

Comment

*Hauna Ondrey, assistant professor of church history,
North Park Theological Seminary, Chicago, Illinois*

This issue captures portions of two winter 2019 events: the inauguration of Mary K. Surridge as tenth president of North Park University and the Covenant Midwinter Conference held in Denver, Colorado.

Among the many events marking President Surridge's inauguration was an academic symposium, held February 13, 2019. The symposium lecture was offered by Kathryn J. Edin, professor of sociology and public affairs at the Woodrow Wilson School of Princeton University—as well as North Park alumna and current trustee. In “Enlightened Hearts, Warmed Intellects: City Challenges and Opportunities and North Park Possibilities,” Edin surveys the triumphs and tragedies of the city, noting that by 2050, two-thirds of the world population will likely live in urban areas. Drawing on her extensive research on the effects of hyper-segregation and benefits of its mitigation, Edin notes the opportunity before North Park University, given its location in the most ethnically diverse neighborhood in Chicago. As she concludes, “in one of the most segregated cities in the nation, in the most economically segregated time in our history as a nation this, in itself, is the kingdom of God, the New Jerusalem, breaking through.”

Three respondents offered comments on Edin's lecture, two of which provided their responses for publication here: Michelle A. Clifton-Soderstrom, professor of theology and ethics at North Park Seminary, and Rich Kohng, director of civic engagement for the University's Catalyst Hub. (All three responses, along with Edin's lecture and concluding discussion, can be viewed at www.youtube.com/watch?v=WZ_nn4wgQWg.)

The inauguration symposium proceedings are followed by two ser-

mons from the 2019 Covenant Midwinter Conference. “Recentering Justice” is the call of Liz Mosbo VerHage, pastor of global and local ministries at Quest Church (Seattle) and current president of the Covenant Ministerium. VerHage underscores the inseparability of spiritual health and justice ministry, drawing from 1 Samuel’s example of Hannah and anti-example of Eli and his sons. “An Ecclesiology of Shalom,” is sketched by José Humphreys, lead pastor of Metro Hope Covenant Church (East Harlem), and Adam Gustine, project lead for CovEnterprises (South Bend, Indiana). Humphreys and Gustine propose shalom as a guiding framework for the church’s communal life and reconciling ministry in the world.

The diverse voices of this issue together call for active Christian engagement in social transformation that is rooted in spiritual formation and ordered to the kingdom of God. We are glad to extend this call in print form.