



A Message from the Dean

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One of the more dysfunctional elements of our increasingly polarized politics in the US was that both parties confidently asserted that the election is the “most consequential vote of our lifetime,” or something along those lines. The right avered that a Democratic win would result in a quick national slide into socialism, huge tax increases, confiscation of guns, urban violence, and the eradication of religious practices

from public life. The left asserted that a Republican win would result in a new wave of discrimination against women and minorities, the loss of health care for millions, wasteful and dangerous military expenditures, and increased privileging of wealthy individuals and corporations. Extremist tendencies by political activists on both sides were then exacerbated by social media and a nervous public caught up in COVID-induced anxiety about the fragility of our social order.

In the midst of this fraught environment, a thoughtful group of Asbury University faculty members are working together with psychology professor Dr. Paul Nesselroade '89 to develop a new Honors Program, to be launched in the Fall 2021 term. Infused throughout the program will be the theme of “human dignity and ethics,” the notion that the Christian gospel bestows inestimable worth on each human, and that our personal mission—no matter our vocation or circumstances in life—should be to develop the virtues, habits, and practices that enable us to live in a manner that honors and buttresses the Imago Dei in ourselves and others. The Honors Program will pursue this theme across a series of intellectually rich integrative seminars, from an array of academic fields, along with travel experiences, colloquium speaker series, enhanced courses in student majors, service activities, and research projects. Those of us involved in this effort are thrilled about the academic and spiritual enrichment that will spill across campus as this program is implemented in coming years.

I can think of few more effective ways to combat the frenzied concerns of our political activists, and the fraught moment we share in our social and economic life, than to situate our personal narratives within the ongoing struggle to understand and respond to the Imago Dei concept. As we develop and field our Honors Program, we aspire to do this with an equal mix of competence and humility at our Christian liberal arts university.



ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT: *Benjamin Lewis '07*



Benjamin Lewis '07, the director of Translation Services for the International Commission on English in the Liturgy (ICEL), combines his academic interest in Latin, Christian worship and liturgy as he provides the official English translation of the Latin liturgical books of the Catholic Church. He finds joy in knowing that his study of Latin and his interest in English style and grammar is contributing to a faithful and beautiful translation of the prayers and liturgical texts. A daunting task at times, Ben is reminded that God can use our daily efforts and that He delights in every renewal of purpose, every little act of discipline undertaken for His sake. Something as simple as proofreading can be made into an offering of love. His hope is that, through their attentiveness in translation, hundreds of millions of Catholics around the world will have a richer experience of worship and communion with God. Ben and his wife, Caitlin Phillips '08 Lewis, and their two children live outside of Washington, DC.



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FACULTY SPOTLIGHT:
Dr. David Swartz

Swartz began teaching at Asbury in 2010 after earning a Ph.D. in history from the University of Notre Dame. His areas of expertise and teaching interest include American religious history, Anabaptist and Mennonite history, twentieth-century American culture, global religion, Civil War memory, and issues of war and peace. An accomplished author and advocate of reading, he loves constructing fascinating stories from the past in both his teaching and his writing. He likes to see his students engage in charitable reading, not with an eye to quickly refute or dismiss, but to reach for understanding, putting the best gloss on the reading of others. "I try to create a classroom culture in which we approach readings with thoughtfulness and care, not as consumers to read as quickly and efficiently as possible." Encouraging his

students to keep cultivating intellectual curiosity, Swartz loves to teach American history because he likes traveling in time to places that were not like his own – the past is truly a foreign country.



STUDENT SPOTLIGHT:
Stephen "Brett" Gillespie '21

A fourth generation Wilmore native, Brett's passion and interest in Representative Democracy led him to study Political Science with a minor in French. Acknowledging that politics can be a divisive field, he finds joy in identifying an issue and then coming up with a policy solution. To really solve problems, you need a seat at the table and Brett is doing his part to make this happen. He has interned for the state government in Frankfort, working for the Legislative Research Commission, and ran for a place on Wilmore's City Council. If he had been elected, he would have been the youngest member to serve on the Council. "The best and most direct way for someone to get involved in politics is with your local government. It's gratifying to know that if you're doing the job right, you'll be able to make a real, positive impact on your community and the lives of your fellow citizens."

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