

CEDARVILLE

MAGAZINE



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PRESIDENT'S PERSPECTIVE









In these pages, you will find an edition of *Cedarville Magazine* that is close to my heart. I have personally learned so much from adoption about the priceless nature of salvation, that I cannot wait for you to read these stories and apply their truths to your own life. When we started working on this issue, I was amazed by just how many in the Cedarville family had adopted or been adopted. I learned about many alumni passionate for adoption, even to the point of founding organizations that encourage and support adoption. I am overwhelmed by the James 1:27 love expressed by the Cedarville family.

My favorite story is still being written through the life of my daughter and the students involved in our Foster Care Scholarship program. Every week, one student in particular comes by to say “Hello” as I sit on the stage after chapel. He brings a smile to my face and joy to my heart with every fist bump, handshake, or hug. He is but one of our Foster Care Scholarship recipients. Cedarville’s administration started this scholarship after looking at the Ohio Foster Care Registry and seeing so many 15-, 16-, and 17-year-olds listed. We wondered what opportunities for higher education these students would have and sought to provide the opportunity to study at Cedarville University by providing a full-tuition scholarship and support for one person who had timed out of the foster care system. In this way, our institution lives out the James 1:27 mandate. I believe the reason stories like these affect me so much is that it reminds me of my own spiritual adoption.

Each of us, at one point helpless as slaves to our sin, had to be adopted by a loving Father at great cost. Through no effort or merit of our own, those who have received the free gift of salvation have been adopted into the family of God — no longer slaves, but sons and heirs of the King. So I pray that as you read these stories you will be encouraged to appreciate your own spiritual adoption and that you will be inspired either to consider adoption or to prayerfully and financially support others seeking to adopt. Ultimately, adoption is at the heart of the Gospel.

Steadfast in Christ,

Thomas White, President

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Cedarville University is a Christ-centered learning community equipping students for lifelong leadership and service through an education marked by excellence and grounded in biblical truth.

Our Vision

Cedarville University will be an exemplary Christian institution known for commitment to academic excellence, submission to biblical authority, passion for the Great Commission, and intentional discipleship that transforms lives for godly service, vocational distinction, and cultural engagement.

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On the cover: Greg and Tricia (Walker) Clark '96 and their adopted sons, Braxton and Camden. Photo by Ashtyn Brooke Photo

HE PREDESTINED us for ADOPTION

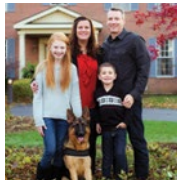
to himself as **SONS** through Jesus Christ, according
to the purpose of **HIS WILL.**

Ephesians 1:5

FEATURES

2 | ADOPTION: THE HEART OF THE GOSPEL

THOMAS WHITE For Christians, adoption is one response to God's command to care for the orphan (James 1:27). But adoption is also at the heart of the Gospel: Our Father welcomes us into His family, beloved children and full heirs because of the sacrifice of Jesus Christ.



8 | GOING THE EXTRA SMILE

HANK FORTENER '03 Inspired by his family's commitment to love children in need of a home, Cedarville alumnus Fortener is an advocate for adoption on a global scale. He is co-founder of World Adoption Day, held each year on November 9. This event has spurred the adoption of thousands of children around the world.



12 | PERFECT FIT

BRIAN BURNS '95 Cedarville's Director of Campus Experience is known for his energy, drive, and commitment to students. But here's something else: Burns is adopted. He tells the story of his adoptive parents in this beautiful tribute.



15 | MISSION TO MOMS

CLEM BOYD God gave Jazmin (Gmuer) Taylor '97 a heart for orphans at a very early age. After she graduated from Cedarville with a bachelor's degree in social work, she found herself drawn to the adoption field. Her kindness and compassion connect birth moms with loving parents for their babies.



18 | CHOSEN AND GRAFTED TOGETHER

DONNA (PAYNE) VANLIERE '89 The best-selling and award-winning author of the *Christmas Shoes* is also mom to two daughters from China and a son from Guatemala. God is the master artist who wove together their beautiful and complete international family.



22 | BEAUTIFUL AND UNIQUE

ALYSSA SPEICHER '17 Aaron '99 and Laurie (Jelinek) Cook '99 are parents to a wonderfully blended family, which has grown through domestic adoption. Along their path, they have received encouragement and wisdom, which they now pass on to others.



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ADOPTION: THE HEART OF THE GOSPEL

BY THOMAS WHITE

Whether good or bad, extreme emotions were the order of the day as we pulled into the lawyer's office. Birth parents, for all the right reasons, had determined to put their daughter up for adoption, but we wondered if they would change their minds. The birth parents walked into one room while the receptionist led us into another. In yet a third room, representatives from the law office carried an 8-pound, five-week-old, blue-eyed, strawberry blonde baby girl. She had no relationship to us on that early, Florida morning and a different last name.

Two hours felt like an eternity as the hands of time moved in slow motion within the round-faced clock — one reverberating tick after another. Eventually, the large wooden door opened. Time, and my heart with it, stood still. Confident our heavenly Father knew our destiny, but supremely aware that we did not, nerves and anxiety filled the room like a dense fog. Finally, we learned all was going well and began to sign document after document before the paralegal disappeared behind a closed door. More waiting ensued. I nervously paced back and forth, heightening the emotion in the room. When the door opened again, all I could see was that same baby girl being brought to us.

I'll never forget looking into her bright blue eyes. Not being an experienced father, I applied the only knowledge I had to the situation. Coach always told me to cover the tip of the ball, tuck it in tight, and don't fumble. This little life was about the same size, so I did just what coach said. My palm covered the back of her head and, of course, the tip "of the ball"; I tucked her in tight to my side, and wasn't dare about to fumble.

The White Family (L-R): Rachel, 13; their German shepherd, Duchess; Joy; Samuel, 6; and Thomas

As I looked into this little girl's eyes, I learned a divine lesson on unconditional love. How could I love someone so much this quickly? I would certainly die for and probably kill for this precious baby that I just met. A legal transaction had made me this girl's father. She had a new last name, which was pretty cool since she would now live at the "White" house.

A surreal feeling came over me as they said we were free to leave the office, but not the state, until proper legal agreements between Florida and Texas could be arranged. Still holding my daughter, I reached for our bag, and my mom asked me if I wanted her to carry Rachel. Not appropriately understanding the desires of a first-time "Nana," I remember distinctly replying with words that have never been truer, "She will never be as safe as she is right now in Daddy's arms." Now that she's a teenager, there are days when I wish we could go back to those "safe" moments.

Beyond unconditional love, this life journey taught me practical lessons about the theology of adoption. A legal transaction granted me a forever daughter, just as the legal declaration of justification made by the just Judge of the

The adoption metaphor also extends to the entire nation of Israel, as Moses received instruction to tell Pharaoh, "Thus says the LORD, Israel is my firstborn son" (Ex. 4:22). God used Moses, himself rescued through adoption, to speak of God adopting Israel as His firstborn son. You remember the narrative: Pharaoh commanded the death of all children under 2 years old and Jochebed hid Moses in the bulrushes. Pharaoh's daughter had mercy on this "orphaned" child and eventually reared him in the house of Pharaoh. Moses, saved through adoption, eventually led Israel, the nation saved through adoption, out of slavery in Egypt.

The story of Moses and Jesus contain similarities. Both lived when leaders commanded children age 2 and under be killed. Moses came out of Egypt, whereas Jesus fled to and came out of Egypt. Pharaoh's daughter "adopted" Moses. Joseph adopted Jesus. God used Moses to rescue the Israelites from slavery in Egypt, while Jesus rescued mankind from slavery in sin. The analogy breaks down as Moses, a man of the law, could only look into the "Promised Land," while Joshua (Yeshua in Hebrew, the Old Testament name for Jesus) was the greater Moses and completed the journey across the Jordan. The law only reveals our sinfulness, whereas Jesus brings us safe passage to our heavenly promised land by grace through faith.

Turning to the New Testament, we see four passages addressing the theological importance of adoption: Galatians 4:4-7, Romans 8:14-23, Ephesians 1:3-6, and Romans 9:1-4, and two others that mention orphans.

These passages could have easily retained the well-established language of the new birth. Instead, the Spirit-inspired Scriptures reveal imagery of adoption, describing in greater detail the fullness of the doctrine of salvation. From these passages, we may draw four conclusions about adoption.

FIRST, ADOPTION MAKES SONS OUT OF SLAVES.

From Adam's choice to follow Eve in eating the forbidden fruit rather than follow God, mankind has been born enslaved to sin. Our corrupt nature leads every human to fall short of the glory of God (Rom. 3:23). Galatians 4 indicates that God sent forth His Son to redeem those in bondage by the law to adoption as sons. Jesus substituted Himself for mankind,

As part of salvation, believers receive the Spirit, which confirms newly adopted sons as children of God.

universe declared me a child of my heavenly Father, forever adopted into the family of God. Neither an orphan nor a slave to my sin, but a son and an heir free to serve my Redeemer. The closer I looked, the more I learned about the cord of adoption woven through the biblical tapestry.

The Old Testament displays God's passion for adoption through his personhood as Father, the adoption of the nation of Israel as His firstborn son (Ex. 4:22), and adoption stories like Moses (Ex. 2:10), Genubath (1 Kings 11:20), and Esther (Est. 2:7).

The Old Testament reveals God as Father and contains about 40 references to the "fatherless." These references include the command to treat the fatherless correctly (Ex. 22:22) and to "bring justice to the fatherless" (Isa. 1:17). Deuteronomy 24:17-21 compares the plight of the fatherless to that of Israel while in Egyptian bondage.

making sufficient atonement for our sins. Those repenting of their sins and confessing Jesus as Savior experience adoption as sons. Galatians 4:7 speaks to this change of realities as Paul writes, “So you are no longer a slave, but a son.” And in Romans 8:15, the connection is made between the Holy Spirit and the work of adoption as it states, “For you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received the Spirit of adoption as sons ...”.

Just as God adopted the slave nation of Israel to make them the children of Israel, God likewise adopts believers, making them sons with all pertaining rights and privileges therein — once slaves to sin, now sons of the Sovereign, redeemed not to fall back into fear, but to enjoy the “Spirit of adoption” (Rom. 8:15).

I’ll never forget coming home one afternoon from preaching about 100 miles from home on Sunday. My children and dogs typically greet me with enthusiastic hugs and wagging tails, respectively. It’s the best part of travel. But on this day, only the dogs appeared. I soon learned that my daughter had gotten in trouble for hiding candy wrappers on top of the cabinet in a large decorative bowl. Turns out that we do use those decorative bowls every now and then. I told my daughter to come sit on the couch so we could talk. She walked down the stairs with head and shoulders slumped and her right pinky finger in her mouth. She slid onto the opposite edge of the couch as though she were one with the green leather arm. Even though we sat on the same three-seat couch, her sin separated her from a loving earthly father by distant miles — the same father who would die for her at sundown. As Romans 8 states, we did not receive a spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but that’s what sin does. Our sin sparks feelings of separation between us and the God who did die for us at sundown and then rose three days later to conquer sin and death, securing a path for salvation.

I remember my own adoption well. Spiritually speaking, most would have considered me an

unwanted child. Stubborn, prideful, and rebellious, my soon-to-be heavenly Father convicted me of my sinful state, as I sat in the second row, fourth seat from the end during a weekend revival service. That night as streaming tears fell from my cheeks, I repented of my sins and placed my faith in Jesus Christ. Through this new birth, God viewed me as united with Christ. Clothed in Christ’s righteousness, God declared me, a flawed sinner, justified in His eyes. Reconciled to the Father, I experienced firsthand the love of adoption — no longer a slave to my own sin but now a son of the King.

SECOND, ADOPTION GRANTS US THE UNDERSTANDING OF GOD AS “FATHER.”

Galatians 4:6 states, “God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, Abba! Father!” Romans 8:15–16 expresses that we have “received the Spirit of adoption as sons, by whom we cry, Abba! Father!” Remarkably, these two texts, written in Greek, use the Aramaic term “Abba,” bringing to mind Jesus’ prayer in the garden. Mark 14:36 records Jesus saying, “Abba, Father, all things are possible for you. Remove this cup from me.”

Paul retained the Aramaic words that Jesus spoke to His Father. Imagine the startling nature of this revelation in a Jewish culture that reverentially refrained from speaking the name of their omnipotent God. The Holy Spirit



indwells believers, testifying that the transcendent, holy, Creator of the universe is also the immanent, compassionate, “Abba! Father.” This was God’s plan from the beginning. The fall of Adam did not surprise our omniscient God. In the fullness of time, God sent his Son (Gal. 4:4) to redeem those He predestined for adoption through Jesus Christ. Adoption occurs “according to the purpose of His will, to the praise of His glorious grace” (Eph. 1:5–6a).

THIRD, ADOPTION GRANTS US THE SPIRIT CONFIRMING OUR SALVATION.

Romans 8:14 says, “For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God.” Scripture confirms that those led by the Spirit are adopted as sons, and vice versa. Those adopted as sons are led by the Spirit. As part of salvation, believers receive the Spirit, which confirms newly adopted sons as children of God. Romans 8:16 adds, “The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God.”

One Saturday afternoon, I partially reclined in the La-Z-Boy, working on my laptop. My daughter walked up and said, “Sit in your lap, Daddy.” I laid the computer aside and cherished a 4-year-old little girl wanting to cuddle with Daddy. In a priceless moment, she snuggled her head on my shoulder with a faded, pink bear and tattered blanket in hand. Her blue eyes gazed into mine as she said, “I love you, Daddy.” Depressing the lump in my throat and holding back the developing tears in my eyes, I responded, “I love you more.” My daughter has never asked to see the adoption paperwork, call a judge, or look at a birth certificate bearing her name to understand that I am her “Daddy.” She simply knows. In like manner, we have no need of a “new birth” certificate nor papers of spiritual adoption. The Spirit renders such things useless as He testifies to our hearts that we are sons, and God almighty is our “Abba! Father.”

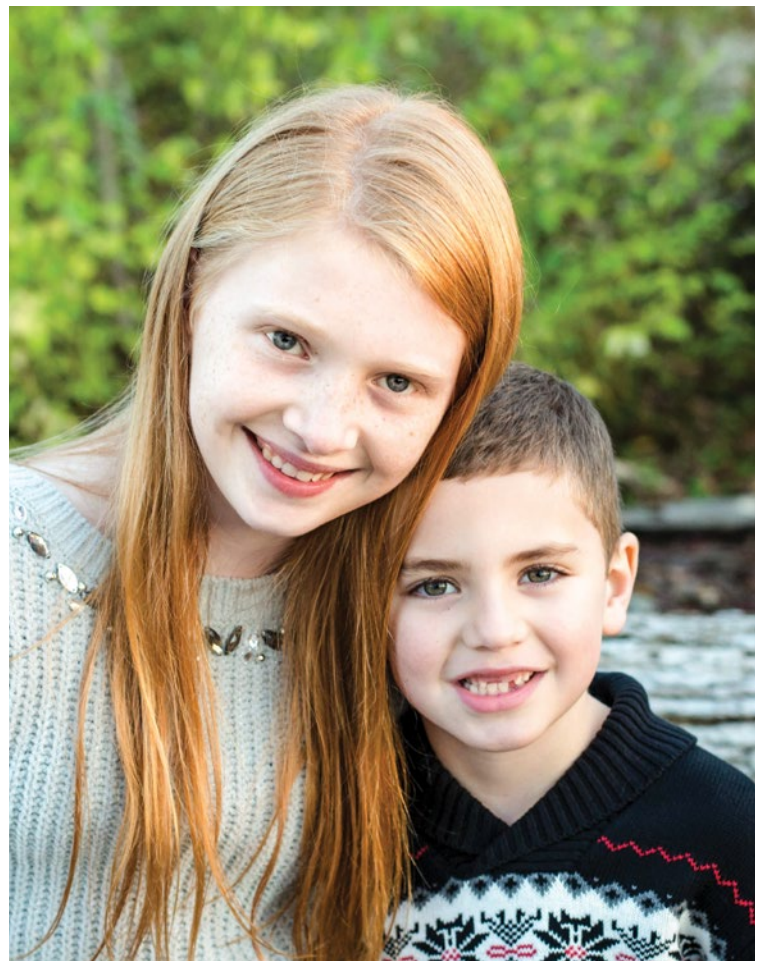
You may or may not remember your spiritual birthday, just as I don’t remember my physical birth, but I know that I am alive. For those of us who believe, we have the Spirit in us, testifying of our salvation, combating the lies of the evil one trying to fill us with doubt by his accusations. Those who have repented of their sins and

believed in Jesus are adopted into the forever family of their heavenly Father. This adoption as brothers and sisters leaves no room for economic, racial, or prejudice of any kind. We all equally kneel at the foot of the cross of King Jesus.

FOURTH, ADOPTION TURNS ORPHANS INTO HEIRS.

The Greek word *orphanos* occurs in James 1:27 and John 14:18 in the New Testament. James 1:27 stresses the importance of ministry to orphans as true and undefiled religion. In John 14:18, Jesus promises not to leave the disciples as orphans but will send the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit calls the lost and regenerates responsive orphans into sons, and as sons, we become heirs.

The designation of heirs makes the imagery of adoption as sons, in contrast to sons and daughters, essential. In the Jewish context, sons receive the birthright and the blessing, while daughters only had a relationship. In salvation, men and women are equally adopted into a relationship and as heirs. Galatians 4:7 states, “and if a son, then an heir through God.”



Through our justification by grace, a radical rags-to-riches story emerges — orphans transform into heirs. Our new birthright through adoption awaits us in heaven as we trade dying, sin-infected jars of clay for resurrected, glorious bodies.

Altogether, adoption should matter to us because adoption matters to God. Through adoption we fulfill the Bible’s command to care for orphans and illustrate God’s plan of salvation. Adoption demonstrates true and undefiled religion. Through the planning, cost, and sometimes pain of adoption, we learn more about the divine love expressed in our spiritual adoption. These reasons should cause everyone to consider adopting or supporting adoption. Those who cannot adopt can help single moms or children with absentee fathers understand the love of our “Abba! Father.”

The day for the finalization of our adoption came. Anxiously, I realized the judge could ask anything he wished. Surprisingly, the judge pontificated on the permanency of adoption. He stressed the finality of his signature, stating, “You cannot undo it. You cannot turn back the clock. After this, you cannot change your mind. Like it or not, until Rachel becomes 18 years of age, she is your responsibility. Do you understand?”

The devilish little boy in me emerged as I responded, “Well, that is the point of adoption isn’t it?” Realizing the seriousness of the judge, I quickly clarified, “Yes, I understand and gladly accept the responsibility, your Honor.”

Later that day it dawned on me that my theological understanding of adoption had affected my cultural understanding. I always understood the permanency of adoption because I understand that spiritual adoption grants eternal security. We often express it as “once saved; always saved.” Yet we live in a world where everything from Cabbage Patch dolls to hamsters can be “adopted” and then abandoned at a whim. We must regain the theological understanding of the permanency of unconditional love and adoption for life. We must continue to practice true and undefiled religion by supporting foster care and adoption as James commands. Spiritually, adoption accompanies justification and guarantees sanctification and glorification. Just as my spiritual adoption as a son of God will never be revoked once finalized, this judge communicated that Rachel’s adoption would not be revoked once finalized. That day through a courtroom exchange, my appreciation for the theology of adoption grew deeper. I realized more than ever that adoption is at the heart of the Gospel.

Thomas White became Cedarville’s 10th President in 2013. He earned his Ph.D. in systematic theology from Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary. He is the author and editor of numerous publications, including *First Freedom: The Beginning and End of Religious Freedom* (B&H Academic).



CU WOMEN SUPPORT FOSTER CHILDREN WITH “SWEET CASES”

Last November, CU Women, an organization made up of female faculty, staff, and friends of Cedarville University, partnered with foster support organization Together We Rise to provide duffel bags, also called “Sweet Cases,” for children in foster care. The group far exceeded its initial goal of \$500, finishing their campaign with more than \$1,800 raised. That money supplied 67 bags to 67 foster care children.

CU Women filled Thomas and Joy White’s home with the duffels, where they were decorated and filled with gifts.

Together We Rise collaborates with community partners to bring resources to foster children, such as “Sweet Cases,” which give foster children a duffel bag loaded with a few supplies, a Bible, and a teddy bear. Many foster children have only a trash bag to carry their belongings.

Mary McCulley, Assistant Professor of English, suggested the idea of a service component to CU Women. She saw it as a way to live out their focus on James 1:27, which calls Christians to look after widows and orphans.

Within a week of the fundraiser being announced in October 2017, their goal of \$500 was almost met, so CU Women raised the goal to \$1,000. In a matter of days, that goal was met as well. When the campaign ended, they had raised almost four times their initial goal.

“I am thankful that so many people see this need,” said McCulley. “We wanted to include people outside of the CU Women organization in this fundraiser to create connections and allow students and others to serve the community.”

After they were assembled, the bags were donated to the Bair Foundation, a faith-based foster and adoption agency in Dayton, Ohio.

going the extra *Smile*

Cedarville Alumnus Spurs a
Worldwide Adoption Movement

BY HANK FORTENER '03

My mom and dad are not normal.

They had three of us biologically and then froze. They couldn't imagine their lives were now on a locked trajectory. As blessed as they were to have three priceless children, they found themselves in a midlife crisis at age 25, trying to figure out why on earth they were here otherwise. The clear answer came amidst the fog.

Mom said God put her on earth to be a mother.

Dad said God put him on earth to make her happy.

So, together, they embarked on their adventure — their calling.





SEVEN-YEAR-OLD FOSTER PARENT

Mom sat me down when I was 7 years old and told me, “We are going to be foster parents.”

I responded, “You mean, you and Dad are going to be foster parents ... I’m 7.” She said, “People who need love don’t care how old you are.”

In the following seven years, we fostered 36 children. And when I say “we,” I mean I was a foster parent, too. Diapers, walks around the neighborhood, meal times, and caretaking ... I was in. I could change a diaper at 8 years old like a soldier field-stripped a weapon.

Some kids stayed in our home for two weeks, some for two months, and a few stayed for two years.

Waking up in the morning, I never knew who was going to be at the breakfast table. Or worse, who wouldn’t be there that morning.

It was beautiful and brutal and chaotic. We were homeschooled, so mom taught us all how to wrangle the human spirit.

Every child we fostered had some type of special need, and some who needed full-time care. At 8 years old, I learned how to adjust oxygen flow and change tanks and how to feed a child through a stomach feeding tube.

It was wild and painful and beautiful and chaotic. Did I mention that it was chaotic?

After our 36th child was moved from our home, my mom said, “Enough!” We needed permanence for our home, these kids, and our family. So we embarked on the second chapter of our family calling, to adopt. Over the next 10 years, we adopted eight kids from six different countries.

Our family grew fast and beautifully.

Never simple.

Never easy.

Always worth it.

Hank Fortener (far left) and his wife, Sueann, with their oldest daughter, Cora during a family reunion in 2012. Fortener’s mom and dad, Chuck and Anne, are in the middle of their 11 children, eight of whom are adopted, plus daughters-in-law and grandkids.



FOUR PIVOTAL CONVERSATIONS

When I turned 17, I enrolled at Cedarville University and moved into Brock Hall as a freshman. In my four years at Cedarville, I had four pivotal conversations that changed my life.

From my conversations with Professor Edward Spencer, I learned that ancient literature holds the secrets to the future.

From my conversations with Professor Jeff Cook, I learned that my longing to live in a city was a spiritual one and was not to be ignored.

From Dr. Bill Brown, I learned that my angst about an issue in the world should always be interpreted as an invitation to do something.

And from Paul Isaacs, my Resident Director at Brock, I learned that I'm not good at following the rules.

Shortly after I moved to Los Angeles, I launched AdoptTogether.org with my dad. Discovering that finances were the number one reason people did not adopt inspired us to create a solution.

In the past six years, AdoptTogether.org has helped 4,300 families raise more than \$14,000,000 to bring their children home.

When we were about to celebrate our five millionth dollar raised, I suggested we do it on World Adoption Day!

Sure enough, there was no such thing as World Adoption Day. So, I thought ... let's start one. Worldadoptionday.org and #worldadoptionday and the smiley face on the hand were born.

I called the United Nations and asked them to help. They suggested I wait a few years and follow their processes. I declined the invitation to follow the official process and called my friends in Los Angeles who I knew could help me: a supermodel named Jessica Stam; a film producer and adoptive dad named Mike Tollin (*Radio, Varsity Blues*, ESPN's *30 for 30*, *One Tree Hill*, *Smallville*); Scott Harrison, the founder of an amazing nonprofit named charity: water; Kim Brown, the chairman of one of the country's top adoption agencies.

We were off to the races. Forbes picked it up. *Huffington Post* joined us. TNT's *Inside the NBA* did a shout out. Shaq posted a smiley face. Tom Arnold posted a picture.

Among all the press and posts, I wanted to engage the world in a conversation about celebration. Adoption, at its core, is a story of loss. A loss of a parent, a relationship, a home, sometimes a life. It begins with loss and pain.

For too long, adoption has been marked as the "painful story," the one that "explains so much" (think Thor and his "adopted" brother). My grandfather was adopted in 1929, and his parents never told him for fear he would act differently or be treated differently. It was time to talk about adoption as an event to be celebrated.

STORY OF A SMILE

American commercial artist Harvey Ball created the smiley face some 50 years ago. A smile as a simple reminder to raise morale and to remember that life, moment to moment, is always good. That being alive is a gift.

I wanted to brand World Adoption Day with a smile. I wanted to give adoption, adoptees, adoptive families, birth mothers, and birth fathers one day to celebrate that being alive is a gift. No matter what has happened, the redemption story is here.

So now, four years later, here we are.

Dozens of countries and hundreds of thousands of posts and millions of likes later ...

We have a day.

A day to celebrate the gift of redemption.

A day to celebrate the power of family.

A day to remember that family, really, is everything.

In my time at Cedarville, I remember wondering how I would make an impact from a quiet town in Ohio.

I loved going to school near my family, and my time at Cedarville was riddled with adventure, education, life lessons, and longtime friends.

But I never realized how powerful a difference can be made from your living room. No matter how broad your reach and no matter how wide your influence, the most powerful space is family.

As 2018 begins, we continue to invite the world to celebrate a #worldadoptionday, and we continue to believe that there is a family for every child.

Hank Fortener '03 is co-founder, with his dad, Charles, of *AdoptTogether.org*, and the founder and creative force behind *World Adoption Day*.





PERFECT FIT

Cedarville's Director of Campus Experience Knew Exactly Where He Belonged

BY BRIAN BURNS '95

On June 21, 1973, my parents, Bruce and Jeanie Burns, were in Florida enjoying one last vacation before I was born. A call came from Indiana to let them know that I had arrived and would be delivered to my granny and papaw.

Growing up, I do not remember when my parents told me that I was adopted. I know that I do remember they called me their gift from the Lord, and I always knew that I was wanted. They loved me and my sister, Lisa, who was also adopted, in every way — praise, encouragement, and discipline.

SURE AND SECURE

I never had a period of doubt until after high school and college when people started asking me, “What’s it like being adopted?” At the time, I was a house parent at Joy Ranch Home for Children in Hillsville, Virginia, working with more than 20 high school kids, some of whom had experienced failed adoptions. I began to wonder, “Should I know more?”

I asked my parents, and they shared letters with me from my biological parents and told me about the circumstances around my birth. I thank my biological parents for giving me the gift of life and placing me in the home God knew I needed to be in.

A lot of times in adoption, there’s an insecurity when other people ask about it. But I didn’t experience that in my home. I knew where I stood. And if I stepped out of line, I knew there would have been consequences.

Sometimes you’ll hear people differentiate between their adopted and their biological children. My parents didn’t do that. I have a younger brother, Matthew, whom my mom gave birth to. My younger brother looks more like my dad, but I act more like him. There was no difference between any of us in our parents’ sight. We were all gifts from God to them.

PERFECT FIT

Growing up in a pastor’s home was a blast. I can remember playing hide-and-go-seek at church while Dad worked on his sermon. I remember youth events we sponsored in the community and getting to know other people and

hanging out with friends. As an extrovert, a pastor's home was a perfect fit for me. Now at age 44, it's even clearer to me. Watching my kids with my parents, and my wife with my parents — this is my family. This is who we are.

My dad is my biggest hero. He's the one who taught me, "Any job worth doing is worth overdoing." I saw that in my papaw and my uncles. I see that tenacity in the way I approach my job at Cedarville. Looking back now, I can see there was no mistake. The times of self-doubt occurred because other people were curious.

Adoption to me is something bigger than acceptance and love. Adoption is a true picture of the Gospel.

I had a special relationship with my granny and papaw. As I mentioned before, I was delivered to them while my parents were in Florida. We always used to joke that Granny saw me first, so I was more hers than Mom's. I remember one time at a family reunion for Dad's side of the family, one of my great-aunts had put together a family tree and people were looking at it. Next to my sister and me, she had written "adopted." Granny hated that. She would say, "They're my kids!" She talked to her sister and had those words removed. My granny lived till she was 93, and we always had a special relationship.

TIME MAKERS

As a family, we would take a vacation every year, which were incredible, intentional times. One of my favorite vacations was our trip to Disney World. This trip ignited a respect that I have for Disney and their approach to business and how they equip and empower their cast members. It was during this trip that I remember my dad telling me that life requires the proper perspective and must be fueled by integrity and passion.

My dad did a lot of visitations (going to people's homes), but he always made time for our family. My brother and sister and I were involved in sports and fine arts: soccer, basketball, band, school plays. Mom and Dad were at our games and plays. They'd be there for opening night. They took an interest in each of our individual lives and made a point to have the family actively involved in each other's lives.

PERSONAL EXAMPLE

When you're a pastor's kid, you hear your dad preaching, but it's different when you see it, when he's not in front of anyone else. He made time to spend with his Savior. A relationship with Christ takes time; it takes commitment. It's not a feeling. In the morning, after I finished my newspaper route, I'd walk into the kitchen, and there he was with his Bible. It's who he was, and it's still who he is. Or I'd catch him on vacations, very early in the morning, studying the Word. I saw the consistency of his walk.

My parents demonstrated that it is vital to not let the urgent things of life crowd out the important. My parents' commitment to God and His Word was their highest priority and to this day, they demonstrate that to me and my family.

Both of my parents have a strong work ethic and a commitment to excellence. In my life, I have always been challenged to do things with excellence, no matter if the job is big or small. This was made clear to me one summer when my dad decided it was time to build a treehouse. This was not a normal treehouse; this treehouse had walls, a roof, and real working windows. When we were building it, I watched my dad take time to make sure everything was measured and fit properly. I can still remember this treehouse build; it inspired a commitment to excellence and work in my career and personal life.

SOMETHING BIGGER

Adoption to me is something bigger than acceptance and love. Adoption is a true picture of the Gospel. When my parents chose to adopt me, they took all of me and gave all of themselves to me. God has provided a way for us to be adopted into His family. We do not deserve this, neither can it be earned. This adoption opportunity is granted to us by the grace and mercy of God. He adopts us, forgives us, provides for us, and offers us the opportunity to be a part of His eternal family. Earthly adoption is a picture of this. Being adopted has helped me appreciate in a different way the beauty of salvation and God's adoption story. I'm so glad I'm adopted, by my earthly parents, and by my Father in heaven.

Brian Burns '95 is Cedarville University's Director of Campus Experience.



Mission to Moms

BY CLEM BOYD

With adoption, the focus is typically on the adoptive parents and their journey. For Cedarville alumna Jazmin (Gmuer) Taylor '97, her efforts have been with the other individuals in the adoption process — the birth moms. She has committed herself to showing kindness, compassion, and respect to women making one of the most difficult decisions a parent would ever have to make.



For Jazmin (Gmuer) Taylor '97, working with expectant mothers is a God-given mission.

"I have a tremendous amount of patience with my birth moms," Taylor explained. "I really just try to tell them they're making one of the toughest decisions in their lives. It is so sacrificial to give up your child. They deserve respect; I offer them gentleness and compassion. It's the best thing you can do for a birth mom."

And that's true regardless of their circumstances or the decisions that led to the adoption. Taylor is committed to offer a listening ear and an open-hearted kindness that lifts up her birth moms.

"Most of the women I work with are trying to make the best choice, though not always," she said. "One example was a birth mom addicted to drugs. We thought the baby would be drug-addicted, but he ended up not having very many problems. She made the choice to place him for adoption."

The hardest part is seeing expectant moms very conflicted about the decision. "I don't try to sell them on giving the baby up, only if they really want to," Taylor said. "But when they're convinced and we match them with an adoptive family, and they've been together a few months and then the baby's born, it's really hard when they change their minds. You see how heartbroken the adoptive parents are."

Taylor is an advocate for open adoption, where the adoptive parents and the birth mom keep an open line of communication, and there's a concerted effort to sustain a lifelong relationship between birth mom and the adopted child.

"I believe it is in the best interest of the child for everyone to be open, because when you hide stuff, it's not healthy for any party," she said. "I encourage my families to be open with their children, to encourage texting and phone calls with birth mothers, and to allow visits."

Taylor speaks from personal experience as well. She and her husband adopted a little boy, Thomas, now 10, and have kept an open relationship with his birth mom. The Taylors also have an older son, William, 17, and a daughter, Melissa, 15.

AMAZED

In her work with expectant moms, Taylor helps them develop an adoption plan and serves as a liaison between them and prospective adoptive parents. While she finds it very gratifying to see a child matched with the right family, there can be trials.

For Taylor, she sees many birth moms in a perpetual cycle of miserable decision-making. "They see adoption as a form of birth control or a source of income," she said. "It is very hard as a social worker to see them do drugs and have babies."

Yet she's never shown anger toward an expectant mom. She's remained patient, kind, and . . . amazed.

"I have such compassion for them," Taylor said. "I'm so amazed by them. This is the hardest decision they'll ever make in their lives. Seeing them in such despair, deciding they have to make this choice. Even when they change their minds, I've never lost my cool with a birth mom."



Jazmin (Gmuer) Taylor '97 and her husband, Eric '97, with their children, William, Thomas, and Melissa.

On the flip side, when the match is good, adoption is a beautiful process to facilitate.

“I love when a match is good, when the adoptive parents open their hearts to the birth mom and make her part of their family,” she said.

Taylor cited the example of family friends who have an exceptional relationship with their child's birth mom. “She's really become part of their lives,” she explained. “She's a hairdresser who lives on her own and she's pretty successful. She comes to birthday parties, goes to events, and even cuts the kids' hair. When you see them succeed and move on, that's pretty rewarding.”

DIVINE DESIGN

While working with expectant moms might be a stretch for some personalities, for Taylor it goes back to her divine design. She's known it since she was a little girl.

“My mom has a journal of mine from when I was 11 or 12 that says I wanted to adopt and work with orphans,” Taylor said. “I've always wanted to be a social worker and work with kids. That's always been my passion since I was very, very young. I always feel this has been a calling from God.”

“God has given me a talent to work with people,” she continued. “I'm super social, and I can relate and empathize with almost anyone. I'm very, very open and transparent.”

She followed that calling to Cedarville, where she earned a degree in social work. After graduation, she worked as a case worker for several years. When she and her husband, Eric '97, began having children, she started looking into the adoption field.

She worked for Adoption Link, Inc., a Yellow Springs, Ohio-based agency, from 2004 till 2006, and currently works part time for American Adoptions. She is also a student advocate with Bentonville High School in Bentonville, Arkansas, coming alongside at-risk students who may

“I love when a match is good, when the adoptive parents open their hearts to the birth mom and make her part of their family”

not graduate because of behavior, grades, or poor attendance.

For those who may have difficulty imagining a job such as Taylor's, her work with teens at her children's high school has been much more taxing. “It's 10 times harder than working with birth moms,” she affirmed. “I've worked with a lot of troubled kids and the hardest part is many of them have no boundaries.”

“Working with birth moms and adoptive parents, they're making all these choices based on what's best for the child. I feel so fulfilled.”

Clem Boyd is Managing Editor of Cedarville Magazine.





Chosen and GRAFTED TOGETHER

International Adoption Completes Best-Selling Author's Family

BY DONNA (PAYNE) VANLIERE '89

In November of 2016, our 16-year-old sophomore, Gracie, was putting the finishing touches on her second quarter project for school, a family crest with motto. As her family motto, she came up with *Inserta sunt Electi*, which in Latin means “Chosen and Grafted Together,” and began to create the crest from there. Neither Troy '89 nor I helped her come up with that motto. It's something she's known from the time she has been able to understand.

Gracie was handed to me in the crowded hallway of a hotel in the Guangxi Province of China in March 2002. As hotel porters were busy carrying the luggage of the 12 families traveling in our adoption group, staff members from the local orphanage were delivering babies. It was complete joy-filled chaos! “Hagan,” our translator yelled above the noise, and the Hagan family laughed and waved their arms, trying to be seen at the end of the hall. An orphanage worker, making her way through the maze of luggage, porters, and anxious parents, handed little Janie to her mom as the translator shouted, “Siefker,” “Edwards,” and other names, until we finally heard “VanLiere.” A Chinese woman smiled and handed me my baby, the one I had been praying about for years. She had a beautiful face, black slick-backed hair,

firm with hairspray, and black eyes full of curiosity. She looked at us as if to say, “You’re the whitest people I’ve ever seen,” and Troy and I laughed at her expression. We named her Grace Zhenli. Zhenli means “priceless gift” in Chinese, and we think of her as a priceless gift of God’s grace. I held onto her and said, “We’ve been waiting for you!”

We had been waiting for 22 months, longer than the gestation of an elephant, but had been praying for Gracie long before that. Long before we knew the woman who carried her was pregnant, we prayed. Long before we knew that a policeman found her on the side of a busy street, we prayed. Long before we knew that she was safe inside an orphanage, we prayed.

We prayed for the woman who would carry Gracie inside her womb; we prayed for angels to surround her wherever she would be discovered; we prayed for the environment where

Gracie would be for the first several months of her life; we prayed for the wisdom to raise her; we prayed she would be a child, young lady, and woman of great integrity and character; and we prayed that she would love and follow Jesus all her life. Long before we knew anything about her, we prayed. And we’re still praying today.

BEAUTIFUL GIFT

Both Troy and I felt as if there were another child for us in China. We began praying again for our baby and traveled in 2004 to bring Kate Meili home. Meili means “beautiful gift.” Kate was sucking on her sleeve when they handed her to me, and we discovered that her entire sleeve was wet. We gave her a blanket, and she began to suck on it as well; we realized she did this to comfort herself. By the time we left China, she was no longer sucking on her sleeve or blanket because she had finally found someone to comfort her. We felt as if our family was still incomplete and, when Gracie was four, I asked her if she wanted God to bring her a baby brother or baby sister. She said, “I want God to bring me a baby cow.” She got a baby brother from Guatemala instead. David was smiling when his foster mother handed him to me in July 2007, and he’s been smiling ever since.

HAUNTED DREAMS

In God’s perfect and amazing plan, Troy traveled to China 11 years ago with the Christian group NewSong and met a 13-year-old girl who needed to be adopted before she turned 14 and would no longer be eligible, per China’s rules. He took pictures of her and on his return home, had a Skype chat with our longtime college friends Bob ’88 and Dannah (Barker) Gresh ’89. He said, “I met a 13-year-old girl in China and her face has been haunting my dreams ever since. She needs to be adopted in the next several months and you’d be the perfect family for her.” He emailed a picture to them, and Autumn’s face began haunting their dreams as well. They had nine months before Autumn turned 14, which meant that a home study, background checks, and mounds of paperwork and red tape, which normally take two to three years, would need to be completed at lightning speed.

At one point, when time was running out and it looked like an important piece of paper would never make it to a particular office, Dannah called me. I was sitting in an airport



Samantha Bean Photography

The VanLieres (L-R): David, Donna, Gracie (holding the family crest), Troy, and Kate

“If God wants that child in your home, He will make a way to get that child in your home!” He’s proven this over and over in the lives of so many families.

and said, "If God can get Peter out of a jail cell, He can get Autumn out of China!" We prayed, and God used a state senator in Pennsylvania to declare Bob and Dannah’s going to China a humanitarian effort, not an adoption trip. In August 2016, they celebrated 10 years with Autumn! When I meet people who are considering adoption but feel they can’t raise the money, or they list a number of obstacles in the way, I always say, “If God wants that child in your home, He will make a way to get that child in your home!” He’s proven this over and over in the lives of so many families.

FIVE-POINTED STAR

For Gracie’s school project, the sun is the center of her family crest design, signifying God, and in the center of the sun is a star made up of five different colored points, which represents the diversity of each family member. Those five colored points make up one star, indicating in Gracie’s words, “God’s complete and beautiful work in putting us together.” For her in-class presentation, she described the crest as God choosing and gathering her and Kate and David, and grafting them and us together into one family. She said, “It wasn’t by chance. It wasn’t random. It was purposeful and planned.”

We will never know until heaven how many souls were rescued and saved for eternity through the beauty of adoption, but one day, all nations, tribes, and tongues will stand before the King of kings and we will proclaim together, “Hallelujah! For we have been chosen and grafted together into the family of God!”

Donna VanLiere '89 is a New York Times and USA Today best-selling author with many titles adapted for television, including *The Christmas Shoes* and *The Christmas Secret*.



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Beautiful and Unique

Domestic Adoption Creates a Remarkable Family

BY ALYSSA SPEICHER '17



Aaron Cook '99, Cedarville University Director of Discipleship Ministries, and his wife, Laurie (Jelinek) '99, have a beautiful family that paints a picture of the Gospel. After 15 years of marriage and two biological children, Aaron and Laurie adopted daughter Lila, and a year and a half later, they adopted daughter Isabella.

Cedarville Magazine sat down with the Cooks to learn about their experiences with domestic, transracial adoption, their advice to other families considering adoption, and the blessings their family has received through adoption.

Tell us about your family before adoption.

Laurie Cook (LC): We got married after our sophomore year at Cedarville University and went into full-time camp ministry after graduation. We had our first child, Aleena, after seven years of marriage. A year and a half later, we had our second child, Dylan.

Aaron Cook (AC): Dylan has cystic fibrosis, a genetic disease that affects the mucus in the lungs and affects every organ except the brain. Although it makes for a different lifestyle, there are lots of joys that come with special needs.

Why did you decide to adopt?

LC: After Dylan, I wasn't able to have other children, but we didn't feel we were done with our family. The first few years, Dylan wasn't stable enough for another child, but after five years, we thought it was time.

Why domestic, transracial adoption?

AC: We had a heart for the nations, yet we couldn't go anywhere because Dylan needed to be close to a children's hospital. However, we had a home where we wanted to raise children.

LC: Originally, we researched adoption internationally, but for many reasons,

we were closed off to a lot of options. With all international doors closed, we decided to look here.

What is the story behind your first adoption?

AC: We thought it would be a really quick situation because we were open to a lot, but it actually took a year and a half. The waiting was hard. One evening in particular, Laurie was struggling and I remember saying, "Laurie, we not only want God to show us who He would bring into our family, but we also want His timing." Sure enough, 12 hours later we got a phone call, and Lila had been born while we were having that conversation.

Why did you decide to adopt a second time?

LC: Everyone kept asking if we would adopt again, and we weren't really thinking about it. Then we said if Lila's

Adoption is a part of our entire life. Our walk with Christ has been deepened and relationships started and strengthened as a result.

birth mom got pregnant again and the agency called us, we would adopt that baby.

AC: We thought it was never going to happen, but 16 months later, we got a call from the agency, out of the blue. They told us the situation, and we said, "We've already prayed about this exact scenario, and the answer is yes."



Erin Krizo Photography

The Cooks (L-R): Dylan, Lila, Aaron, Isabella, Laurie, and Aleena in 2016

How did your faith inform your decision to adopt?

AC: We know for sure that God cares deeply for the fatherless and widowed. He is clear about that.

What challenges have you faced having a transracial family?

LC: Very little beyond the regular challenges of raising children. Although I am sure that there will be challenges ahead, by in large the response has been positive.

AC: We sometimes get a confused look, but we have experienced more open doors than closed doors. There are always challenges, but it was overall a lot smoother and more natural than I thought. If anything, people graciously allow us into conversations that we wouldn't be in hadn't we adopted transracially. Not because we know it all, but there are many who are wanting to keep the conversation of racial reconciliation moving forward in a gospel direction. I feel very fortunate for each of these opportunities.

How did your other children react to the adoptions?

AC: They've loved it every step of the way. They get to see a part of the Gospel: what it's like to be predestined for adoption.

What kind of support have you found at Cedarville?

AC: The Cedarville community is very supportive. Adoption is promoted a lot here. We feel it's a family; it's really special. In general, a vision of family is promoted here that is counter-cultural. Our society often sees children as a hindrance to be discarded whenever they are no longer a "benefit" to whomever is caring for them. We see children as a wonderful part of our lives and the Cedarville Experience — not something that gets in the way. Both Jon Wood, Vice President for Student Life and Christian Ministries, and Jim Cato '83, Associate Vice President of Christian Ministries, have been very supportive of my family and have volunteered on multiple occasions to take responsibilities off my plate so that I can tend to something at home. For instance, Jon covered for me when Dylan was really sick and had to be hospitalized.

How has adoption blessed you in ways you didn't anticipate?

LC: I'm just so thankful all the time. We can't fathom what our life would be like without them. Adoption is a part of our entire life. Our walk with Christ has been deepened and relationships started and strengthened as a result.

What is your advice for someone considering transracial adoption?

LC: I think the biggest thing is to not think of it as transracial adoption. It's about the child first and then your family. I don't want to discount that the adoption is transracial, but that isn't primary. The primary thing is figuring out the needs of your child because, like with biological children, each is unique.

AC: Their identity is in who God says they are; it's not determined by their skin color or what they're good at. Each child needs the Gospel, and you need to study your child to see what their needs are individually.

LC: This is especially true if your child comes from a different culture, and you're adopting them into your culture. Age plays a huge part in it, but assessing the needs of your child should be your primary concern.

Any advice for families considering adoption?

AC: Don't go into it looking for applause. Adoption is hard, and many have had it more difficult than we have, but it's so, so good. Our training told us to give our children as much of a story about their biological family as you can, so they can know why they do things a certain way. That was helpful.

How has your faith grown through the adoption process and beyond?

LC: One of our biggest challenges in parenting has been health-related, and we don't have a health history on Lila

or Bella, which can make it more difficult at times. God has definitely grown our faith as we rely on Him through the difficult health issues with all of our children. We have found him to be so faithful, and at our weakest points we have had some of the sweetest communion with Christ!

AC: Yes, often in parenting in general, God graciously reveals our need for Him. In that process he expands our love for our kids and our love for Him. Lila and Bella's physical adoption has deepened my vision of God's spiritual adoption of us. This is a magnificent exchange that has infinitely fallen in our favor!

Final thoughts?

AC: We are just so thankful God has blessed us to have children. Marriage and family are not the greatest good, but they are one of God's sweetest blessings and one of the greatest opportunities to put the realities of the Gospel on display. We are just overwhelmed at the kindness of God to choose this path for us. We can't imagine life any other way.

Alyssa Speicher '17 is a former student public relations writer for Cedarville University.

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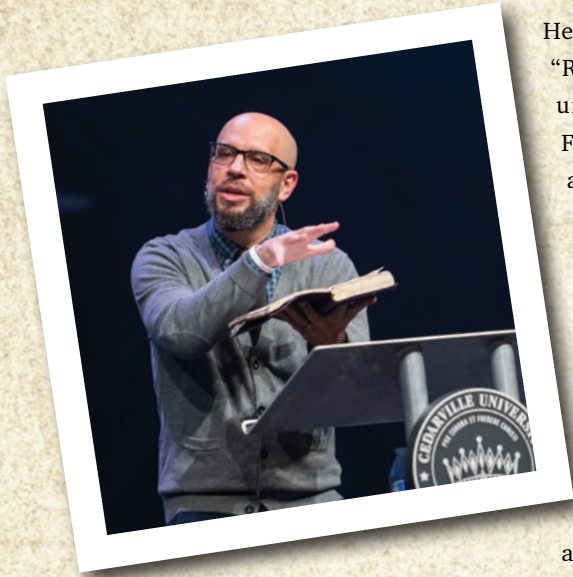
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Word-Obeying Missions

The following is an excerpt from a January 10, 2018, chapel presentation by Tony Merida. Merida was the keynote speaker for the 2018 Missions Conference. Listen to his full remarks at cedarville.edu/chapel.



Here's what James 1:27 says, "Religion that is pure and undefiled before God the Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their affliction, and to keep oneself unstained from the world."

I think most people assume that infertility was what led us to adoption, but it wasn't. We were motivated by theology, not biology. I was invited to speak at a youth camp about nine years ago. I began

to see passages like James 1:27 where James calls his hearers to be doers of the Word, and not just hearers, and to care for orphans in their affliction. I was convicted by my own preaching.

My wife and I ended up going to the Ukraine. We were approved for two kids under the age of 5. And we

As a reflection of His own character, we are to be people who care for orphans and widows; we should be the people who are known for this.

met a sibling group with ages 4, 6, 7, and 9. And we agreed to adopt them.

After about a year, we decided we had room for one more. My sister has five adopted children from Ethiopia. And so my Ukrainian kids have been playing with their Ethiopian cousins, and they wanted an Ethiopian brother. We brought Joshua home in about six months.

Get before God's Word and submit to it as the inspired Word; humble yourself before it, so that you're teachable. Some of the greatest advocates for orphans and the oppressed are men and women who have done this. Underneath their care for the poor and the marginalized is a deep devotion and humility before the Scriptures.

So James 1:27 says this is true religion: to visit. To visit orphans is more than dropping by for a little chat. It means to intervene. It means to get involved. It means to do something, and we do it. That's the good Father. As a reflection of His own character, we are to be people who care for orphans and widows; we should be the people who are known for this.

God has visited us in our affliction. We are not superior to the orphan. We are the orphan. And God has adopted us in the Gospel. We are the widow, and Jesus has become our Groom in the Gospel. We are the sojourner, having no homeland, and we have inherited a Kingdom. In the Gospel we are poor and bankrupt. And God has given us an inheritance.

Tony Merida is Pastor for Preaching and Vision at Imago Dei Church in Raleigh, North Carolina.

Join the University family in chapel each day via the livestream broadcast (cedarville.edu/chapellive) or Facebook Live (cedarville.edu/facebook). Past messages are also archived at cedarville.edu/chapel.

March 20 **Randy Stinson**
Senior Vice President and Provost
Southern Baptist Theological Seminary
Louisville, Kentucky

March 22 **Dannah Gresh**
Speaker, Secret Keeper Girl
Author, *And the Bride Wore White*
State College, Pennsylvania

March 28 **Freedom to Flourish Conference**
David French
Senior Writer
National Review Institute
New York, New York



Remember Your Creator

The following is an excerpt from a February 6, 2018, chapel presentation by Tim Challies. Listen to his full remarks at cedarville.edu/chapel.

There are two things I want to draw out of Ecclesiastes for you to see. First thing, if you're going to be joyful at some future time in life, you've got to be joyful now. God wants you to be joyful. It's God's desire that you live life to the fullest, that you learn to delight in the good things of the world and the good things of life.

God loves it when you appreciate the beauty in a sunset. God loves it when you savor delicious food and when you linger over a great cup of coffee. We glorify God when we find pleasure in the things that He has made.

We see some of this in Ecclesiastes 11:7, "Light is sweet, and it is pleasant for the eyes to see the sun." The author is speaking about the days of youth in this picture of a sunrise. With every sunrise lays a new day before you and it asks, "What will you do with this day?"

There lays a whole lifetime before you and it asks, "What will you do with your life? Who will you be in this life?"

There's a second thing the author wants us to see: If you want to be godly, then be godly now.

Chapter 12 verse 1: "Remember your creator in the days of your youth." Remember your Creator today. Remember Him while you're still young. Remember Him before you get old. And don't just remember Him like "bring Him to mind," but do something about Him.

Commit yourself to Him. Acknowledge Him and live as if He's real. Live as if He's created you; live as if He really does have a claim on your life.

The Lord wants the best of your life, not what's left over once you've lived your way, and it's all falling apart. How many people have put it off thinking, "I'll turn to Christ tomorrow"? Tomorrow never came.

Grab ahold of these days, because a day will come when your mind will begin to fade. And your strength will begin to fail. And your most productive days will now be behind you.

Before this time comes, remember your Creator. Before your mind starts to grow dim with age and with all the cares and concerns

The Lord wants the best of your life, not what's left over once you've lived your way, and it's all falling apart.

of a difficult life, you want to live well. You've got to learn to live well. You have got to learn to be godly. Now.

Tim Challies is a pastor at Grace Fellowship Church in Toronto, Canada.



March 29 Staley Lecture Series
Ryan Anderson
Senior Research Fellow
The Heritage Foundation
Washington, D.C.

April 4 Living Water Apologetics Conference
Rosaria Butterfield
Speaker and Author, *The Secret Thoughts of an Unlikely Convert*
Durham, North Carolina

April 5 Living Water Apologetics Conference
Sam Allberry
Visiting Professor, Cedarville University
Speaker, Ravi Zacharias International Ministries
Maidenhead, UK

FOSTER CARE SCHOLARSHIP FULFILLS JAMES 1:27

BY MICHELE (CUMMINGS) SOLOMON '91

Since 2013, Cedarville University has awarded a full-tuition scholarship to a student who has come through the foster care system in Ohio, born out of the University administration's desire to answer God's call in James 1:27 to "look after orphans and widows in their distress."

Here are the stories of two scholarship recipients. They found themselves in situations they did not choose, but their stories are stories of hope, stories of answered prayers, and stories of how God can redeem even the hardest situations for His glory.

IT'S NOT MY STORY, IT'S HIS

From as far back as he can remember, Luke Combs '19 had a home life that was unstable at best, downright tumultuous at worst. "Social services was part of my life from birth," he said. "It's all I knew." Placed in foster care during the first two years of life, he eventually was sent back to the care of his mother. His father was only sporadically involved in his life. "The dynamic between my parents was all about drugs and fighting," he explained.

Combs found an escape from the turmoil at home in a local church that sent a bus to his neighborhood every Sunday. "I started going because my siblings went," he said. "My mom let us go just to get rid of us."

But it was there that Luke found hope through a relationship with Jesus Christ, accepting Christ as his Savior between the ages of 4 and 5. "I always knew that I wanted to pursue a relationship with God," he said. "I knew I wanted that in my life."

Church became an important part of his life,

offering him what he wasn't getting at home — security, stability, love. "I went every chance I could," he explained. As he got older, he'd even walk to church. "I can remember leaving at 6:30 a.m. to get there on time," he said.

By the time he was 12 years old, things at home had gotten so bad that he was no longer able to live with his mother. He hasn't seen her since. He went to live with a grandmother and then an aunt for a few years, but eventually found himself placed in a foster home during his freshman year of high school. Through it all, he continued to cling to the hope he had found in Christ.

As a cross country runner, Combs began to form a close relationship with his coach, Clinton Murray. Eventually, Murray and his wife, Shelley, became Combs' guardians in the middle of his freshman year. He lived with the Clintons the rest of high school, and it was there he found stability to begin dreaming about his future.

Combs first learned of Cedarville University through attending cross country meets at the University. By his sophomore year of high school, he knew he wanted to come to Cedarville, but financially, it seemed out of reach. Murray and he began to consider local colleges, which seemed more feasible for him. But he never lost his desire to come to Cedarville.

During his senior year, "eight things happened



in one week that told me I was supposed to go to Cedarville,” he explained, “so I sent in an application.” Murray was not supportive at first, since it seemed impossible, but he eventually reached out to Jessi Dyson, Combs’ admissions counselor, to see what kind of financial aid might be available. It was Dyson who first introduced them to Cedarville’s Foster Care Scholarship, and so began a series of events that would change Luke’s life forever.

“Luke was a student with high standards for himself, a desire for deep community, and a love for the Lord that came out in his daily life. He loved campus and seemed like a natural fit,” Dyson recalled. “I was excited to help him get here.”

Combs interviewed on May 6, 2015, with Thomas White, Cedarville’s President, and was

told immediately that he would receive the scholarship. “We switched from stressful interview mode to a celebration,” he recalled. “I didn’t know how to react. Seeing God’s promises come to fruition almost seemed surreal. It’s still hard to believe sometimes.”

Combs is now thriving at Cedarville as a biblical and theological studies major with a mission minor. “I’ve learned that I’m capable of doing a lot of things if I just trust God,” he said. He hopes to be a missionary someday, something he knows may be difficult. “I’m not worried. God has proven to be very faithful to me. I’ve learned to trust Him.

“I know what it’s like to have nothing and have to depend on God for everything. My life is in His hands. It’s not my story, it’s His.”



YOU MUST REALLY WANT ME HERE, GOD

Allie Eybers '21 grew up in a strong Christian family with two loving parents who encouraged her to follow Jesus from a very young age. Her childhood was almost perfect, until her mom got sick. The family moved around for a few years, relocating so her mother could receive the best treatment for breast cancer. When Allie was 12, her mother lost her battle with the disease, leaving Allie reeling and doubting her relationship with God. "But I still had my dad," she said. "He was the one who kept encouraging me and making sure my faith stood solid."

She, her dad, and her two younger siblings moved in with her maternal grandmother in Munroe Falls, Ohio, which provided needed support and stability to the family as they grieved

her mother's death. Allie was enrolled in Cuyahoga Valley Christian Academy School, where she was growing in her faith. Then, the unthinkable happened: Her father died suddenly from a heart attack.

"It was such a shock, so unexpected," Eybers said. "It was really hard to make sense of it." Following her father's death, she and her younger brother and sister continued to live with their grandmother, who became their legal guardian.

Eybers heard about Cedarville University from a friend at school and fell in love with the University the first time she visited. "I loved it," she explained. "It was so different than any other school I looked at. There was just something different about the atmosphere.

"My mom went to a Christian college. I knew she would have loved for me to go to Cedarville,"

Eybers said. But, no matter how much she wanted to come to Cedarville, the cost seemed to make it an impossibility. “I knew that if the Lord wanted me here, He’d have to make a way,” she recalled.

Allie started researching different scholarship opportunities, and she noticed the Foster Care Scholarship that Cedarville offered. “I didn’t know if I would qualify since I wasn’t technically in foster care,” she explained. Her high school counselor, who also happens to be her aunt, stepped in to investigate. “We discovered that since I was made a ward of the state when my dad died and my grandma was appointed my guardian, I qualified to apply for the scholarship.”

She applied and received an email that White wanted to meet her. While her friends were enjoying Senior Skip Day back home, Allie came to Cedarville to interview with White. “I was so nervous, but then so excited when he offered me the scholarship,” she recalled. “I was in shock. I thought, ‘Is this really happening? You must really want me here, God.’”

Now finishing her first year as a communication major at Cedarville, Eybers is thankful for the opportunity that has been given to her. “Winning this scholarship is really a testament to all that God has done in my life,” she said. “My dad’s death was so unexpected, but I see now that God had a plan for me all along.”

She clings to that thought on her tough days. “I’m still grieving; I still struggle,” she explained. “But I know God put me here for a reason. I take it day-by-day to see what He has for my life.”

Michele (Cummings) Solomon '91 is the Copy Editor for Cedarville University Marketing and Communications.

THE HEART OF A PRESIDENT

Cedarville University’s Foster Care Scholarship came out of a burden God placed on President Thomas White’s heart several years ago as he looked over the Ohio Foster Care Registry. “I noticed that many of those in foster care were above 15 years of age,” he explained. “I began to wonder what would happen as these precious children created in the image of God aged out of the system. They certainly wouldn’t have the resources to attend a school like Cedarville.”

White brought the idea of a yearly foster care scholarship to members of his Cabinet. The Cabinet unanimously agreed with the plan for the scholarship, which would be a way to show love for others without requesting anything in return.

“Little did I know that one prospective student that I had spoken to and prayed for would be the first recipient,” White said. “When I first met her, she told me that she could not afford Cedarville but felt led to go to school here. My response was that God would provide if He wanted her to attend. I had no idea that God was already working to provide through this scholarship. Looking back on the way it all happened, I have no doubt that God led us to this point every step of the way.”

For White, this scholarship is a clear example of Cedarville’s firm stand for the Word of God and the Testimony of Jesus Christ. “James 1:27 says that ‘pure and undefiled’ religion is ministry to the orphans. Philippians 2 states that Christ considered others before Himself, and that we should have the same mind,” he explained. “This scholarship lives out our motto and our student life core values of Loving God and Loving Others. By investing into the Foster Care Scholarship, the University lives out what our faculty and staff urge our students to do. It is consistent in every way with our mission and adds valuable relationships to our Cedarville community.”



When you give to Cedarville University, you help students like Luke and Allie experience an education that transforms lives for godly service, vocational distinction, and cultural engagement. Give today at cedarville.edu/onlinegiving.

CRASH COURSE

A TEST DRIVE OF THE CLASSROOM EXPERIENCE (WITHOUT THE FINAL EXAM)

PROGRAM TITLE

Social Work Junior Field Experience I and II

COURSE COORDINATORS

George Huff, Field Director

Melissa Brown, Assistant Professor of Social Work

DESCRIPTION

Junior Field Experience places students in poverty-focused social service agencies for a minimum of 150 client contact hours. Students meet weekly with qualified field instructors and attend weekly seminar classes. Field Experience allows students to practice social work knowledge, values, and skills they have learned in coursework.

BIG IDEA

- Students can choose an internship domestically or internationally. International internships are available in Romania, Uganda, and India.
- The junior field placement prepares students to work in secular and faith-based organizations.
- Students work with foster care organizations, juvenile court, homeless shelters, detention centers, mental health facilities, hospitals, schools, nursing homes, prisons, domestic violence shelters, veterans, hospice, immigrant and refugee organizations, domestic and international adoption agencies, and organizations that create and advocate for social welfare policy.
- The junior-level internship must have a poverty focus, which gives students access to diverse populations and field settings.
- Students interview at a minimum of three social service organizations to further develop professional skills.

LEARN MORE:

cedarville.edu/socialwork

"My field experience at Bethany Christian Services has profoundly shaped my career in social work. It allowed me to experience what social work looks like in an adoption setting. Bethany fostered an environment that pushed me out of my comfort zone and allowed me to see the impact adoption has on bridging individuals from various points of life together. I was able to work on a team with social workers and build professional relationships, which provided me with an employment opportunity upon graduation."

Emilie Delgado '17

Supplee Named Dean of Graduate Studies

Cedarville University has named Janice (Warren) Supplee '86, Vice President for Marketing and Communications, the new Dean of Graduate Studies at the University. She will retain her vice president role.

The added responsibility is not new to Supplee, who led the graduate studies function last year on an interim basis. Cedarville

enrolls 417 online and residential students in its graduate programs, which include a doctoral degree in pharmacy; master's degrees in business, divinity, ministry and nursing; and a graduate reading certificate.

Supplee has served at Cedarville since 1995. She became the Vice President for Enrollment Management and Marketing in 2009 and transitioned to her current leadership responsibilities for marketing and communications in November 2016.

"Our strategic goals for graduate programs reflect a passion to equip highly skilled professionals who are committed to living out their faith in the workplace," said Supplee. "We are looking at new program opportunities that serve the local church and advance Cedarville's successful healthcare and professional degree programs. We are also proposing an appropriate long-term structure for graduate programs that organizationally will continue to foster a thriving graduate student culture."

Current goals for graduate studies include maintaining momentum within

existing programs, seeking maximum potential in every degree, and continuing to add specialized tracks for students to follow in their concentrated field.

"We have intentionally made certain that our graduate programs — whether delivered online or on campus — have the same level of excellence that

Cedarville's undergraduate programs are known for," said Supplee. "Quality faculty, practical experiences and a biblical worldview are woven into every course Cedarville offers. We equip students to use their vocations to share the Gospel and minister to others."

Along with aligning to the university's mission, White has also laid out quality, marketability and sustainability as benchmarks for any Cedarville graduate program. Excellent faculty and ongoing program assessment produce quality, sufficient student interest and employer demand ensure marketability and strong enrollment and efficient cost structures create sustainability.

Supplee earned her bachelor's degree in organizational communication from Cedarville University in 1986. She received a Master of Business Administration degree from Wright State University in 2001. In 2014, Supplee earned a doctorate in educational studies from the University of Nebraska.



Class of 2017 Continues Postgraduation Success

Recent data from the National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE) indicates Cedarville University graduates continue to achieve high rates of employment or graduate school enrollment after graduation. According to the report released in January 2018, 97.5 percent of Cedarville's 2017 graduates were either employed or attending graduate school.

The report documents information from all participating graduates for their first-destination survey. Since 2013, Cedarville students have ranked 14 percent higher than the national first-destination rate for college graduates.

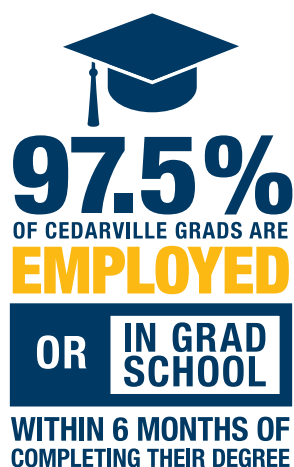
"Historically, our graduates have done well in securing a position or being admitted into graduate school," said Jeff Reep '78, Director of Career Services. "We've averaged 97.1 percent placement rate during the past four years, and this speaks to the quality of students and how well they are prepared during their years at Cedarville University."

According to data provided by Cedarville's Career Services office, the University's 2017 graduates are employed by organizations including Boeing, Gentex, General Electric, Edward Jones, Mayo Clinic, Samaritan's Purse, the Walt Disney Company, the

Philadelphia Phillies, the U.S. Department of Agriculture, and Compassion International.

Just as impressive is the list of graduate schools being attended by recent graduates. This list includes Dallas Theological Seminary, The Ohio State University, Campbell University School of Medicine, and Carnegie Mellon University.

"This rate of placement represents that we have outstanding programs, faculty members who are doing a great job, and graduates with character, motivation, and expertise. Employers value that, and when we get a Cedarville graduate into a position or into an internship, it isn't hard to get the next one in," said Reep. "Our students are well-prepared."



**VISIT THE
YELLOW
JACKET
ZONE**

If you love Cedarville University – home of the Yellow Jackets – this is the place to shop. Browse Cedarville apparel, gifts, and athletic-branded products available online.

Visit yellowjacketzone.com

Upcoming Events

March

- 26** Masterworks Concert
- 31** Easter Break

April

- 1–2** Easter Break
- 5–15** Spring Play – *Baskerville: A Sherlock Holmes Mystery*
- 6** CU Friday
- 13** Pharmacy Preview Day
- 17** Academic Honors Day
- 20** All-Access Orientation
- 28** Elliv

May

- 5** 122nd Annual Commencement

June

- 4–8** Academic Camps: Engineering, Theatre, Worship
- 11–15** Academic Camps: Worship, Geology, Music, Writing
- 18–22** Academic Camps: Engineering, Art and Design, Athletic Training, Pharmacy
- 25–29** Academic Camps: Criminal Justice, Forensic Science, Psychology

cedarville.edu/events

RE-TWEETS TWEET TWEET TWEET TWEET



CULead @CU_Lead · Jan 17

"CU Lead equips students to be leaders in a professional setting, promoting Christlikeness, by laying down the biblical groundwork for leadership." - Marshall. BE READY, BE AVAILABLE. Jan 19-20. #CULEAD18

CC4 Int'l Health @CCIntlhealth · Jan 25

Prayers of thanks for nursing programs that integrate faith, spirituality, and physical healing. Prayers for students and faculty at @cedarville @CedarvilleFNP @CedarvilleGHM.

Mark Vroegop @MarkVroegop · Jan 26

Record enrollment, rock solid financials, robust scholarships, vibrant spiritual culture, biblical orthodoxy, and strong leadership. This is @cedarville under @DrThomasWhite leadership. Thankful for two great days of Trustee meetings.

Paul Baloche @paulbaloche · Jan 27

Amazing weekend at Cedarville University!! Worship and teaching. Hallelujah!!

Carson Papp @CarsonPapp · Feb 4

The more that I talk to @CUHeartSong the more excited I am to get to @cedarville and audition for them. Truly some of the greatest people I've ever had the opportunity to talk to.

Daniel Michalski @The_Michalski · Feb 4

This updated [Doden Field House] surface is leaps and bounds and throws and sprints and runs and TONS better than what it was before! Thanks so much to the University and donors who made this possible. Your athletes are beyond grateful!

TOUCHED BY ADOPTION

Cedarville faculty and staff are committed to adoption. Cedarville offers an adoption benefit for faculty and staff, reimbursing adoptive parents up to \$3,000, as one way of supporting this practical living out of the Gospel. The following pictures represent just some of our Cedarville family who have been adopted or who expanded their families through adoption.

1 Jeff Bates and his wife, Serena, adopted children Sheryl, Jay, and Keegan.

2 Bobby Camilleri's wife, Carly, was adopted at birth.

3 Alan Geist '83 and his wife, **Lynn (Robinson) '91**, adopted sons William and Ryan.

4 Aleda Chen was adopted by parents James and Rhoda Hess.

5 Sharon (Klopfenstein) Christman '92 and her husband, Rob '96, adopted children Nick and Alli from Russia.

6 Melissa Beck adopted daughters Hannah and Nora.

7 Tricia (Walker) Clark '96 and her husband, Greg, adopted sons Braxton and Camden.

8 Chuck and **Rhonda Clevenger** adopted daughters Carla and Courtenay.

9 Stephanie Cronin and her husband, Paul, adopted son Christo from Bulgaria.

10 Scott Dixon '84 and his wife, Sara (Beattie) '84, adopted daughter Ellie from China. They are pictured with Ellie's foster parents who cared for her during her first eight months.

11 Chrissy (Rising) Faulkner '98 and her husband, Tom '98, adopted daughter Hallie.

12 Steve Gollmer and his wife, Evelyn (Parker) '80, adopted children Alyssa and Marcus.

13 Adam Hammett and his wife, Rachael, adopted their niece Nathalie.

14 Becky (Ferrell) Hayes '82 is the proud grandma of Evelyn and Russell Nanney, who were adopted by daughter Sara (Hayes) '08 and husband Phil Nanney '08.

15 Jennifer (Himes) Wingerter '04 was adopted as an infant by parents Cindy and Stacey Himes.

16 Aaron Hutchison '98 and his wife, Jennifer (Secor) '01, adopted children Joshua and Elliana.

17 Loren Kuhn '07 and his wife, Courtnie (Merritt) '14, adopted sons Jaydenn and Jaxson.

18 Marc Clauson and his identical twin brother, Kevin, were adopted at birth, pictured here with mom Phyllis.

19 Cyndi (Tate) Messer '94 and her husband, Jason '94, adopted their two youngest children, Elliana and Dominick.

20 Tim Overdorf '98, and his wife, Heidi, adopted daughter Jessica.

21 Mark Owens and his wife, Rachel (Bontrager) '00, adopted daughter Arianna.

22 Jeff Simon '06 and his wife, Sandahl, adopted daughter Aubrey.

23 Luke and **Linda Tse** adopted daughter Christina from China.

24 Felisha Younkin's paternal grandmother was adopted, her maternal grandmother was the first single woman in Ohio to adopt a baby (Felisha's mother), and two of Felisha's siblings are adopted.

25 Janice (Warren) Supplee '86 and her husband, Ed '85, adopted son Ben.





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YELLOW



Doden Field House Gets an Upgrade



For the first time since its construction, the Doden Field House had its floor resurfaced — all 56,000 square feet of it. It was a massive undertaking.

The task was completed by Connor Sports Flooring and features a Connor 10-millimeter ProTraxx surface on the blue six-lane track, striped per NCAA Track & Field regulations. The gray infield includes a poured Connor ElastiPlus surface with game lines painted for basketball, volleyball, tennis, and soccer. To view the resurfacing from start to finish, visit cedarville.edu/Doden-resurface.

“The additional cushion on the track surface and infield will help everyone who uses the facility,” said Mark Mathews ’82, Director of Campus Recreation. “The new surfaces will aid in our recruiting efforts, as prospective students see and experience the

beautiful new indoor track. It should attract more high school and college athletes to our indoor track meets.

“The decision to resurface the field house floor demonstrates the University’s desire to serve our students well by providing the best quality programs and facilities.”

“I am thankful to the University’s commitment and to those key people who contributed in making this happen,” said Head Track & Field Coach Jeff Bolender ’91. “We have enjoyed hosting numerous collegiate and high school meets, including Great Midwest Athletic Conference and NCCAA Championship events. This new surface ensures we can continue to host top-quality meets inside the Doden Field House.”

“This is another example of Cedarville University’s desire for

excellence,” noted Cedarville Athletic Director Alan Geist ’83. “The new track will be very beneficial for not only our track & field student-athletes, but for our other teams, all students, and the general community.”

Doden Field House opened in March 2004, providing year-round training for multiple Yellow Jacket sports and enhancing the school’s popular intramural program. Cedarville moved its graduation ceremonies into the facility in 2004, providing seating for up to 7,000 people.

The Yellow Jackets broke in the new track with the Cedarville Collegiate Invitational on February 2 and the Richey Indoor High School Tune-Up February 3. The NCCAA Indoor Track & Field Championships returned to Cedarville February 16–17.



JACKET SPORTS



Trials Are Team's Opportunity to "Rise"

Every Yellow Jacket team has a student-athlete blogger. In their posts, you catch the heart and soul of the team, and how their sport is helping them grow in their walk with Jesus. That comes through in this recent post by Abby Wolford '19 from the Lady Jackets basketball team. Read Wolford and other athletes' blogs at cedarville.edu/sportsblogs.

During our game against Kentucky Wesleyan College on February 1, Regina Hochstetler '19, one of our guards, went down with a knee injury. She re-tore the anterior cruciate ligament (ACL) from sophomore year. She had surgery on the ACL and her meniscus February 14.

This news hit our team hard. I write all the time about how close our team is and how much we all love each other. When one is hurting, we all hurt, and this injury was a prime example.

"God is good and God's ways are higher," Regina wrote on my blog. "I'm excited to see what He has for me this time around. As upset as I am that I can't finish this season on the court, I'm still feeling so privileged that I get the opportunity to sit on the sideline and cheer on a team, and be a part of a team, that's going to do some pretty cool things yet this year!"

The morning after Regina's injury, I was talking

with Head Coach Kari (Flunker) Hoffman '05 and her husband Jimmy. I asked them, "Why do these things keep happening to us?" Jimmy responded that, as Christians, we are called to endure and keep going. Sometimes really unfortunate things happen for us to show what it looks like to persevere through trials, trust in God, and be able to show who we represent and how we play for something bigger, something adversity, injury, and trials can't take away from us. We play for a greater purpose.

As I reflected on this trial, I was reminded of a quote: "More people have their eyes on you in the pit than when you come down the road in a multi-colored coat." Coach Hoffman talked about how people are watching to see how we will respond to adversity. We have an opportunity to play inspired basketball.

When thinking about how we needed to rise to the challenge presented to us and persevere through adversity, we came up with a new mantra: "Rise up." It's based on this verse: "Some trust in chariots and some in horses, but we trust in the name of the Lord our God. They collapse and fall, but we rise and stand upright" (Ps. 20:7-8).

Abby Wolford '19 is a junior guard for the Lady Jackets basketball team.

2018 Cedarville Athletic Hall of Fame Inductees



Jay Fry '51
Football and Men's Basketball



Eddie Nehus '01
Men's Track & Field



Amy (Gregory) Smith '02
Women's Tennis

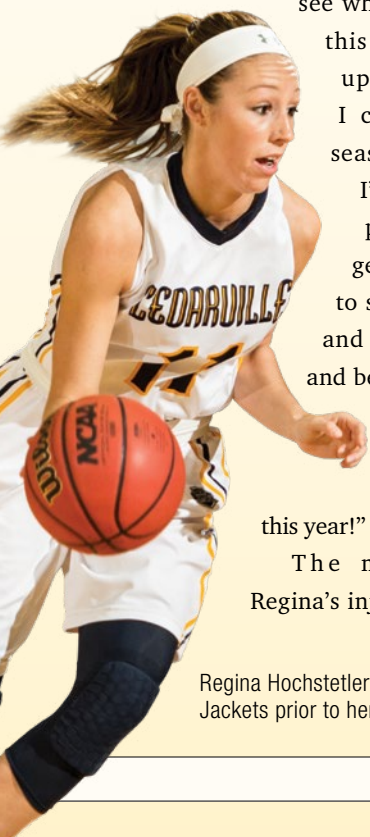


Erin (Nehus) Vergara '03
Women's Cross Country



Jon Waldo '04
Men's Soccer

To read more about these hall of fame athletes, visit cedarville.edu/2018HOF.



Regina Hochstetler '19 in action for the Lady Yellow Jackets prior to her season-ending injury

Cedarville Researches 3D Human Tissue Printing

Collaborative research by Cedarville senior biomedical engineers and the school of pharmacy shows that 3D printing of human tissue scaffolds has tremendous potential for regrowing bone. Their research was published by the Orthopedic Research Society (ORS) this March.

3D printing is commonly associated with the industrial design field, where printers are used to create prototypes or actual parts for cars, planes, and machinery or scale architectural and other types of models. Now 3D printing is being employed to recreate human organs and bone-building scaffolds.

The biomedical engineering students working on this project are Mitchell Ryan '18 (Hopkins, Michigan), Daniel Sidle '18 (Macedonia, Ohio), Stephan Smith '18 (Prompton Plains, New Jersey), Jacob Cole '18 (Sidney, Maine), Tierra Martinelli '18 (Cincinnati, Ohio) and Sarah Seman '21 (Delmont, Pennsylvania).

According to Tim Norman, Professor of Mechanical and Biomedical Engineering, biomedical engineering and pharmacy students are using a 3D printer to produce a scaffold. Polylactic acid is used in the printer; it is a biocompatible and biodegradable substance. The scaffold is a framework with which the cells will easily inhabit and mimics the body tissue being regrown.



The scaffold is submerged into a liquid growth media full of normal endothelial cells that will attach to the scaffold and reproduce. The biomedical engineering design group is partnering with Rocco Rotello, Associate Professor of Pharmaceutical Sciences, to culture human cells in the pharmaceutical science laboratory.

Ideally, the cell-enriched scaffold would be implanted into the body to eventually regrow the missing tissue. The scaffold is reabsorbed by the patient's body, while the cells produce the new tissue.

"The biomedical field is growing and moving so quickly, and this project reveals the interdisciplinary nature of this field extremely well,"

Norman said. "It shows our students that collaborative work with other disciplines is necessary for successful biomedical engineering projects."

Cedarville began this research in 2015 and is still in the early stages of the research process. The biomedical engineering department's research paper about the material properties of 3D printed scaffolds was published in March 2018 at the ORS annual meeting in New Orleans.

The end goal of this research is to design a scaffold that supports cell life and represents the tissue it is meant to replace.



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Theology and Apologetics
Cedarville University



Dr. Thomas White
President,
Cedarville University

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MOMENT

in Time



Caring for Orphans in Our Own Backyard

From 1869 to 1997, the Ohio Veterans' Children's Home (OVCH) in Xenia, Ohio, took care of orphans of sailors and soldiers from the Civil War (when it was known as the Ohio Soldiers' and Sailors' Orphans' Home), then the wars that followed, and, in its final years, children who had been removed from their families and become wards of the state. From 1959 till 1995, ministry teams from Cedarville University, including these students from 1988,

were part of OVCH's caring and nurturing atmosphere, spending time with the kids, playing with them, helping them, and sharing the Gospel of Jesus Christ with them, pointing them to an eternal, forever Father.





Adoption: In His Timing, For His Glory

We were a year into marriage when the Lord led us to Cedarville University for Adam's job as Resident Director of Brock Hall. Little did we know, God gave us more than a job, He gave us a community of believers who were not just adoption-friendly but adoption advocates. We began regularly sharing life with students, co-workers, and friends who had been touched by adoption some way. When we began sharing our plans to adopt, we were met with excitement and people who wanted to help. By the time we finished fundraising, the Cedarville community had contributed more than \$7,000.

Once initial paperwork was done and we were home-study-approved, God continued to push us outside our comfort zone. It is one thing to say you are open to any child. It's another to check boxes on an official document of disorders and disabilities. Two of our three "will not consider" categories were changed with excitement when two babies came up for adoption. Neither of those children were ours, but the Lord taught us to trust His will and not our "will considers."

We waited for more than a year, but not in vain. God did so much in our lives! He has sanctified our stubborn hearts. He opened our eyes to an incredible ministry to mothers in crisis pregnancies. We were privileged to meet seven different birth mothers, each making a loving plan for her unborn child. We prayed with each woman, sharing our hope in the Gospel as the main reason for adopting. God leveraged our waiting for His glory and our good, and we are thankful.

After a year of waiting, we met Debra. Debra was young and had three other children, one whom she had placed for adoption previously. She was pregnant

and making another adoption plan. After meeting us and a few other families, she chose to place her child with us. We were so excited! We looked forward to having an open relationship with her. We spent five months getting to know her, her kids, and her life. While we prepared to parent this little boy, we knew she could change her mind and choose to parent her child.

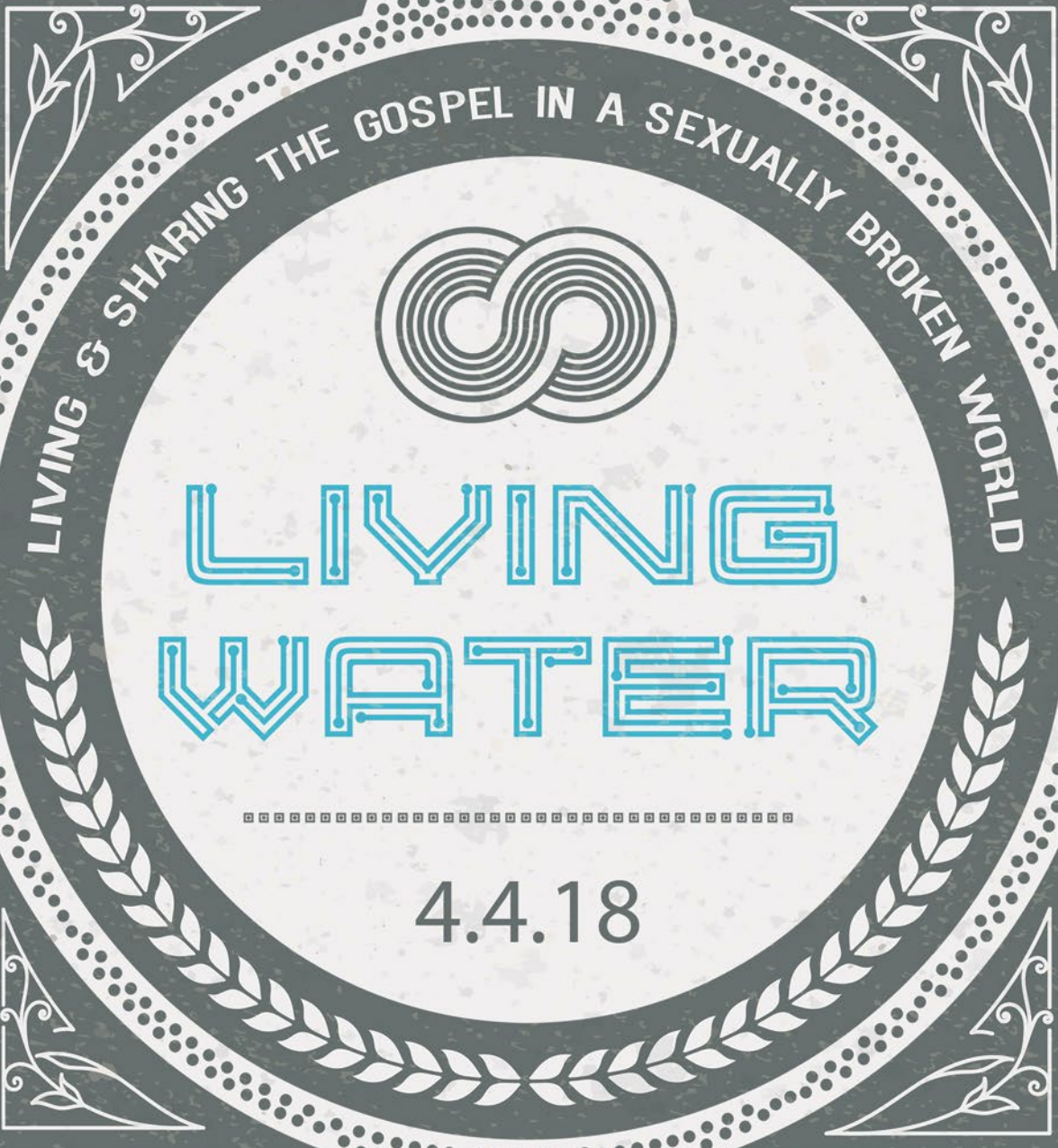
After 48 hours in the hospital, loving a baby who we thought would be ours, we came home childless. Debra had chosen to parent. It was hard, but we trusted the One who brought us this far. God had a plan for our family, and the time spent with Debra was not wasted. If it was just about bringing a baby home, then many would view this match as a failure, but there is so much more. It's about living the Gospel out in our family and to each birth mom. It was for His purpose, in His timing, and for His glory. We trusted Him and waited.

Our wait, as it turned out, was not long. We received a phone call one week after leaving the hospital childless. The social worker informed us there was a family making a last-minute adoption plan and they wanted to meet us that weekend. A few days later, we were matched with a baby due in just 10 days. God was writing a story we could have never imagined.

Exactly one month after leaving one hospital disappointed, we entered another hospital overjoyed as we met our new daughter for the first time. We held her and thanked our King and Savior for His amazing provision of this beautiful child.

Adam and Hannah Southerland serve in Brock Hall, where Adam is Resident Director.

CEDARVILLE UNIVERSITY



APOLOGETICS CONFERENCE



FEATURED SPEAKERS

ROSARIA BUTTERFIELD
SAM ALLBERRY

APRIL 4, 2018 • 10AM - 8PM

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GATHER YOUR "FRIENDS FOR LIFE" AND JOIN CEDARVILLE FOR OUR **FRIENDS FOR LIFE CRUISE** FEBRUARY 2-9, 2019

Did winter seem too long and too dreary this year? Next year, come join us for our 2019 Friends for Life Cruise to the sunny Caribbean!

This seven-night, all-inclusive cruise will sail to Labadee, Haiti; San Juan, Puerto Rico; and St. Maarten. Gather your friends or family as we join Dr. Thomas White and other Cedarville guests on this wonderful excursion. There is fun to be found for everyone! The cruise will depart from Ft. Lauderdale, Florida, on Saturday, February 2, 2019, returning on Saturday, February 9.

Prices start at \$1,560.92 for interior cabin, double occupancy.

To reserve your cabin, pay a \$250/per person deposit by November 4, 2018. Deposits are 100% refundable until November 4, 2018.

Go to cedarville.edu/anchorsaway for more details and to register. If you have any questions, please contact Alpha Journeys at 1-281-745-7082 or susan@alphajourneys.org.



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