My wife Kathleen and I are blessed to be completing our fourth year at Covenant. We are blessed as well as Covenant parents – as paying customers – with two of our sons attending the College.

Covenant College exists as a crucial part of God’s generational transfer system, as through every dimension of academic and campus life we seek to pass along the praise of God to the next generation: one generation teaching the next to think, see, feel, and act in light of who Jesus Christ is, in every dimension of life and culture, and passing along the wonder of his grace in all aspects of his creation.

This is how God has primarily purposed to work in his creation, through the intergenerational transfer of his covenant truth and promises. What a blessed calling: telling his truth and promises, as Psalm 22 puts it, to a people yet unborn.

This year marks Covenant’s 51st, and we are experiencing the blessing of growing student enrollment, expanding academic programs, an outstanding faculty of godly and gifted scholar-teachers, and growing connections with churches, schools, and communities around the nation and the world. In order to serve and support these expanding numbers and programs, we are also, in God’s providence, developing the campus, with several new buildings and renovations on the schedule.

But the real story of Covenant College is told in the stories of those who have received their education here and then put that Christ-centered education to work in various ways. The real story – the one that matters in Kingdom perspective – is the outputs, not the inputs: literally thousands of graduates who are certainly evangelistically and discipleship oriented, who love and serve the church, but who have also become, by God’s grace, prepared to think through everything, and then live everywhere, in light of Jesus Christ, who is preeminent in all things.

This is the real vision for Covenant College. Covenant is intentionally focused on engaging purposefully the intellectual frameworks and worldviews that dominate the academic landscape and, as we surely know, shape the culture and its future.

As we seek to raise up the next generation in the framework of God’s grace, we need aggressively to reengage the war of ideas, knowing and trusting that all truth really is God’s truth, and that thoughtful, careful scholars can make inroads into the secular scholarly conversations that are going on all around us.

What a joyful burden to join with generation upon generation of our faithful forefathers who engaged the battle of ideas, and equipped their children and their children’s children to understand everything – every academic discipline, every professional vocation, every aspect of home life and community life, every dimension of government, art, business, leisure, education, science – in light of the gospel of Jesus Christ and his rightful rule over his creation.
By God’s grace, that’s what we aim to do at Covenant College. That is our distinctive mission in the PCA, and we are blessed to have this calling. Further, Covenant is distinct in the higher education marketplace as the only unapologetically biblically faithful undergraduate college in the Reformed historical stream in the country, from the board of trustees whom you elect on down.

By the way, I believe that only the Reformed theological framework, rooted in the inerrant Scriptures and centered on the biblical gospel, can provide the intellectual muscle to sustain and advance in the long run the kind of aggressive engagement I am calling for. This means that we are uniquely positioned and therefore distinctively obligated to pursue this gospel-driven intellectual engagement with zeal and determination.

This is largely why I think Covenant is growing: the growing recognition among families that we must equip the next generation aggressively to declare the wondrous sufficiency of God’s gospel and truth in every aspect of intellectual, cultural, and vocational life.

What does this look like?

It looks like Covenant College alumni such as --

Joel Belz: founder of WORLD magazine, a much-read weekly resource enabling Christians to see the beauty and sufficiency of God’s truth in understanding events and trends all around us.

Jim Grauley: senior executive in Bank of America’s huge economic development enterprise, demonstrating in concrete ways the redemptive power of the gospel in rebuilding shattered places.

Rev. George Robertson: senior pastor, First Presbyterian Church, Augusta, Georgia, called to equip his congregation with this world-viewish, comprehensive understanding of God’s truth.

Dr. Priscilla Strom: surgeon, medical missionary, now in private practice, and also engaged in the messy world of bio-ethics, bringing the light of biblical truth to bear on issues of life and death, genetic research, and the very meaning of human life.

Dr. Jim Drexler: former high school principal, now chairman of the Education Department at Covenant, helping our students grasp the challenges of the world of education – its purpose and values, its pitfalls, its challenges – and to respond with a thoroughly biblical approach in principle and practice.

John Sweet: master baker of artisan breads in Chattanooga, building a business, mirroring the creating, sustaining work of the Creator.
Don Petcher, PhD physicist, and Tim Morris, PhD biologist: both Covenant College alumni and current faculty, who have just published the book *Science and Grace*, which in effect answers the question, “What does Jesus have to do with the theory and practice of science after all?”

Rev. Andrew Conrad: church planting pastor, in God’s providence establishing another point of light for the gospel in the midst of a needy world.

March Bell: attorney with the U.S. Department of Justice, working internationally to address the horrendous realities of human trafficking, demonstrating in real-life ways the redemptive promise of the Kingdom of God.

Michael Cromartie: President Bush appointee as chairman of the United States Commission on International Religious Freedom, attacking religious persecution around the world and thereby supporting the ministry of the gospel and the ministry of the church.

It is a great privilege for me to serve at Covenant, where we desire to populate homes, churches, and every vocational area with thoughtful, well-prepared, Christ-centered, and gospel-focused graduates, to take every thought captive in obedience to Christ, and to declare and demonstrate his preeminence in all things.

Niel Nielson
President