Enlightened Hearts, Warmed Intellects: City Challenges and Opportunities and North Park Possibilities[1]

Kathryn J. Edin, professor of sociology and public affairs, Woodrow Wilson School, Princeton University, Princeton, New Jersey

In 1950, 30 percent—about one-third—of the world's population was urban. By around 2008, that figure surpassed 50 percent. Last year, 55 percent of the world's population lived in cities, and by 2050 about two-thirds of all citizens across the globe will live in cities. The twentieth century has been called "the Urban Century." What then of the twenty-first century? It is an age in which everywhere, all across the globe the influence of the city will be felt.

In his book *Triumph of the City*, Harvard economist Edward Glaeser heralds the city as our species' greatest invention.[2] He shows how the city lifted human achievements to heights that would not have been possible without urbanization. This is believable. Cities are our seats of government. Cities are the locations of our great cultural institutions. Most institutions of higher learning are in cities, and many of the marvels of modern architecture are in cities as well. Industrialization was key in the history of cities because it transformed them from edifices of protection, safety, and controlling routes of transportation and trade to places that concentrated capital and labor in amazing ways that allowed for unparalleled opportunities for economic growth.

[1] Symposium lecture marking the inauguration of Mary K. Surridge as North Park University president. Delivered February 13, 2019.

[2] Edward Glaeser, *Triumph of the City: How Our Greatest Invention Makes Us Richer, Smarter, Greener, Healthier, and Happier* (New York: Penguin Press, 2011).

But the industrializing city was also was also a magnet for poor immigrants from Europe and migrants from other parts of the United States. Some of these immigrants were pushed by crop failures and poor harvests, such as my ancestors from Sweden. Others by untenable social conditions, which prompted scores of African American migrants to move north during the Great Migration to what was thought of as "the promised land." Still others by revolution and the pull of industrial jobs, as was the case for scores of Mexicans and, later, Mexican Americans, as Chicago drew them east.

Early twentieth-century sociologist Ernest Burgess observed this massive influx of immigrants coming into the city of Chicago at the turn of the century.[3] He described how the city metabolized cascades of newcomers, perniciously and persistently segregating them by race and ethnicity—the Italians to Little Italy, the Germans to Deutschland, the Chinese to Chinatown, and the African Americans increasingly to the corridor along State Street that became known as the "Black Belt."

The city also segregated newcomers and old-timers by income. Closest to the city center were the poorest citizens, who were relegated to what Burgess called the "ghetto," the "underworld," or the "roomers" districts. Those a little bit better off moved outward to claim the "two-flats," and those who were even better off the bungalows and single-family homes. As Harvey Zorbaugh, one of the founders of the Chicago School of Sociology, observed in 1929 in his book *The Gold Coast and the Slum*,[4] the Loop contained the central business district but also the most affluent residents of the city, hence the name the "Gold Coast." But this gold coast lay cheek to jowl with the slum.

What the work of all of these early twentieth-century sociologists hinted at was a deep tragedy that, despite Edward Glaeser's prose, has proven to be as endemic to cities as the triumphs Glaeser describes. Industrial cities and now post-industrial cities, which by their nature attract unparalleled diversity, are often deeply segregated by ethnicity, by race, and by class. Chicago has been a poster child for these trends. Early industrialized cities often oppressed their workers and relegated

[3] Ernest W. Burgess, "The Growth of the City: An Introduction to a Research Project," in Robert E. Park, Ernest W. Burgess, and Roderick D. McKenzie, *The City* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1925).

[4] Harvey Warren Zorbaugh, *The Gold Coast and the Slum: A Sociological Study of Chicago's Near North Side* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1929).

them to squalid living conditions. Thus, one feature of industrialized cities is that they are often the scenes of intense class conflict, such as the 1886 Chicago Haymarket Riot, one of the most important riots in labor history, nationally and globally, all starting when a few marchers coalesced in support of workers who were striking for, among other things, an eight-hour work day.

Racial conflict has also been endemic to cities, such as the Chicago race riot of 1919, the worst of the "red summer" riots that erupted across the country that year. In Chicago, thirty-eight people died and more than 500 were injured. What started this riot? An African American boy was swimming in Lake Michigan, and he accidentally drifted down the lake into an area that was informally designated whites only. White youth began lobbing rocks at the swimmer until he drowned. The riot resulted from African Americans rising up in protest against this violent act. Student-led protest movements are also features of industrialized cities, such as the student movements opposing the Vietnam War that disrupted the 1968 Democratic National Convention, held in Chicago.

Thus, by the mid-twentieth century, the work of urbanists reflected both the triumph and tragedy of growing industrial cities. Perhaps the best-known, Jane Jacobs, author of *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*, found real hope in the diversity of the cities.[5] But on the other hand, Lewis Mumford believed that cities were doomed if they did not begin to find a way to organize themselves around the needs of people rather than machines.[6] Our provost's new book, *Market Cities, People Cities*, tells the story of cities that have organized themselves around human needs. To quote Emerson, "'Market cities' end up with higher social inequality and more segregation and higher crime than 'people cities.'…People cities have higher trust among their people and more civic participation than market cities."[7]

When I was a graduate student, I became captivated by the work of French sociologist and sometime theologian Jacques Ellul. One of Ellul's master works, *The Meaning of the City*, not only captured this tension—the triumph and tragedy of the city—better than any other,

[5] Jane Jacobs, *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* (New York: Vintage Books, 1992).

[6] Lewis Mumford, *The City in History* (New York: Harcourt Brace and World, 1961).

[7] Michael Oluf Emerson and Kevin T. Smiley, *Market Cities, People Cities: The Shape of Our Urban Future* (New York: New York University Press, 2018), 158.

but it also offered a biblical diagnosis of the problem and a prophetic cure. The book has what is perhaps the best first sentence of any work of urban sociology I've read: "The first builder of a city was Cain. The circumstances were these…."[8]

What were these circumstances? According to Scripture, recounts Ellul, Cain built the first city after he murdered his brother and was cast out, cursed to wander. But he was marked with the symbol of God's protection, and he was promised that God would offer him safety and security. But Cain chose to go his own way, and instead of relying on God's promise of security, he created his own by building the first city. The city was a sign of Cain's rebellion. In keeping with this, Ellul reminds us that the famous early cities—Babel, Babylon, Nineveh—were all known for their rebellion.

I felt the tragedy of the city viscerally when I first came to Chicago in 1980, as a North Park freshman. North Park had just decided to stay in the city. Imagine what its president and board members must have felt when, in March 1981, there was a series of violent incidents on the North Side of Chicago in the Cabrini Green area (the very area many Swedes had first settled in Chicago in the nineteenth century). The violence was so severe that thirty-seven people had been shot and eleven had died. Jane Byrne, the first woman mayor of a major US city, made international headlines when she moved into the Chicago's most notorious public housing project, Cabrini Green, with her husband. She lasted only three weeks.

The 1980 census had just been administered prior to my freshman year, and it revealed something extraordinary. It showed that there was an historically high and rapidly growing trend in the city that posed a pernicious and unique threat. That was the growth of concentrated poverty, defined as neighborhoods in which at least 40 percent of one's neighbors are poor. The work of sociologist William J. Wilson showed a dramatic increase from the 1970s in the number of neighborhoods that were extremely poor. In just a decade's time, one's probability of being poor and living in a hyper-segregated neighborhood had increased dramatically. Importantly, Wilson argued that it was the rise of this extreme segregation in cities by income, layered on to the historical pattern of

[8] Jacques Ellul, *The Meaning of the City* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1970), 1.

racial segregation, that explained why the War on Poverty had not been won.[9]

These hyper-segregated neighborhoods did not arise by accident. The Chicago Housing Authority had sited massive public housing high-rises inside the historic Black Belt, closed off from the rest of the city by the Dan Ryan expressway and other barriers, physical and legal, such as restrictive housing covenants. To cross these boundaries meant that one risked one's life. On the South Side, the Robert Taylor Homes was the largest cluster of public housing in the world. Although they looked shiny and new when construction finished in 1962, they quickly became corridors of poverty and despair.

In 1982, facilitated by North Park sociology professor David Claerbaut, I began an internship in the neighborhood surrounding Cabrini Green, just after Jane Byrne's historic tenancy there. While I was there, I met April, an elementary-school student who was tutored after school by North Park students. April introduced me to her mother, Sonja, and it was amazing to me how instantly I felt an affinity with Sonja. She was a small-town gal from Mississippi; I was a small-town kid from Minnesota. Neither one of us had more than one stoplight in our hometowns, and we both felt the city to be a somewhat alienating and strange place. Though I didn't know it then, that relationship marked a turning point in my life and charted my career.

Soon after, while I was a graduate student at Northwestern, I took on a part-time teaching job with a North Park program that provided college classes in some of the city's most disadvantaged neighborhoods. I found myself spending afternoons teaching sociology courses in North Lawndale, another hyper-segregated neighborhood—the poorest neighborhood in the city at the time. My very first assignment was to teach Minority Cultures (ironically, I was the only non-minority in the class). There I met wonderful North Park students, including Shirlee, Rita, and Valerie, who taught me much more than I taught them—more about what it was like to live in places of hyper-segregation and try to raise a family, what it was like trying to subsist on welfare while raising their families and attempting to improve their educational prospects and their human capital. It was these relationships that undergirded my first major

[9] See William J. Wilson, *The Truly Disadvantaged: The Inner City, the Underclass, and Public Policy* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2012).

book, with Laura Lein, *Making Ends Meet*.[10]

Later, as a professor, I received several research grants to follow a group of families that had managed to escape these vertical ghettos, due to a landmark Supreme Court decision, *Gautreaux et al. v. Chicago Housing Authority*, the nation's first major public housing desegregation lawsuit. Dorothy Gautreaux, the main plaintiff, had been a resident of Altgeld Gardens. This suit charged that by concentrating more than 100,000 almost completely African American public housing residents in segregated black neighborhoods, the Chicago Housing Authority and HUD had violated both the US Constitution and 1964 Civil Rights Act. The court found both CHA and HUD guilty of discriminatory housing practices.

One remedy the CHA was required to implement was to offer a portion of its residents the chance to move to a less segregated neighborhood through a voucher. The early results of this program were so successful that soon HUD followed suit with a similar national program, called Moving to Opportunity. I was able to follow these families, and when I first interviewed them, I asked each of them what it had been like to live in these hyper-segregated areas. One told me,

> I felt like it was a mistake—somebody dropped me off and didn't come back and pick me up. It was torture. It was sometimes like a [bad] dream.…The elevators was always broke. You had to walk thirteen flights of steps. My kids couldn't go downstairs all the time to the playground with the other kids when the elevator was broke [because] people would get to shooting down there, and I [couldn't] come running down thirteen flights of steps to save 'em.

Another told me,

> That was the worst experience that I ever experienced, living in an environment which made you feel trapped, caged, and worthless, just stuck into the atmosphere of absolutely no progress. It was a whole little community of pure dissatisfaction in everything. No one encouraged no one.…I became

[10] Kathryn Edin and Laura Lein, *Making Ends Meet: How Single Mothers Survive Welfare and Low-Wage Work* (New York: Russell Sage Foundations, 1997).

> stabilized in my depression….I knew I could not do anything as long as I was trapped in that situation.[11]

In *The Meaning of the City*, Ellul conceded that the city was indeed the most significant creation of humankind. Yet he insisted that it still carried with it a tragic legacy. For Ellul the city remained Babel, a site of rebellion against God. But that is not where his exegesis ended.

In the New Testament, "Jerusalem represents both the city's persistent distress and the city's eventual restoration," according to Ellul scholar Noah Toly.[12] Despite the fact that it was born out of rebellion, God still promises to eventually redeem the city—all cities. This promise will only be fully realized in the New Jerusalem, the heavenly city. In the meantime, we as Christians find ourselves in the uncomfortable but familiar position of being in the "now but not yet."

Does this mean we should flee the city, turn our back on its despair? To this question Ellul says a resounding no. While we wait, in this period of now but not yet, we are without question called to live and work in the city. In fact, it is vital that we do so. Because Christians in the city "represent the presence of God in the midst of the self-assertion, self-realization, and self-sufficiency of human beings."[13] Our presence in the city is vital because we must, through our lives and our actions, symbolize what the kingdom of God is like. Ellul warns that the kingdom will not come without suffering. We may fail. But there will still be miracles along the way as we try to represent the kingdom by seeking justice and mercy for the city.

A century of census data from the city of Chicago reveals something interesting, even miraculous. That data shows an evolving portrait of the growing racial and ethnic divides in the city—but with some notable exceptions. In 1910 the city was overwhelmingly white, save for the emerging non-white populations in the Near South Side, Armor Square, Douglas, and Fuller Park neighborhoods—neighborhoods that

[11] Kristin Turney, Rebecca Kissane, and Kathryn Edin, "After Moving to Opportunity: How Moving to a Low-poverty Neighborhood Improves Mental Health among African American Women," *Society and Mental Health* 3, no. 1 (2013): 1–21.

[12] Noah Toly, "The Meaning of the Global City: Jacques Ellul's Continued Relevance to Twenty-first Century Urbanism," *Bulletin of Science, Technology, and Society* 32, no. 3 (2012): 235.

[13] Ibid., 236.

still remained over 60 percent white. In 1920 we see the consolidation and spread of this area, moving southward, as the city's historic Black Belt began to form. The years 1930 and 1940 show the consolidation of the city's Black Belt. By 1930, Douglas, Grant Boulevard, and Washington Park were about 80 percent African American—a dramatic change from just a decade before—and by 1940, that figure was 90 percent or more in the latter two neighborhoods.

By 1950, we see the Black Belt bursting at its seams with overpopulation. The Great Migration had brought scores African Americans to the city, a number that would reach half a million by 1970. But these migrants were restricted to this little bit of land hugging a thirty-block corridor of South State Street, hemmed in by social custom, restrictive covenants, and physical barriers, with violent repercussions for those who dared to try to move outside of its confines. In 1960, for the first time, we see the emergence of multiple neighborhoods with no majority population. During this time period, these would all prove to be neighborhoods in the midst of rapid racial turnover, as those of European descent were replaced by African American, Mexican, and Chinese newcomers. By 1970s, the city was divided, nonwhites segregated into corridors stretching South and West, while whites held the North and Southwest sides. By this point racial turnover was in full force, as whites fled the city. By 1980, Latino-majority districts had emerged. Pilsen and South Lawndale were by that time 80 percent or more Latino. By 1990, Logan Square and its neighbors had also become majority Latino neighborhoods.

These patterns of segregation continued into 2000, but then there was a marked increase in the number of neighborhoods with no majority population, including Albany Park, North Park's neighborhood. Since it began to diversify, Albany Park has largely resisted the segregating impulse of the city and the process of rapid racial turnover. As a result, Albany Park looks…a lot like Chicago. It is a little less white than the city on average, more Hispanic, less black, and more Asian, but all the major racial and ethnic groups are represented here in this neighborhood. Entering into the twenty-first century, Albany Park stands as one of the five most diverse—using a multi-factor index of diversity, both by race and by class—and it is the most ethnically diverse neighborhood in the city. According to a 2008 DePaul University report, about half of its residents are foreign born, hailing from five countries, with children speaking forty different languages. I ask you, what are the chances?

What are the chances that a university built on farmland in 1894 on

the outskirts of a burgeoning city would find itself, more than a century later, at ground zero—in a place where people from such varied backgrounds are living together, brushing shoulders, sometimes bridging cultural divides? Is this an accident, or is it divine providence? Does this smell, feel, taste a little like the kingdom?

Lest you think that neighborhoods that resist segregation are unimportant, let me take you back to those families I spent a decade and a half following, those who had the rare opportunity to move from the corridors of poverty and despair I showed you earlier—the hyper-segregated neighborhoods of the South and West Sides. I was one of a team of researchers who followed these families for fifteen years to find out how they fared. We learned that while initial moves were varied, many ended up settling in neighborhoods that were about average for the city as a whole—neighborhoods like Albany Park. We started interviews in the mid-1990s but went back to interview some of these parents and their children in 2002 and then again in 2007 and 2010, following some through 2013, when the children were entering late adolescence and early adulthood.[14] After us, a team of economists used IRS data to follow the children into their mid-twenties.

What did injecting just a little justice into the lives of these families accomplish—families who, due to their sharply segregated lives, had seen more of the tragedy of the city than its triumphs? Our study showed that the youth in these families were about two and a half times more likely to graduate high school than their parents, and roughly four times more likely to enroll in college or trade school. Furthermore, 82 percent of the 150 youth we followed into early adulthood were "on track" by the study's end—either working or in school. Less than 20 percent had ever been involved in the drug trade or other serious criminal activity. What we witnessed was a huge intergenerational leap forward.

We found that the key factor distinguishing who flourished and who stumbled was if, during adolescence, a youth found an "identity project," something to be "about," a sustaining passion that formed a bridge between the challenges of the present and future aspirations. The most effective of these identity projects were those that were facilitated by adult mentors. North Park's Urban Outreach program provides such mentors,

[14] Stefanie DeLuca, Susan Clampet-Lundquist, and Kathryn Edin, *Coming of Age in the Other America* (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 2016).

by participating in after-school tutoring programs in elementary schools all over the city of Chicago and volunteering at Young Life at Lane Tech High School.

When the team of economists followed these young people even further, into their mid-twenties, they found that those offered the opportunity to move from public housing with the voucher, relative to those who weren't, saw about a third more income, a third more college going, higher college quality, and a sharp reduction (27 percent) in single motherhood.[15] Just a little bit of justice, a merciful relief from hyper-segregation meant so much to these young people. And I believe this is powerful evidence that efforts to bring justice and mercy to the city can bear fruit.

Earlier I reminded you of the miracle of North Park ending up at ground zero—the archetypal neighborhood for diversity in the city. But I often smell, feel, and taste the kingdom of God in this place for another reason. I want you to imagine this scene. I'm sitting in the Johnson Center's Bickner Bistro in October 2018, waiting for the board of trustees meeting to start. Outside the window is the crossroads of campus, that brick circle anchored by a brass plaque embedded in the center where the sidewalks come together. Bounding the circle are low walls bowing outward, lettered with the words, "Seek justice, love mercy, walk with God." If the author of these words, the prophet Micah, were here with us today, *just maybe* he would have added "in the city."

I lift my eyes to the foot traffic traversing the circle. I see women and men. I see a cornucopia of diversity by ethnicity and race. I see future pastors, nurses, physicians, educators, historians, business people, engineers, musicians, artists, public servants, and maybe even some future sociologists. They're all together. They're rubbing shoulders. They are nodding and laughing. You may think this is normal if you hang around this place a lot, but it's not. These students learn together. They live together. They compete together, perform together, serve together. They travel to the city every Wednesday to that vital living laboratory, Chicago, together. They pray and worship together. And now, thanks to visionary leadership at the seminary, our students include both incarcerated and free.

We don't do it perfectly. Those of us on the board know that not all

[15] Raj Chetty, Nathaniel Hendren, and Lawrence Katz, "The Effects of Exposure to Better Neighborhoods on Children: New Evidence from the Moving to Opportunity Project," *American Economic Review* 106, no. 4 (2016): 855–902.

of our students experience North Park in the same way—not by a long shot. We have urgent work to do. But 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.

Response

Michelle A. Clifton-Soderstrom, professor of theology and ethics, North Park Theological Seminary, Chicago, Illinois

Thank you Dr. Edin for the gift of your scholarship, for your investment in North Park, and most importantly your passion for the kingdom. My remarks are directed to the work Dr. Edin is calling us to—a work that challenges North Park University's core values of being Christian, city-centered, and intercultural.

At this time in our history, I challenge us to greater maturity in our core value of being intercultural and to examine in depth what it means for North Park to be intercultural. Angela Davis argues that there is a significant difference between multiculturalism and justice, especially racial justice.[16] It would be easy for us to believe that because we are diverse we have overcome or at least come to terms with racism.

But multiculturalism at its core is not simply diverse representation or a "bouquet of flowers" or a "beautiful mosaic" or even hitting the tipping point of over 50 percent non-majority culture students on our campus. Multiculturalism is not a metaphor. Nor is it a number. At its best, multiculturalism is the creation of spaces where the cross-cultural community names oppression, fights for justice, and addresses structural inequalities together. It is the space to resist something and build something, and I believe this is deeply Christian and city-centered.

[16] Angela Y. Davis, *Abolition Democracy: Beyond Prison, Torture, and Empire* (New York: Seven Stories Press, 2005), 31.

Edin's work calls us specifically to resist segregation, because segregation is not good for the city, and more accurately, to recall Provost Emerson's language, it is not good for the *people* in the city.[17] The descriptions of hyper-segregation that Edin relayed from those who lived in Chicago housing projects tell in vivid terms why segregation is not good: "It was torture," "like a bad dream," "living in an environment that made you feel trapped, caged, worthless," "it was pure dissatisfaction in everything," and finally, "I knew I could not do anything as long as I was trapped in that situation."

Social psychologist Thomas Pettigrew argues that hyper-segregation in America's housing is "the structural linchpin of today's patterns of institutional racism."[18] Rising poverty over the last forty years in black neighborhoods in particular corresponds with harsh and disadvantaged social environments. These spatially concentrated areas of disadvantage in our city of Chicago show us that our intercultural work toward racial justice is ahead of us.

I offer an example. Chicago is often described as a city of neighborhoods. In all the studies I have read on our neighborhoods and in looking at the maps marking the various districts and wards, *none* includes Stateville Correctional Center. Stateville is a maximum-security prison in Crest Hill. You may be thinking, rightly, that Stateville is not located in the city proper, so that is why it is not on the map of Chicago neighborhoods.

Yet a bit of background about Stateville may convince you otherwise. Approximately 60 percent of those at Stateville are black, even though only 14 percent of the Illinois population is black. By contrast, 30 percent are white, whereas whites comprise approximately 70 percent of the state population. Further, the prison population in the state of Illinois has grown from 6,000 in the mid-1970s to 49,000 today in 2019. Finally, the majority of persons incarcerated at Stateville are from Chicago's South and West Sides.

At a time in history when we are experiencing a marked increase in integrated neighborhoods in our city, we have relocated people from Chicago's Black Belt to Stateville. Stateville is, then, arguably one of Chicago's most segregated neighborhoods.

[17] Emerson and Smiley, *Market Cities, People Cities.*

[18] Thomas Pettigrew, *The Sociology of Race Relations: Reflection and Reform* (Washington, DC: Free Press), 242.

As "ground zero" in Edin's words, North Park is strategically situated to resist things such as segregation. We are not only strategically positioned to resist, however. We are positioned to *build* something. After all, that's what cities are all about, and here is why this is good news for us. The kingdom of God allows us to do something that good intentions in the city alone cannot—the kingdom of God allows us to transcend the spatial limitations of Albany Park and even the city.

We are resisting segregation in Stateville by building educational programming in prison with outside North Parkers. As you know, the seminary enrolled thirty-eight incarcerated degree-seeking MA students at Stateville last fall, and we have fifteen or so "visiting" incarcerated students.

And what is happening on our Stateville campus is not just a seminary program. Undergraduate students take courses inside. There is significant Writing Center peer support (our director is there today training fifteen new writing assistants who will work from Stateville under the direction of the Writing Center), and the undergraduate Gospel Choir has regularly performed joint concerts with the Stateville Choir for over four years. In total, over the last few years, we have had more than 300 free North Parkers—from students to board members to Evangelical Covenant representatives to major donors—go to the Stateville campus. By blurring the lines between the Albany Park neighborhood and the Stateville neighborhood, North Park is actively resisting segregation in this city.

If we are going to build education in a truly Christian, city-centered, intercultural way, we must embrace our interculturalism as the space to live the struggle of inequalities together, and I believe the faith/learning community is the most significant place for this to happen.

Edin's research in *Coming of Age in the Other America* and *$2 Dollars a Day: Living on Almost Nothing in America* shows definitively that young people's finding an "identity project"—something to be about or a sustaining passion that forms a bridge between the challenges of the present and future aspirations—has "the power to interrupt the intergenerational transmission of disadvantage."[19] And when it does, people's trajectories change dramatically for the better.

Building through education means that everybody—not only those

[19] DeLuca, Clampet-Lundquist, and Edin, *Coming of Age in the Other America*, 2.

who have experienced more "tragedy than triumph"—finds their identity project. For those of us who have "experienced more triumph than tragedy," our identity project looks different. When I frame the work North Park is doing at Stateville, I am clear that it is not "charity" or "free education." It is North Park doing what it does best—Christian higher education in the city—in a form of creative, Christ-like reparations, a "healing balm" to use Minnehaha Academy's president Donna Harris's image from chapel this morning.

I believe that under the leadership of President Surridge and the work of colleagues such as Michael Emerson (provost), David Kersten (seminary dean), and Shena Keith (acting vice-president for advancement), North Park is strategically situated to do the "urgent work" that Dr. Edin call us into.

President Surridge prayed these words as part of her closing prayer at the seminary convocation last fall:

> On this day, we lift to you, the hearts, minds, bodies, and labors of *all* students of North Park this year. Before us today we have the precious students who will seek your wisdom, guidance, and grace as seminarians studying on our local campus. And joining them in places distant from this sacred chapel, but deeply held to our hearts—in places of freedom and in places of restraint—we seek your hand of safety and your gift of grace. For we know that education may grant us freedom and knows *no* restraint. You have called these students, and you will likewise equip them.

President Surridge did not simply pray a prayer at convocation in North Park/Albany Park. She also blurred neighborhood lines and took this prayer into the Stateville neighborhood last September.

While we have remained true to our Albany Park heritage of resisting segregation, we still have urgent work to do in the city, and we will know our work of integration is behind us when *all* of our brothers and sisters may, in the words of Kathryn Edin, "Learn together. Live together. Compete on the same teams. Perform together. Serve together. Travel the city together…and pray and worship together."

Response

Rich Kohng, director of civic engagement, Catalyst Hub, North Park University, Chicago, Illinois

In invoking Ellul, Dr. Edin offered a theological template for how one can understand and view the city. As we live between the now and not yet, Jesus's model prayer, "let your kingdom come" (Matthew 6:10), implores God to bring glimpses of the eschatological heaven to infiltrate the earth and our cities. What should this look like?

While we can look to the other-wordly, glimmering descriptions of the New Jerusalem given in the book of Revelation, it is clear that Scripture itself not only foreshadows the end of the age but also looks backwards to the very beginning of it all, the Garden of Eden. As Ellul himself highlights, Eden symbolized perfect and complete security with God and among others.[20] Just as significantly, the author of Genesis highlights that the river that supplied Eden also branched off into four tributaries, two of which are known to us as the Tigris and the Euphrates (Genesis 2:14). Given the stature of the Tigris and Euphrates to ancient listeners in an oral tradition, perhaps the natural association they would have made is to the burgeoning and flourishing civilizations cradled along its banks.

In other words, the waters that supplied the garden were always meant to flow beyond paradise to extend its flourishing to all of humanity. The river that flowed from Eden was never meant to be an unsustainable Evian in a bottle. Eden had no boundaries, and the world would flourish in the same way. The boundaries only come after the fall, when Adam and Eve are told to leave (Genesis 3:23–24).

While the first inhabitants of the garden were told to vacate for their own good, we see that modern-day manifestations of boundaries are quite different. Dr. Edin compellingly described the detrimental effects of segregated public housing units in Chicago and Baltimore and how residents' outcomes improved when they found new homes in neighborhoods

[20] Ellul, *The Meaning of the City*, 2.

like Albany Park. While the demolition of the projects is championed as a victory today, many are wary. Could the mechanisms that led to the rise of the high rises in the first place be the same mechanisms at work in other manifestations, impacting the very communities to which they are relocated? It is possible these mechanisms are as old as Eden itself.

There was a third river that branched out from the waters of Eden, the Pishon, which flowed into a region called Havilah known for its gold deposits (Genesis 2:11). Could this have been a subtle allusion to what would take place later in human history? In a patriarchal world of conquest and domination, the tributaries that carry pristine waters from paradise can quickly become choked off and turned into a brackish swamp by greedy prospectors panning for gold.

Today Chicago shares a metaphorical parallel. As the city continued its rapid expansion through the late 1800s, Chicago faced an emerging public health crisis. The branches of the Chicago River flowed through the city out into Lake Michigan. The same river that enabled the city's rise as an economic powerhouse spewed toxic human and industrial waste out into Lake Michigan, Chicago's main water source. The city literally choked on its own byproducts of economic growth and prosperity.

The challenges of our city, from urban violence to food deserts to segregated housing, can be traced to a common phenomenon. The flow of our city's investments and resources continues to follow this same flow of the Chicago River down to the Loop, where it is redirected at the whims of the movers and shakers on LaSalle Street and Wacker Drive, like the flow from Eden to Havilah: $55 million in TIF funds used for a hotel and university stadium near McCormick Place[21] and the $6 billion redevelopment of Lincoln Yards into more office space and luxury apartments within steps of an already gentrified Lincoln Park.[22] Outsiders and residents alike lament we have gone from a "City on the Make" to a "City on the Take."[23] We are unabashedly a city of the market, and

[21] Ben Joravsky, "Rahm's Latest Plan: Close the Schools, Build an Arena," *Chicago Reader* (May 23, 2013), available at https://www.chicagoreader.com/chicago/mayor-spends-tax-dollars-on-sports-arena/Content?oid=9769374.

[22] Patrick Sisson, "Can Megadevelopments Serve the Whole City?" *Curbed* (February 5, 2019), available at https://www.curbed.com/2019/2/5/18211070/chicago-lincoln-yards-development-real-estate.

[23] Nelson Algren, *Chicago: City on the Make* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1951).

Eden is far upstream. While market cities can potentially bring more investment and jobs, our own Michael Emerson writes in his latest work contrasting "market cities" and "people cities," "Market Cities are the bigger polluters, have more inequality, more crime, less trust, extensive sprawl, and a host of other seemingly clear negatives."[24] These include gentrification. As real estate values continue to rise in the city, spurred on by development in the Loop, South Loop, and West Loop, low-income residents who lived as renters in neighborhoods trending upwards economically, like the historic African American community of Bronzeville or the Mexican American community of Pilsen, are being forced out. This is all the more disheartening because Edin's research reminds us that strong neighborhoods can serve as buffers for at-risk youth.

Between 1995 and 2008, the city tore down the Henry Horner homes on Lake Avenue, west of Ashland. Purchasers of market rate units, predominantly white, were supposed to live next to those with Section 8 vouchers. Unfortunately, one resident I heard about described his current experience as "Henry Horner flipped on its side. Just a lot less of us here now." In Chicago, what are the implications if Section 8 or now Housing Choice vouchers are simply the new restrictive housing covenants?

Following the third tributary from Eden to the land of gold is not just apparent in American market cities like Chicago. The same currents are at work in higher education. It is expected that we must compete with other institutions to build the poshest dorms and buildings with the most modern amenities to meet consumers' (a.k.a. students') needs. Indeed, even in higher education we can see how the flow travels down to the Loop and meanders through the collaborative university venture in South Loop, where several universities partnered to build high-rise dorms that rival their neighbors to the tune of $201 million, recently sold to a real estate investment firm.[25] The costs are predictably being passed down to students, culminating in the "gentrification of education," as Lee Bessette once coined.[26] According to the Federal Reserve, for the second quarter

[24] Emerson and Smiley, *Market Cities, People Cities*, 179.

[25] Alby Gallun, "Big South Loop Dorm Sale Sets a Record," *Crain's Chicago Business* (August 3, 2017), available at https://www.chicagobusiness.com/article/20170803/CRED03/170809931/chicago-south-loop-dorm-university-center-sells-to-blue-vista.

[26] Lee Bessette, "Gentrification in Higher Education," *Inside Higher Ed* (October 9, 2012), available at https://www.insidehighered.com/blogs/college-ready-writing/gentrification-higher-education.

of 2018, outstanding student loans hit $1.53 trillion.[27]

According to Edin's research, one of the greatest barriers for upward mobility is the short-term calculus under-resourced young people must do under duress. Dollars *in hand* working a minimum wage job feel much more tangible than pursuing a four-year diploma that promises the *possibility* of a job. For these potential students, it certainly can't help if the calculus doesn't compute. As institutions tout increased diversity numbers from both a race and economic standpoint, higher education in the United States must now bear the same guilt of the developers who pushed the original inhabitants out. The rents are rising, and only those who can pay can stay. Lydia Dishman writes, "According to a new survey from CareerBuilder, 27% [of American companies] are recruiting those who hold master's degrees for positions that used to only require four-year degrees."[28] Can many students from a low socio-economic status afford to move on to graduate school to compete for the same jobs that now require a master's degree when they are $25,000 in debt from obtaining their bachelor's?

So back up the river to North Park. What is our place in all of this? Do we feed into the same current? Or do we push towards something even more dramatic? In Chicago, we did the impossible and unthinkable: we reversed the river.

Donald Miller notes that in 1885, after torrential downpours caused sewage to overflow and contaminate the city's water supply, there were "deadly outbreaks of…waterborne diseases that killed an estimated twelve percent of Chicago's population."[29] It was not until practically every Chicagoan was touched by this public health crisis that people took to the streets. Public outrage moved legislators to action, and immigrants, including those from Sweden, were the ones who accepted the enormous

[27] Michelle Singletary, "US Student Loan Debt Reaches a Staggering $1.53 Trillion," *Washington Post* (October 3, 2018), available at https://www.washingtonpost.com/business/2018/10/04/us-student-loan-debt-reaches-staggering-trillion/?noredirect=on&utm_term=.69e45748bc1b.

[28] Lydia Dishman, "How the Master's Degree Became the New Bachelor's in the Hiring World," *Fast Company* (March 17, 2016), available at https://www.fastcompany.com/3057941/how-the-masters-degree-became-the-new-bachelors-in-the-hiring-world.

[29] Donald Miller, *City of the Century: The Epic of Chicago and the Making of America* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1996), 423.

challenge of drudging up a new canal, inch by inch.[30] The ecological impacts notwithstanding, and purely for the sake of analogy, perhaps it's time we help reverse the flow.

In some ways we are already helping to reverse the flow. With a diverse student body across the socio-economic spectrum, we offer a relatively affordable private education. Our students will leave with degrees obtained by studying under accomplished faculty in classrooms with small faculty-to-student ratios. We are making progress in helping them achieve their academic goals. Our first-generation college students who come to North Park can participate in the Lighthouse program, run by the Office of Student Success, which can translate much of the inside vernacular of higher education their parents never had the opportunity to navigate.

Pedagogically, we are strategically poised to help students discern the flow of the river or to step foot into the waters, through a dynamic core curriculum, our robust degree programs, and through Catalyst 606_ _, which features our Wednesday afternoon experiential learning and civic engagement block.

Just this past week, our experiential learning cohort, the Catalyst Semester, visited Cabrini Green. Our cohort had the opportunity to connect with a young African American man named Shaq who grew up there. Shaq guided our students to a closed down section of the housing project, with windows long shuttered. He spoke to our students about how the city made empty promises to residents and lamented that there are 100,000 people on the waitlist for the affordable housing units the city said it would build in its place. As Shaq spoke, current residents of what is left of Cabrini walked by our group, smiling and bantering with him. They stopped to say hello to our students, offering hospitality and a different window into what once stood there. When Shaq greeted the more recent transplants to the area walking by, the ones who occupied the million-dollar condos down the street, *not a single one responded* or even looked at him. Our students knew exactly what was happening.

At one point, Shaq stopped and asked our students: "Do you feel safe?" The students laughed at his question; of course they did. They

[30] Anita Olson Gustafson, "Swedes," *The Electronic Encyclopedia of Chicago* (Chicago Historical Society, 2005), available at http://www.encyclopedia.chicagohistory.org/pages/1222.html.

did as much laughing as learning. Then he said something that stopped the current for a moment: "A bunch of us are running a 'just say hello' campaign. We meet with our new neighbors to let them know what we're all about. We're not all thugs or gang bangers."

At that moment, our students knew it was Shaq who wasn't safe. In his perspective, the new settlers have come in to remove people like him. They no longer use cannons, guns, or disease, but dollars and cents. Or eminent domain.

Afterwards, as we debriefed our time with Shaq, I realized something profound happened in our students, and it spoke to me as I sat in my frustration. Although they suspected the waters were bound for lands of gold, as they stepped into the waters, they were still able to find traces of Eden in the river too. Traces of Eden like Shaq who remind us to say "hello" in a polarized world where we simply look down and walk past each other—the same dehumanization that can often justify faster currents or polluting the waters instead of reversing them.

As we begin a new journey under the leadership of President Surridge, until the currents change, or no matter how quickly the river flows, as Edin has reminded us, may we be reminded that the waters of Eden still run through our campus. They are embodied in our own students who inspire us with their sense of the way things should be, pointing us to the headwaters of Eden. May their vision and optimism buoy us as we head upstream. As we know, changing the currents will require innovation, and the challenging of our natural risk-aversion. Heaven, the New Jerusalem, is counting on it.