

Comment

*Paul H. de Neui, professor of missiology and intercultural studies,
North Park Theological Seminary, Chicago, Illinois*

Since the earliest years of the Evangelical Covenant Church, global service has been an important part of its identity. In this issue we are proud to present reflections of five long-term Covenant global personnel who share what they have learned in their many years of intercultural vocational service as they now approach retirement. Collectively these leaders and their spouses have given over two hundred years of participation in and with God's mission in several countries throughout Africa and Asia. It is timely as we celebrate the Covenant's 140th anniversary as Mission Friends this year to listen to these words and reflect together on the many ways all of us participate in the *missio Dei* wherever we are called.

This issue also includes the text of a powerful sermon by Sanetta D. Ponton, associate pastor of justice, advocacy, and compassion at Metro Community Church in Englewood, New Jersey. Her prophetic message on Martin Luther King Jr. Day challenged everyone in the ballroom of the Sheraton Denver Downtown at the Midwinter Conference of 2025. We are grateful for her willingness to share these words with our readers and believe it will be a blessing for you.

Bret Widman, director of North Park Theological Seminary's office of contextual and lifelong learning, provides helpful insight in his article, "Cultivating an Interpretive Community for the Present and the Future." In our current complicated climate Widman suggests the possibility and process of developing congregations as interpretive communities, looking to our past to determine future direction.

We hope the book reviews presented in this issue will supplement your reading, edify your leadership, and encourage your prophetic voice to speak to those whom God has led under your care. Many thanks to our reviewers.

We are grateful to Scott Burnett for his assistance as book editor of the *Quarterly*, for all the members of the Covenant Publications team, and the generous financial support from the Covenant mission priority of Serve Clergy. Most of all we thank you, our readers, for the work you do in service to God's kingdom, taking these thoughts and ideas and putting them into practice for your own growth, as well as the transformation of the world. We welcome your comments, suggestions, and submissions for future issues.

PAUL H. DE NEUI