of random events that turned out luckily for one over another. One could look at the history of my marriage and exclaim, “Well, that’s a happy story.” But the amazing thing is that the Lord in His wisdom, love, and sovereignty rules over all of these events and shapes the course of history in the trillions of choices made by us as His image-bearers. Specifically, He calls us, His people, to pray that His kingdom would come and that His will would be done on earth as it is in heaven. And while we do so earnestly, we do so with the expectation that that day will come. It is that framework that informs the way I teach history and direct the Center for Calling & Career at Covenant. I hope to guide students to understand that their journey to discovering the Lord’s will for their lives involves trusting His sovereignty in the midst of making hundreds of these seemingly inconsequential decisions. With this perspective, we can work to simultaneously honor the choices and actions of God’s image-bearers while also marveling at His astounding sovereignty as He is right now working through those human choices to reconcile all things to Himself. Thanks be to God. 🙏

to know fully & be fully known

ONE OF THE WORDS that I have heard quite a bit since coming to Covenant over a year ago is “known.” In my job, I speak with and listen to students, alumni, faculty, and staff describe their personal Covenant experiences, and what I often hear is that the Covenant community feels deeply known by their brothers and sisters in Christ here on the mountain.

I realized fairly quickly that this word was, in many ways, spot on. So many of my interactions with the community consisted of me asking interview questions, getting to know the college, and understanding Covenant’s story in order to be able to tell it well in my writing for various audiences. However, what I encountered was that I wasn’t the only one asking questions. I found early on that the Covenant community is very curious in the best way possible. They want to know me. When I conducted interviews for different articles, the interviewee would inevitably ask *me* questions about *my* life: my family, my past, my ambitions, my future, my personal writing, my walk with the Lord. It became a trend, and as I got to know Covenant, the Covenant people worked to genuinely get to know me.

One of my favorite scripture passages that includes this word “known” is towards the end of 1 Corinthians 13 and is a passage I’ve been dwelling on this past year. Verse 9 begins, “For we know in part...” (ESV). Through seasons of change and growth, I have painfully felt my limited view of what I could “know” about the trajectory of my life—it has been very clear that I only know in part. The beginning of verse 12 echoes a similar sentiment but includes memorable imagery, “Now, we see in a mirror dimly.” The sweet communion with God and His people that we experience on earth is merely a clouded reflection of what is to come. Looking back, I can see the Lord’s hand at work in my life, but I also see a life blurred by the dimness of this fallen world. There have been moments where I have not felt known or when the way ahead was skewed and I’ve stumbled forward as if in a poorly lit house of misshapen mirrors. This imperfect world, this partial view of God’s kingdom on earth, is contorted by sin—yet I still see hope.

Verse 10 says it first: “But when the perfect comes, the partial will pass away.” Oh, the perfect!—the perfect kingdom of God,

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the perfect, uninhibited view of our perfect Savior—our blessed Redeemer, Jesus. Verse 12, again, gives us this hope after that first glimpse of our desperation: “Now we see in a mirror dimly,” continues with, “but then, face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I have been fully known.” What a miracle to not only anticipate being fully in the know, but to be now fully known by our Christ! The use of the word “known” within the Covenant community, though comforting, shudders and burns out like an old lightbulb in comparison to the brilliant light of being known by our Creator in this very moment.

When I assume—or wistfully hope—that my life here on this earth should be in full focus, I am surprised when my view is limited or vision blurred. Yet in reality, this life is what we should expect to be partial and dim, though we can strive to see Christ and know like Christ every day. I recall the refrain from Covenant’s hymn: “Since mine eyes were fixed on Jesus, I’ve lost sight of all beside,” or a line from another of my favorite hymns: “Turn your eyes upon Jesus, look full in His wonderful face, and the things of earth will grow strangely dim in the light of His glory and grace.” So as I am able, I rejoice in knowing partially and remind myself that being known by Jesus, the Author and Perfecter of my faith, gives me true clarity and renewed sight as I look forward to seeing Him face to face. 🙏

To the Ends of the Earth

AS I LOOK BACK on my first year as president, one of the real highlights has been the opportunity to meet and visit with alumni—quite literally around the world—and hear how the Lord is using them in His kingdom. This past summer, Kelli and I had the opportunity to visit with several alumni in Indonesia whose stories serve as a wonderful encapsulation of the kingdom-building work Covenant graduates have been doing for decades in all sectors of society. Space limitations permit only three brief stories:

Jane Tjahjono '15 was our first student from Indonesia and went on to Harvard to pursue a master's degree after graduating from Covenant. She shared about the adversity she faced as a Christian at Harvard and how it was a daily challenge to hold firm to her Christian commitments in the face of trials. Jane now serves on the Deloitte team tasked with designing the new capital city of Indonesia—a smart city located in a rainforest on the island of Borneo.

A graduate of the pre-engineering dual-degree program with Georgia Tech, Gideon Yuwono '18 now has a thriving taco restaurant with pop-up shops and a brisk to-go business. On top of this, he has a growing wholesale business online as he sells his chips, spices, and other ingredients. I asked Gideon what inspired the creation of his taco business. He shared that his work study supervisor at Covenant had taken him out to a Mexican restaurant to thank Gideon for his work that semester. Gideon loved the flavors, and when he could not find those flavors upon returning to Jakarta, he set about “engineering” the flavor profile until he was satisfied. The results speak for themselves.

We had the pleasure of dining with Gideon, Jane, and Kristie Jaya '17, enjoying these delicious tacos while we heard their stories. I asked these graduates how Covenant had prepared them for the work they are doing now. Two consistent themes emerged: 1) Covenant helped them to view all their callings through the lens of Scripture, and this gave them the courage to pursue and take gospel risks. 2) Covenant had helped them to root their identity firmly in Jesus Christ so that they could stand firm in the face of adversity and doubt.

Finally, on a trip into the interior of Papua, I had the opportunity to travel for a couple days with a recent alumnus of our MEd program. Beta Laoli '21 has served as the school head in two village schools on the island of Papua and is now the head of a new school in Jakarta, built expressly for Papuan children whose families want them to come to the city for secondary education. I had the privilege of visiting some of these schools in the mountains of Papua with Beta and saw firsthand how beloved he was by students, teachers, and parents as a great educator, leader, and friend. I also witnessed the power of Christian education at work in a tribal people with deep animistic roots. One day, I observed a young child who had learned the gospel from Christian teachers through a Christian curriculum asking questions of a village elder about Jesus. It was incredible to see the vision coming to fruition as the younger bore witness to the older with the truths of who Christ is and what He has done.

In reflecting on my time with these graduates, I couldn't help but remember Jeremiah's call to seek the welfare of the places where the Lord sends us. As these graduates build cities, build businesses, and build schools, I'm reminded of the unique opportunities Covenant College graduates have to pursue the welfare of the communities in which they reside as they courageously live out their callings to boldly proclaim and participate in Christ's work of making all things new. 🌱



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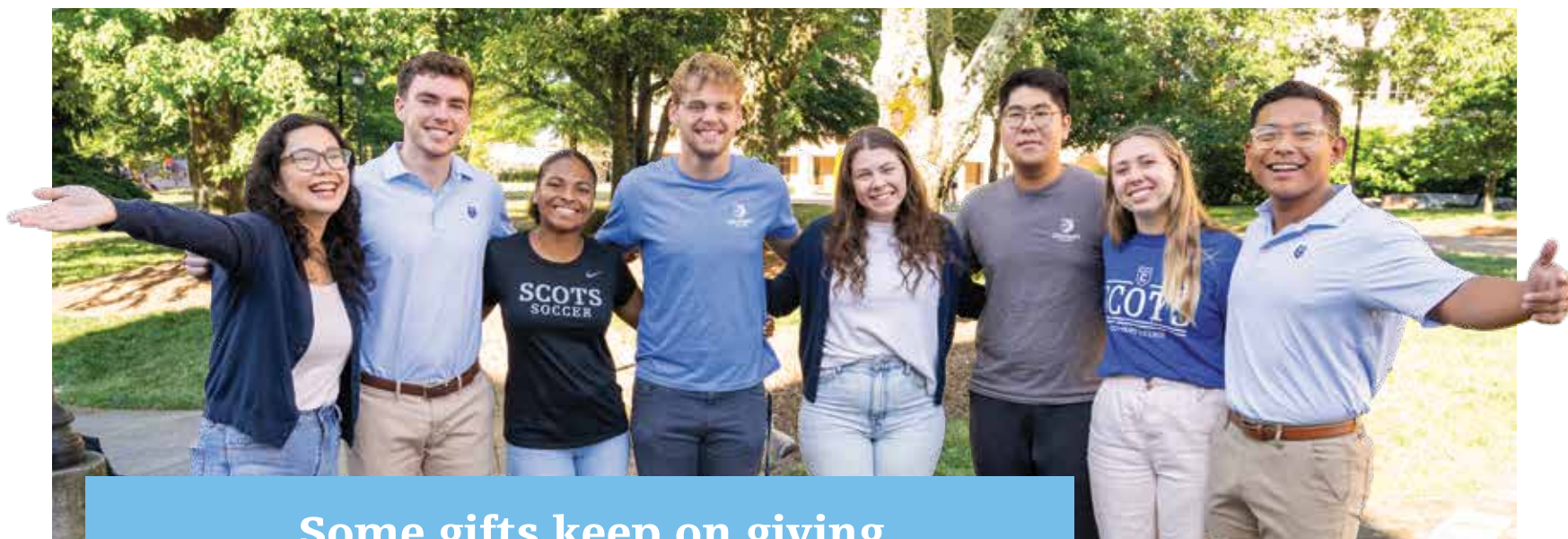


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