

Senior Chapel Reflection

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Class of 2001

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Albert Einstein once wrote, “There are only two ways to live your life. One is as though nothing is a miracle. The other is as though everything is a miracle.” Without doubt, there are many here today who find themselves echoing the latter thought . . . it is indeed a *miracle* that graduation day has arrived. Despite moments of stress, anxiety, and doubt over the past four years, there is living proof in this room that God does miraculous things.

When I arrived at Calvin four years ago, I had no idea what I’d come to learn, who I’d come to befriend, where I’d end up going, or what I’d end up seeing. I knew only that God had directed every step of my life up to that point and that His gentle prodding had somehow landed me at Calvin College . . . which, I might add, is probably the first place I’d ever been where I wasn’t self-conscious of my height.

What I leave here with, is a lifetime’s worth of memories, of knowledge, and of friendships that are centered on the very One who creates, sustains, and redeems life.

As a freshman, I embraced college life somewhat shyly, attending the social functions in my dorm and gradually finding my niche at this new place. I dove headfirst into the choral program at Calvin. With various choral groups I had an opportunity to travel to California, Florida, New Mexico, Indiana, and Canada. In these places I experienced the hospitality of God’s children first-hand and I came to see that no matter where you are in the world . . . there’s bound to be a Calvin graduate nearby who will eagerly share memories of Calvin amidst piles of ham buns and huge pans of lasagna. My experiences in the choral program gave me the confidence and developed a love of music and fine arts that I believe I’ll never outgrow. Calvin taught me to sing the miracle of God’s redemption and power.

My second year at Calvin led me in a completely different direction. As a Resident Assistant on the Mosaic Floor, God slowly and patiently began to teach me about diversity. Living on a floor with 40 young women who were about as different as 40 people can be, I began to understand the intricacies of God as Creator. No matter what people say, I still claim that I had the best dorm floor that Calvin College has ever seen and I still claim that the relationships and bonds from that experience taught me more than any textbook ever will about the importance of

recognizing people for who they are for the wisdom and life-lessons that they can offer to me and the world at large. I learned that it's not enough to *not* be racist. I need to be *anti-racism*, and I need to realize that even I . . . one little person in the grand scheme of things . . . can make a difference. Calvin taught me to celebrate the differences and wonder in the similarities between my neighbors and myself.

By the time my junior year rolled around, I was eager to pursue my love of theater and acting. Timid at first, I came to realize that acting isn't necessarily something you have to strive to pursue. . . it's something that pursues you until it's enveloped your heart and soul. God blessed me through the productions I participated in here at Calvin. My fellow thespians taught me the power of grace and acceptance, while my instructors and directors showed me the awesome responsibility we have as Christian actors to reveal Christ's wonder to the world. I found in theater, a place to release all the questions, all the struggles, all the joys, all the mysteries that I encountered in life. And I found that my faith grew when I dared to engage issues like death, decay, humor and wit, story and song. Calvin taught me to perform for an audience of One and to love the complexities of the human nature.

As a senior at Calvin, I participated in the Orientation Board, where I had the privilege of introducing 1100 freshman to the place I'd come to love and appreciate. As an added perk of that position, I got to relive my "dining hall days" . . . although I can't complain because my meals consisted of the delicious menu items that somehow magically appear every time parents are on campus. The fall of this year led me to WOOD TV8, the NBC affiliate here in town, where I completed an internship in communications and was later hired as an Assignment Editor. Last semester I also had the opportunity to take CAS 399 . . . or "Senior Seminar" as it's commonly called. In this class, I learned the importance of discovering what I was created to do. Of looking at my passions, talents, and giftedness and trying to decipher what direction God may be pointing me in. Calvin taught me to dare to dream big and to be still long enough to let God open doors that are far too heavy for me to budge.

And that leads me to today. On the eve of college graduation, two weeks before my marriage to a wonderful Christian man, I can stand here and say one thing with certainty: God is faithful and He knows what's ahead. He has planted my steps for me long before I roamed this earth. And He can hardly wait to show me what's around the next bend.

So, as I wrap up my reflection on four life-changing, life-affirming, life-giving years at Calvin, I remind you to stop and smell the miracles this weekend. You are a living example of the intricacy of God's plan . . . His timing . . . and His provision.

The final portion of the passage of Psalm 118 read earlier by my friend Hae-Won states:
“The Lord has done this, and it is marvelous in our eyes. This is the day that the Lord has made.
Let us rejoice and be glad in it.” May we never cease to see the “marvelous” in what’s around us.
And may we always look forward with rejoicing at what’s to come.