

THE COVENANT
QUARTERLY

August/November 2016

CONTENTS

- | | | | |
|----|---|----|--|
| 1 | Comment
<i>Hauna Ondrey</i> | 55 | The Graduate
<i>Al Tizon</i> |
| 3 | On the Beginnings of North
Park University: “Risberg’s
School” and Covenant
Ministerial Education,
1885–1916
<i>Philip J. Anderson</i> | 64 | Strategic Initiatives: Planning
for the Future
<i>David Kersten</i> |
| 27 | David Nyvall’s Enduring
Impact on Christian Higher
Education
<i>Scott Erickson</i> | 70 | I Believe in the Future of
North Park Theological
Seminary
<i>Gary Walter</i> |
| 43 | Inhabiting a Dwelling Place:
Reflections of a Seminary
Student and Professor
<i>C. John Weborg</i> | 74 | Book Reviews |



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Comment

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In his fiftieth-anniversary *History of North Park College* (1941), Leland Carlson wrote,

Of all the departments of North Park College, the Theological Seminary has the unique distinction of continuous existence from 1891 to the present day. The reason for this fact is that when the founders made plans for a Covenant school they thought primarily of an institution which would train ministers for the denomination. This purpose constitutes the *raison d'être* of North Park College. To understand fully the story of [North Park], the reader must keep in mind the place of the Theological Seminary as the very heart of the academic organism.

As we bring to a close a year of celebration, marking 125 years since North Park's founding, this double issue contributes focused reflection on the origin and future of our seminary, the "very heart" of North Park.

Philip J. Anderson, professor emeritus of church history, contextualizes North Park's origins within the competing educational ventures pursued by free church Swedish immigrants, 1885–1916, each advocating divergent pathways with respect to ethnic identity and American assimilation. Scott Erickson, seminary alumnus and current head of school at Phillips Brooks School, appraises founding president David Nyvall's vision of Christian higher education—a vision Nyvall pursued in the face of opposition and that has stood the test of time. John Weborg, professor emeritus of theology, reflects on his experience at the seminary, first as student and then as professor, encouraging the school to pursue a Christian identity both global and local, taking its place as a member

of the world church with a particular history worth telling.

The next three pieces point aspirationally to the seminary's future. On the "eschatological" premise of seeking to live into a desired future, Al Tizon, executive minister of serve globally for the Evangelical Covenant Church and affiliate associate professor of missional and global leadership at the seminary, describes the capacities needed in the seminary graduate who seeks to serve today's church and world. Both David Kersten and Gary Walter contribute in their roles as seminary dean and denominational president respectively. Each describes a present context of significant change in church and classroom and suggests ways North Park may adapt in order to form pastors for this changed reality. Kersten outlines strategic priorities toward North Park's offering the whole church theological education that is missional, sustainable, and mutually empowering across denominational and ecumenical partnerships. Walter calls on North Park to be a pace-setter in "missional theological education."

Neither our understanding of the past nor our attentiveness to the future can afford to operate without the other. As (then-ECC president) Paul Larsen wrote for this journal on the occasion of the school's centennial, "If the dream [for the future] is large, we must beware lest we imply that success arrived for the first time with us. If the future of North Park is large and bright, it does not follow that it is rising in our late-born shadow. The strength of the school is its long and noble history." Anderson, Erickson, and Weborg cast the compelling educational vision to which the seminary is heir—an inheritance worth carrying forward into the next 125 years. Tizon, Kersten, and Walter suggest ways we may do so within the particular challenges of the present context.

On the Beginnings of North Park University: “Risberg’s School” and Covenant Ministerial Education, 1885–1916

*Philip J. Anderson, professor emeritus of church history,
North Park Theological Seminary, Chicago, Illinois*

The Evangelical Covenant Church and its school of higher learning, North Park University (before 1997, North Park College and Theological Seminary), have never been strangers to the realities and challenges of immigration, generational transition, and ethnic identity in a pluralistic, dynamic American culture. It is fitting during the observance of North Park’s 125th anniversary to revisit a primary catalyst in the historical narrative of its origins and to gain insight into dimensions of an institution’s life that has as much to do with continuity as it does with change. This may serve as a case study that wedds older patterns of the mass migration of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries with the ever-richer tapestry of American life in the new millennium.

Frederick Jackson Turner made commonplace the notion that in order to understand America it is necessary to understand the immigrants.¹

1. The significance of immigration was central to Turner’s understanding of western expansion, which he introduced in his seminal lecture, “The Significance of the Frontier in American History,” delivered to the American Historical Association at the Chicago World’s Fair in 1893. For the influential role of Turner’s “frontier thesis” among later

This article was originally published during the centennial anniversary of North Park as “The ‘Risberg School’ in Chicago: American Aid and Swedish Immigrant Ministerial Education, 1885–1916,” *Swedish-American Historical Quarterly* 42, no. 4 (1991): 208–31. With revision, it appears here with the permission of the Swedish-American Historical Society. A form of the article appeared in Ulf Beijbom, ed., *Swedes in America: New Perspectives* (Växjö: The Swedish Emigrant Institute, 1993), 174–84.

It has been less evident perhaps that to understand the immigrants it is necessary to understand their religions. More than four decades ago, Rudolph J. Vecoli observed that ethnicity in American historiography has been something of a family scandal with skeletons in the closet, and Martin E. Marty in his presidential address to the American Society of Church History extended the image to suggest that “ethnicity is the skeleton of religion in America because it provides the supporting framework, the bare outlines or main features, of American religion.”² Though we have learned much about the pluralistic character of American religion, Marty has stated elsewhere that the greatest conflict has been “between the original-stock Anglo-Saxon Protestant peoples and ‘everyone else.’”³

This reality explains the rich historical themes of nativistic claims of Protestant hegemony and immigrant struggles with incorporation and identity. In a more positive way, it also points to the variety of means and motives by which American aid was offered to immigrant churches. Since the time of George Stephenson’s *Religious Aspects of Swedish Immigration* (1932), which transcended traditional denominational historiography, historians have often generalized about Swedish Americans as either secular or religious, assuming that the latter were predominantly Augustana Lutheran and rural in character.⁴ In the case of the Swedes, however, American aid in its most generous forms was a later and more urban phenomenon (though many rural churches benefited) and did not involve the Augustana Synod but the various Swedish-American “free church” groups that traced their origins to the Mission Friend movements of Carl Olof Rosenius (1816–1868) and Paul Peter Waldenström (1838–1917). These were immigrants who arrived well after the Civil War, beginning especially in the 1870s and ’80s, and whose youthful

historians of immigration, see John Higham, *Writing American History: Essays on Modern Scholarship* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1970). At Harvard, Turner supervised the doctoral dissertations of three pioneering American historians of immigration and ethnicity: Merle Curti, Marcus Lee Hansen, and George M. Stephenson (the latter two of Scandinavian immigrant heritage).

2. Rudolph J. Vecoli, “Ethnicity: A Neglected Dimension of American History,” in Herbert J. Bass, ed., *The State of American History* (Chicago: Quadrangle, 1970), esp. 70ff; Martin E. Marty, “Ethnicity: The Skeleton of Religion in America,” *Church History* 41 (1972), 9.

3. Martin E. Marty, *Modern American Religion, Volume 2: The Noise of Conflict, 1919–1941* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991), 2.

4. George M. Stephenson, *The Religious Aspects of Swedish Immigration: A Study of Immigrant Churches* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1932), *passim*. For

leaders directed a surging immigrant stream of young, single, and increasingly urban Swedish Americans. The most poignant and protracted record of aid came from the American Congregationalists between 1885 and 1916 and was aimed not only at Swedes but also Danes, Norwegians, and Germans in an educational enterprise centered largely at Chicago Theological Seminary (CTS).⁵

This study focuses especially on Fridolf Risberg (1848–1921), who headed the Swedish Department of CTS and its promotion of a Swedish Congregational church with confidence in an inevitable assimilation into the American denomination, and on the protest raised by leaders of the Swedish Evangelical Mission Covenant, such as David Nyvall (1863–1946), who labored for a more highly differentiated Swedish-American identity through their own school, North Park College and Theological Seminary. Adding complexity to the story is the more independently organized mission activity of the “Free” elements in their own congregations and in Fredrik Franson’s Skandinaviska Alliansmissionen (Scandinavian Alliance Mission), founded in 1891, which included Danes and Norwegians as well. All of these activities centered in Chicago. More than any other individual, Risberg was connected to all three of these religious associations. The complex, competitive efforts at ministerial education in Chicago between 1885 and 1916 demonstrate the strength of the various free movements in numbers, vying for relatively limited resources in an intensely Americanized setting. They also show a striking degree of pragmatic cooperation and sporadic attempts at merger, where Risberg was clearly the bridge and a young North Park forged its singular educational identity.

the broader context of the Swedish and Swedish-American free churches, see Philip J. Anderson, “The Lively Exchange of Religious Ideals between the United States and Sweden during the Nineteenth Century,” in Scott E. Erickson, ed., *American Religious Influences in Sweden* (Uppsala: Tro och Tanke, 1996), 31–48; and Anderson, “From Compulsion to Persuasion: Voluntary Religion and the Swedish Immigrant Experience,” *Swedish-American Historical Quarterly* 66 (2015), 3–23.

5. For the Scandinavian departments at Chicago Theological Seminary, see Robert M. Anderson, “An Analysis of Congregational Aid to Scandinavian Churches,” B.D. thesis, North Park Theological Seminary, 1960; P. Richard Lindstrom, “The Risberg School,” B.D. thesis, North Park Theological Seminary, 1966; Frederick Hale, “The Scandinavian Departments of Chicago Theological Seminary,” M.A. thesis, University of Minnesota, 1974; and Hale, *Trans-Atlantic Conservative Protestantism in the Evangelical Free and Mission Covenant Traditions* (New York: Arno Press, 1979), chapters 9–10.

Mission Friends and Attitudes about Education

Before looking more closely at Risberg, it would be well to establish the outlines of educational issues among Mission Friends and the self-understanding of American Congregationalists in their home mission work with immigrants. The religious awakening that began in the 1830s in Sweden had a leveling effect on many of the primary institutions of society. In addition to national educational reform in the 1840s, the religious folk movements established several ministerial training schools, such as Peter Fjellstedt's in Stockholm and P.A. Ahlberg's in Vetlanda. Waldenström's popular serial allegory *Brukspatron Adamsson* (Squire Adamsson), published in 1862–1863, made the universities at Uppsala and Lund, with their attendant clericalism, appear to be “preacher factories.” Instead, the faithful *läsare* were informed that the best learning came at the feet of “Mother Simple” and “Father Experience” in the “Misery Class” rather than from professors “Cocksure” and “Wise-in-His Own Conceits” at “Theology College.”⁶

When applied to the children of revival in America and their itinerant evangelists and pastors, it is little wonder that education in general, and ministerial training in particular, became noisy fields of battle. During the 1870s, those Mission Friends who had left Augustana or the Synod of Northern Illinois to follow their convictions of non-confessional biblical authority and gathered believers' churches, organized themselves in free Lutheran synods.

The largest of these, the Mission Synod (1873), was opposed to schools altogether and never worked to establish one.⁷ For example, when Carl

6. P.P. Waldenström, *Brukspatron Adamsson: Eller, Hvar Bor Du?* (Stockholm, 1863). The novel was first published serially in *Stadsmissionären* (The City Missionary) in Stockholm. This was translated into English in 1928, in part to support Swedish-American fundamentalists in their heresy charges directed against Nils Lund, dean of North Park Theological Seminary, for his alleged modernism: *Squire Adamsson: Or, Where Do You Live?*, Ruben T. Nygren, trans. (Chicago: Mission Friend Publishing Company, 1928). Cf. the recent definitive translation with critical introduction by Mark Safstrom (Seattle and Minneapolis: Pietisten, 2014). Most Mission Friends seem to have missed the irony in Waldenström's hyperbolic allegory. Waldenström was awarded a PhD in classics from Uppsala University about the time the allegory was published.

7. Though many Mission Friend pastors had attended training schools in Sweden, most shared the judgment that “the pioneers were uneducated men and women. They did not consider an education essential to a successful career in the ministry. Most of them were self-made men, gifted and useful in that early generation” (A.H. Jacobson, *The Adventures of a Prairie Preacher* [Chicago: Covenant Press, 1960], 34).

Johan Nyvall (1829–1904) visited the United States in 1876, he found it odd that the Mission Friends in Lindsborg, Kansas, could praise Bethany College so highly when the first disciples merely learned at the school of Jesus.⁸ The Mission Synod formulated a statement on ministerial education at Des Moines, Iowa, in January 1880, which read in part:

Fully conscious of the need of a minister to have essential skills, as for example to read properly and clothe his thoughts in somewhat orderly phrases... we nevertheless believe that such essential knowledge can be secured in a less pretentious manner than through seminaries or whatever they are called; furthermore because we have found no reference to the establishment of such schools in the Scriptures... [and] since it is clearly manifest that schools have more destroyed and hindered than furthered Christian life... the meeting decided that it considered it essential to cease discussing the matter... And this so much the more since it would be heartless to impose such a burden [of ministerial education] upon our friends.⁹

In contrast, the Ansgar Synod (1874), closer to Augustana in theology and to the General Synod in its openness to Americanization, supported its own school, which had been started in 1873 in Keokuk, Iowa, by its most energetic leader, the Dane Charles Anderson. Moving to Knoxville, Illinois, in 1875, the fledgling school struggled for a decade as a result of inadequate resources and students, as well as the limited strength of the Ansgar Synod in a period of escalating synodical suspicion and strife. When the school fell into the hands of “Free” iconoclasts like J.G. Princell (1845–1915) in 1879, the only thing that kept the school attached to the synod was a legal condition that if the synod dissolved, the assets of Ansgar College would revert to the city of Knoxville. Though several pastors were trained at the college, the school folded when the Ansgar and Mission Synods, along with several independent congregations, merged in Chicago in February 1885 to form the Swedish Evangelical Mission Covenant.¹⁰ The only Covenant school on the horizon was a little inde-

8. C.J. Nyvall, *Travel Memories from America* (Chicago: Covenant Press, 1959), 54f.

9. *Missions-Vännern*, February 1880, 47f. For a discussion of this theme, see Richard Hofstadter, *Anti-Intellectualism in American Life* (New York: Vantage Books, 1963).

10. See C.V. Bowman, “Ansgarius College,” *Swedish-American Historical Bulletin* 2 (1929), 19–30; and Philip J. Anderson, “Education and Identity Formation among

pendent immigrant training school in Minneapolis, begun in 1884 by Erik August Skogsbergh (1850–1939), who was an evangelist and pastor, not an educator. Moreover, it made no provision for ministerial training. This school would be taken over by the Covenant in 1891.

The woeful planning for ministerial education by American Covenanters, partially the result of little liquid capital, did not go unnoticed by CTS and the American Home Missionary Society (AHMS). Three representatives, Hugh MacDonal Scott and Samuel Ives Curtiss of CTS and Frederick E. Emrich of the Tabernacle Church in Chicago, were present at the Covenant's organizational meeting to offer immediate assistance through the expanding foreign work of the seminary. A German department had been opened in 1882, followed by a Danish-Norwegian department in 1884. Instruction was also given in Finnish. By the autumn of 1885, a Swedish department joined the ranks under the leadership of Fridolf Risberg, fresh from Sweden and handpicked by Waldenström and Covenant president C.A. Björk (1837–1916) at Congregational expense. A Bohemian department was authorized in 1886 but never materialized.

The Congregational AHMS, a product of the Plan of Union with Presbyterians in 1801, sought to extend the New England way on the frontier, intertwining nationalism and religion, bolstered by a romanticized and partly invented historiography of its Puritan roots. New Englanders began arriving in Chicago in the 1830s, and the Chicago Association was formed in 1835, independent of Presbyterian participation. The first Congregational church was organized in 1851, and because of a general shortage of ministers in the Midwest, CTS opened its doors in 1858, perpetuating on the frontier New England agendas of abolition, Native American missions, manifest destiny, and the kingdom of God in America.

Swedish Lutherans had had early involvement with the AHMS in the ministry of Lars Paul Esbjörn, an unhappy experience that contributed to the formation of the Augustana Synod in 1860. The Norwegian pastor Paul Andersen had previously received aid in 1848 for his Lutheran church in Chicago. Esbjörn incurred the wrath of Gustaf Unonius (who formed a Swedish Episcopal congregation in Chicago in 1849) and others when in 1850 he accepted an annual stipend of three hundred dollars

Swedish-American Mission Friends: The Case of Ansgar College, 1873–1884,” in Philip J. Anderson, Dag Blanck, and Peter Kivisto, eds., *Scandinavian Immigrants and Education in North America* (Chicago: Swedish-American Historical Society, 1995), 50–61.

from the AHMS. But Esbjörn himself chafed while teaching at Illinois State University under the expectations to submit to Reformed views of regeneration, sacraments, election, and eternal security, sensing an oppressive form of ecclesial condescension. Eric Norelius wondered how Esbjörn could “throw himself into the arms of such a thoroughly reformed, puritanical, and in all respects anti-Lutheran society.”¹¹ Esbjörn, however, detested the embrace and walked away, sealing for the future Augustana’s attitude toward any encroachment by the Congregationalists.

Congregational aid to Swedish Mission Friends represented the coming together of varying degrees of cultural nativism and a growing conviction that these people were indeed Congregationalists, but, according to Scott, “there were no Congregationalists in Sweden to tell them so.”¹² In 1867 the Chicago Association discussed how to reach immigrants and concluded that “the aim should be to nationalize them and gather them into our churches, rather than to establish churches exclusively of foreign elements.”¹³ Levi Cobb, superintendent of the AHMS in Minnesota, asserted in 1878: “To us nothing is plainer than this—that *God has sent these people to our very doors for us to Christianize*. We must do it, or they will make Europeans of us.”¹⁴ The challenge to “Americanize, Christianize, Congregationalize” was summed up by Curtiss when he asked, “What have we, orthodox offspring of the pilgrim fathers, done to teach these children of Luther a more excellent way?”¹⁵

By the mid-1880s this nativism had developed into a rhetorical tradition justifying aid to Scandinavian free-church immigrants while glossing over inherent doctrinal and ecclesiological differences.¹⁶ The power of this tradition was particularly articulated by Marcus Whitman Montgomery

11. Quoted in Stephenson, *Religious Aspects of Swedish Immigration*, 162f.

12. H.M. Scott, *A Ministry for Foreign Born America* (Hartford, CT: Hartford Seminary Press, 1907), 46. For a history of the American Home Missionary Society, see C.B. Goodykoontz, *Home Missions on the American Frontier: With Particular Reference to the American Home Missionary Society* (Caldwell, ID: Caxton Printers, 1939). The Scandinavian work, however, receives no attention in this study.

13. Quoted in Matthew Spinka, ed., *A History of Illinois Congregational and Christian Churches* (Chicago: Congregational and Christian Conference of Illinois, 1944), 284.

14. *The Home Missionary* 51 (December 1878), 187.

15. Quoted in A.C. McGiffert, *No Ivory Tower: The Story of the Chicago Theological Seminary* (Chicago: Chicago Theological Seminary, 1965), 59.

16. This rhetorical tradition is developed in Hale, “Scandinavian Departments,” esp. 62ff. Future problems were anticipated in 1884, however, when the Congregational Club of Minnesota held a symposium entitled “Norwegians, Swedes, and Their Denomina-

(1839–1894) in his position as superintendent of the Scandinavian work of the AHMS, which included an extended visit to Scandinavia in 1884 and the resulting enthusiastic report of “spontaneous Congregationalism,” entitled *A Wind from the Holy Spirit in Sweden and Norway* (1885).¹⁷ The rhetoric of Montgomery, Scott, Curtiss, and others treated the northern Europeans as different from other immigrants, as “allies with us in the work of saving America for Christ,” in effect making the Germans and Scandinavians “second-class WASPs”—one in the cause, but only because they were perceived to be easily assimilated.¹⁸ At the same time, it was natural for immigrants to participate in the American religious institutions that most clearly resembled their own, and many Swedes initially came to believe the rhetorical tradition.

Based on his travels, Montgomery concluded that the “Swedish free churches are purely Congregational” in all respects, despite no previous contact.¹⁹ Even as he rhapsodized about the similarities, questionably (if not, naively) confirmed by Waldenström, the nativism directed toward these “desirable people” was clear: “The information gathered may be summarized thus,” wrote Montgomery:

The Scandinavians are, all things considered, among the best foreigners who come to American shores. . . . They who love liberty and religion will make the best citizens of this republic. Just such are the Scandinavians. They are almost universally Protestants; comparably few are sceptics. They have been reared to believe in God, the Sabbath, and in salvation through

tions,” where the speakers Sven Oftedal, professor at Augsburg Seminary, and George Wiberg, Ansgar Synod pastor from Worcester, Massachusetts (who became a staunch ally to the work of Risberg at CTS and was employed by the AHMS), predicted inevitable conflict over doctrinal issues.

17. For the crucial role of Montgomery, see Hale, *Trans-Atlantic Conservative Protestantism*, 215–55.

18. M.W. Montgomery, speech to the Congregational Association of Minnesota, reported in *The Pilgrim* (October 1885). This was a defense of Protestant America against foreign perils enumerated by Josiah Strong and the Evangelical Alliance. See Robert T. Handy, *A Christian America: Protestant Hopes and Historical Realities* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1984), esp. 57–81. On Scandinavians as “second-class WASPs,” see Charles H. Anderson, *White Protestant Americans: From National Origins to Religious Group* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1971), 43ff.

19. M.W. Montgomery, “The Free Church Movement in Sweden,” *The Andover Review* 2 (1884), 411.

Christ. They ardently love the principle upon which our republic rests and hence are intensely loyal. In politics they are generally Republican. They have large, strong bodies; are industrious, frugal, eager, apt, modest, intelligent. Very many American homes are blessed with the services of Scandinavian girls whose ways are likely to be honest, quiet, faithful, cleanly, and pious.

In several respects the Scandinavians are in marked contrast with some foreign elements among us. They are not peddlers, nor organ grinders nor beggars; they do not sell ready-made clothing nor keep pawn-shops; their religion is not hostile to free institutions; they do not come here temporarily, and, while seeking for gain, live a foreign life, praying all the while that their bones may yet lie in the lands from which they came. . . . This republic—the hope and aspiration of the world—has nothing to fear from the Scandinavians, but very much to gain. After a careful observation of these people in this land and in their native countries, I am clearly of the opinion that *they are more nearly like Americans than any other foreign peoples*. In manners and customs, political and religious instructions, fertility of adaptation, personal appearance, and cosmopolitan character, they are strikingly like native Americans [sic]. . . . The first generation of American-born Scandinavians, when they reach the age of twenty years, cannot generally be distinguished from Americans by either appearance, language, or customs.²⁰

Despite the strength of this manufactured rhetorical tradition (and many such examples can be marshaled), leaders at CTS also had a more pragmatic and pastoral view that, because these Scandinavians “in sympathy with us” needed an educated ministry and had neither preparatory academies nor seminaries of their own, such an extension of home mission was worthy and altruistic.²¹ Through such benevolence it was hoped that “they will take a warm interest in our churches and naturally

20. M. W. Montgomery, *“A Wind from the Holy Spirit” in Sweden and Norway* (New York: American Home Missionary Society, 1884), 6f. Montgomery wildly estimated that half the population of Sweden was Lutheran while the rest were oriented toward the free churches; in fact, approximately 300,000 were part of the Mission Friend movement.

21. *Minutes of the Tenth Triennial Convention Held in Chicago, April 22, 1885, in Connection with the Chicago Theological Seminary* (Chicago, 1885).

look to us as their American helpers and friends.” Furthermore, added Scott, “We are not slow to take the hint.”²²

This, then, sets the context for Risberg’s arrival at CTS in the autumn of 1885, a world of faith and education that must have seemed very foreign to him. While the Congregationalists were quite certain of the qualities that defined an American, such an identifiable species must have seemed highly illusive through the eyes of an immigrant initially. No doubt, CTS provided Risberg with a culture and context that allowed him to be a bridge among Swedish leaders and groups between 1885 and World War I, three decades that comprised the most critical period for issues of identity, self-differentiation, and degrees of ethnic consciousness, made all the more pressing by generational change.

Risberg, Nyvall, and Growing Tension

Fridolf Risberg was born on November 4, 1848, at Nysätra in the province of Västerbotten.²³ The son of a provincial physician, he attended Umeå College and Uppsala University, graduating in 1871. After two years working as a tutor for a wealthy family, Risberg was ordained in Uppsala in December 1874. He then served as a pastor in various parishes in northern Sweden. Risberg became increasingly dissatisfied with the state church, and a significant turning point occurred in 1880 when the itinerant evangelist Fredrik Franson (1852–1908) held meetings for three weeks in Härnösand, where Risberg was pastor. Risberg shared his home with Franson, and the two formed a permanent friendship,

22. The report of Professor H.M. Scott to the Triennial Convention of the Chicago Theological Seminary, April 22, 1885, in Lindstrom, “The Risberg School,” 97. Lindstrom prints this most interesting status report in its entirety as an appendix (pp. 85–97), outlining the origins and work of each foreign department at CTS. Montgomery gave three reasons for the ambivalence of Mission Friends toward education: “(1) the deeply religious nature of the Scandinavians, which cares more for religion than culture; (2) the prejudice among these Free Church people against education, which has grown out of the unspiritual teachings and the harsh persecutions of the Lutheran State Church preachers, who are all educated; and (3) the revival prevailing among them makes them feel that the gospel messenger must not wait for the slow processes of a thorough education. Hence these young men are willing to overleap the college, and sometimes even the academy, and flock to the theological school,” not nearly as prepared as American students: M.W. Montgomery, *The Work Among the Scandinavians, Including the Swedes, Danes, and Norwegians* (New York: American Home Missionary Society, 1888), 11.

23. There is little biographical information on Risberg apart from his brief autobiography, *Strödda minnen från mitt flydda Ziv* (Chicago: Missions-Vännen Bokförlag, 1916). His personal papers are not extant.

which in a decade would establish a new alliance in Chicago.²⁴ On April 30, 1882, Risberg preached his farewell sermon in the parish church of Edsele, thus joining Svenska Missionsförbundet (the Swedish Mission Covenant), founded in 1878. A devout and sensitive man, highly influenced by Waldenström, Risberg criticized the state church for its rigid confessionalism, its lack of courage in applying spiritual discipline, and its practices of membership apart from voluntary signs of regeneration. “It is almost like serving God and Mammon,” preached Risberg. “Two such different lords I can no longer serve. . . . I have been called to a work in greater conformity to the word of God.”²⁵ He claimed that the decision was five years in the making.

Having been secured by Björk and Waldenström in the summer of 1885, Risberg commenced his teaching at CTS on September 9, joining what A. C. McGiffert later called a “polyglot seminary,” comprised of the various foreign departments. Risberg had studied Shakespeare at Uppsala and knew at least a little English, but for some time he conducted his conversations with the faculty in German. He began with fourteen students. A lifelong bachelor, these were his family, and of the 313 Swedish students he taught between 1885 and 1916, only one out of seven had been born in the United States, and the average age was twenty-eight.²⁶ At Risberg’s inauguration, John H. Morley of the AHMS spoke of the rosy prospects of assimilation through mission. “America, especially the Northwest,” he said, “is plastic to the touch of Christ,” and all foreigners would be “moulded” by American institutions, “so that they should not be alien to our nation, but homogeneous, no line of cleavage appearing.”²⁷

24. O. C. Grauer, *Fredrick Franson: Founder of the Scandinavian Alliance Mission* (Chicago: Scandinavian Alliance Mission, n.d.), 36.

25. Fridolf Risberg, *Afskedspredikan på tredje söndagen efter påsk den 30 April 1882* (Härnösand, 1883), as quoted by Karl A. Olsson, *By One Spirit* (Chicago: Covenant Press, 1962), 734.

26. McGiffert, *No Ivory Tower*, 66. For a listing of the students, chronological and alphabetical, see Lindstrom, “The Risberg School,” 128–67. Risberg gave his own analysis of the students, *Strödda minnen*, 132f. The board of CTS followed five criteria in calling Risberg: (1) spiritual, doctrinally sound, inspiring confidence; (2) some knowledge of English; (3) skill in practical theology; (4) ability to teach Swedish homiletics and church history; and (5) a good preacher and example of godliness to the students. *Covenant Yearbook 1885*, 14f.

27. John H. Morley, “Charge to Professor Fridolph Rissberg [sic],” TS, Chicago Theological Seminary Library, 3, as quoted by Hale, “Scandinavian Departments,” 99.

This ambition was shared by Fridolf Risberg, and his work at CTS was guided by the conviction that eventual assimilation into the American church would best serve the needs of the Swedish Mission Friends. In 1892 he wrote,

My opinion is that every European who makes this land his home should think from the very beginning that he is to become a good American. The English language must in time become our mother tongue. In the future, then, our preaching must be in English. Then certainly our churches may coalesce with the American. However, for the near future Swedish must be the chief language among us. It is because the training of Swedish preachers among Americans has a future before it that I willingly labor in this seminary.²⁸

Risberg formally joined the Congregational Church in 1894.

The work of CTS with the Scandinavian free churches was complicated by the fact that the Covenant Church was a new denomination, and the issue of control over its students had never been fully anticipated or resolved, leading to years of misunderstanding. The first Annual Meeting of the Covenant in Princeton, Illinois, in September 1885, directed specific questions to CTS regarding admission, the relationship of students to Swedish congregations, and the nature of Risberg's connection to the seminary, though a committee of Covenant leaders had been meeting with him to screen ministerial candidates.

In time a partial solution was reached as the Covenant provided money to pay for an assistant to Risberg, pushed by President Björk—even as he remained adamant that the Swedes should not have their own school. This person was David Nyvall, who arrived in the fall of 1888. After his emigration from Sweden in 1886, Nyvall had taught at Skogsbergh's school in Minneapolis and served a congregation in Sioux City, Iowa. Having passed his pre-medical examinations at Uppsala and begun his medical studies at the Carolinian Institute in Stockholm, Nyvall was thoroughly at home in the rigorous academic climate of CTS.²⁹ He later

28. Quoted in M.W. Montgomery, "Scandinavian Department," *The Home Missionary* 65 (1892), 70.

29. For Nyvall as educator, see Philip J. Anderson, "David Nyvall and Swedish-American Education," in Philip J. Anderson and Dag Blanck, eds., *Swedish-American Life in Chicago: Cultural and Urban Aspects of an Immigrant People, 1850–1930* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1991). For the definitive biography of Nyvall,

described his time with Risberg as “two of the most delightful years of my life.”³⁰ By 1889 there were forty students enrolled in the Swedish department’s four-year program (much larger than the other foreign departments). Though they were housed separately from the American students because of their inferior learning, Scott once defended them by saying to all the students, “You American boys with your degrees need not look down on these Swedish lads; I will be satisfied if you know as much about the Bible when you finish here as these fellows knew when they were confirmed in Sweden at the age of fifteen years.”³¹

Nyvall, however, vigorously disagreed with Risberg’s views of Americanization, saying that “in all things personal Risberg and I were one, but in school matters and in matters of denominational interests we did not agree.”³² His role in the unfolding stormy discussions of schools and possible mergers led to the conviction that the Covenant needed its own school if the denomination was to have a future and if Swedish-American people were to shape their own cultural and religious lives. In reference to CTS and ministerial education, Nyvall wondered how the Covenant could assume responsibility “simply by watching with others at the entrance while the Seminary alone stood watch over the exit.” In April 1890 Nyvall tendered his resignation “to be free to work for a Covenant school.”³³ Covenant leaders, however, were reluctant to sever connections with CTS (Björk was still somewhat suspicious of education and cautious about grassroots perceptions), so Magnus E. Peterson (1850–1940) was called from Stromsburg, Nebraska, to succeed Nyvall

see Scott E. Erickson, *David Nyvall and the Shape of an Immigrant Church: Ethnic, Denominational, and Educational Priorities among Swedes in America* (Uppsala: Uppsala University, 1996), esp. 233–314.

30. David Nyvall, “Dreams That Came True,” *Cupola* (1923 *North Park Yearbook*), 33.

31. Interview with Joel Fridfelt by P. Richard Anderson, May 1966, in Lindstrom, “The Risberg School,” 55f.

32. Nyvall, “Dreams That Came True,” 33.

33. David Nyvall, *The Swedish Covenanters: A History* (Chicago: Covenant Book Concern, 1930), 72ff. In this book, Nyvall commented extensively on his relationship to Risberg, whose character and teaching abilities he deeply admired. Nyvall described Risberg’s generational views (p. 75): “He was a staunch believer in the prompt Americanization of the Swedish Mission Friends and he used to say that he was certain of two things, and somewhat uncertain as to a third. He was sure that the Mission Friends of the first generation would never consent to any scheme of Americanization. He was equally sure that the third generation of the Mission Friends would be Americanized as a matter of course. He was not sure whether the Americanization would take effect already in the

in 1890, and together he labored with Risberg until the department, called the Swedish Institute after 1903, closed in 1916.³⁴

Nyvall must have been deeply affected by the experience of Peter Christian Trandberg (1832–1896), the instructor in the Danish-Norwegian department from its opening in 1884 until his termination by CTS in 1890. Trandberg was fifty when he emigrated from Denmark, a graduate of the University of Copenhagen and converted by the writings of Søren Kierkegaard. Trandberg was a devout “free Lutheran” and had received from Montgomery “permission to hold fast to Lutheran interpretation.”³⁵ A controversy arose when Trandberg learned that Congregationalists were being told that he was at CTS to protect it and his students from Lutheran influences. Trandberg had formed several free Lutheran congregations in Chicago and countered publicly that he “heartily adhered to the Lutheran view of the mysteries of salvation.” Perhaps reminiscent of Esbjörn, Trandberg accused CTS of “blatant sheep stealing” and Montgomery of buying converts by offering aid to students and churches.³⁶ He was fired. Trandberg was followed by Reinert Jernberg, a graduate of both Yale and CTS, and an ardent assimilationist and Congregationalist known for his caustic attacks on Lutheranism. While Nyvall did not share in Trandberg’s evangelistic millenarianism, he did identify with his free Lutheran stand in a Calvinistic enclave and his critique that similarities in polity do not make for common doctrine or ecclesiology.

The years 1889 to 1891 were crucial for future alignments among the Scandinavian free churches and the place that Congregational aid might have. Waldenström visited America in 1889; merger discussions, the dismissal of Trandberg, and the resignation of Nyvall occurred in 1890; and a Covenant school as well as Franson’s Scandinavian Alliance Mission (SAM) were formed in 1891. In the midst of this organizational activ-

second generation. With this opinion as to the future it is natural that he could not take a very enthusiastic view of the Covenant plan.” For a study of generational theory, see Peter Kivisto and Dag Blanck, eds., *American Immigrants and Their Generations: Studies and Commentaries on the Hansen Thesis after Fifty Years* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1990).

34. Half of Peterson’s \$1,000 salary was paid by the Covenant, half by CTS. When the Covenant school was established in Minneapolis in 1891, the Covenant withdrew its funding, and Peterson’s earnings were augmented out of Risberg’s own pocket.

35. P.C. Trandberg, *Deliverance from Babylon and Its Foreshadowings* (Chicago: N.O. Moore, 1888), 41f.

36. For a discussion of the Trandberg controversy, see Hale, “Scandinavian Departments,” 108–111.

ity, it became increasingly clear that Congregationalist hopes would be limited by the self-determinative actions of the Scandinavians themselves, producing either, on one hand, intentional denominational commitments (the Covenant) or, on the other, more amorphous associational activity (SAM) across whose spectrum people moved freely and where schools became the key symbols of a potentially greater cooperation. It was here that the low-profiled and unassuming Fridolf Risberg became a tenuous link between all.

Assumptions, Expectations, and Politics

What were the ambitions of the Congregationalists? On the basis of the rhetorical tradition, it is tempting to see assimilation and absorption of the Scandinavian free churches as the goal. Congregational leaders had made this quite clear. If one reads more closely, however, it is equally clear that their overriding concern was for preserving the Protestant establishment in America from the infiltration of “foreign elements,” especially Jews, Roman Catholics, and immigrants from Southern and Eastern Europe. With a qualified xenophobia, they diligently sought alliances with Protestant immigrants from Northern Europe and Scandinavia and were quite happy to allow these ethnic groups to establish their own associations—with hopes for possible merger in the future. In 1886, for example, Montgomery wrote that “organic unity between Congregationalists and Mission Swedes is not desired by either party, but Christian fellowship between them grows with mutual acquaintance.”³⁷ Yet, others harbored larger expectations, perhaps justifying for some the investment in these groups.

It should not be surprising, then, that in response to this Covenant leaders developed a rhetorical tradition of their own that became widely promoted in the press and among the people. The Congregationalists sent many mixed messages rooted in their nativism. This is well illustrated by the one effort at joint denominational affiliation in 1889–1890. At the triennial Congregational National Council meeting in Worcester, Massachusetts, in the fall of 1889, a “fraternal overture” was made to the Covenant. Sensing the Covenant’s sensitivity about assimilation, the resolution added that the church should “retain their present name and

37. M.W. Montgomery, *The Pilgrim* (October 1886), as quoted by Hale, *Transatlantic Conservative Protestantism*, 233.

organization, and carry on the work in their own language and methods, and send delegates to the National Council.” In reference to financial support of ministers and churches, it was stated that “this aid is not given for the purpose of making Congregationalists of them.”³⁸ Moreover, Waldenström was then making his first tour of America, had received an honorary doctorate at Yale, and was well known for his support of affiliation with the Congregationalists, though he feared the liberalizing tendencies of Americanization. Even as the Covenant emphatically refused the proposal, Waldenström wrote, “It would be a joy if all the Swedish Free churches would unite in a Swedish Association, and then this Association, as such, join the Congregationalists. But as the situation is at present, it may be best to have patience.”³⁹

David Nyvall and Axel Mellander, who in 1892 became dean of the Covenant school, anticipated the Covenant’s rejection of the overture. In January 1890 Mellander wrote in *Missions-Vännern* that the freedom of the Covenant “cannot be sold either for Congregational favors or American bribes.” A week later, Nyvall added, “We shall not be assimilated because we shall not be Americanized. By making the best of what we now are, we can best educate the nation in America. . . . If we are good Swedes (in an apolitical sense), we are good Americans.”⁴⁰ The same week, Montgomery wrote in exasperation, “Some of their leaders are as blind. . . . as the ostrich with her head in the sand. They bitterly oppose Americanizing influences. As well might they strive against the rising of tomorrow’s sun. They will succeed only in extinguishing themselves.”⁴¹ In a similar vein, Scott wrote to Montgomery stating that should Nyvall wish to return to CTS, he would have to promise to “act loyally with us and at least cease all attacks on us. . . . To give some men rope enough means self-hanging.”⁴²

The proposal was formally rejected by the Covenant’s executive board

38. *Minutes of the National Council* (1889), 175, 276, as quoted by Hale, *ibid.*

39. *Reports of the American Home Missionary Society, 64th Report* (New York: American Home Missionary Society, 1890), 61ff. For the nineteenth-century Swedish context of democratic movements of reform, see Mark Safstrom, *The Religious Origins of Democratic Pluralism: Paul Peter Waldenström and the Politics of the Swedish Awakening, 1868–1917* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2016).

40. *Missions-Vännern*, January 22, 1890; January 29, 1890.

41. M.W. Montgomery, “Our Scandinavian Brethren,” *The Advance*, January 23, 1890, 68.

42. H.M. Scott to M.W. Montgomery, June 16, 1890, as quoted by Lindstrom, “The Risberg School,” 21.

at a joint meeting with the Congregationalists, February 4–5, 1890, at the Pacific Hotel in Chicago. The reasons given demonstrate the rhetorical tradition emerging in the Covenant, namely, Nyvall's concern for denominational identity and Swedish-American ethnic consciousness and Mellander's fear of theological liberalism and social laxity. It is obvious that both sides misunderstood each other's intentions, but both had given ample cause for the other's doing so. An embittered Joseph B. Clark, secretary of the AHMS, believed that the Covenant's delegates to the meeting were not fully representative and complained in a letter to Montgomery "that they could not probably manage the team [of horses] which they assume to be driving. . . . [L]et the *Verbund* go to the grass or to the grave. I guess it does not matter much which."⁴³

The Congregational leaders had good reason to wonder about the Covenant's central leadership, though they totally misread the internal divisions among the Scandinavian free churches. By 1890 the AHMS had aided numerous churches in the New England states, and in December of that year the Eastern Missionary Association (EMA) formed in Worcester, Massachusetts, along regional lines similar to what had been proposed nationally. Though the EMA merged solely with the Covenant in 1921, these churches were in effect Covenant all along (though known as Swedish Congregational), with clergy trained largely at Risberg's school.

By the turn of the century, there were over a hundred Swedish Congregational churches with some 5,000 members, concentrated most heavily in New England and areas of Minnesota and Wisconsin.⁴⁴ In the East, this dual affiliation persisted for decades in local congregations; whereas in the Northwest, a separate Swedish Congregational association of churches and pastors existed from 1898 until its merger with the Covenant's Northwestern Missionary Association (1884) in 1918. It is both surprising and revealing that there were few Swedish Congregational churches in Illinois—only one small congregation in Chicago (which moved many times and in 1905 had only sixty members), and four in

43. J.B. Clark to M.W. Montgomery, n.d., as quoted by Anderson, "Analysis of Congregational Aid," 35. Congregational leaders frequently used the German word *Verbund* instead of the Swedish *Förbund*.

44. For an extensive description of these 106 churches, see the sympathetic history by A.P. Nelson, *Svenska Missionsvännernas historia i Amerika* (Minneapolis: published by the author, 1906). In an attempt to show the common history of Mission Friends with English and American Congregationalism (to merge the rhetorical traditions), Nelson had written *Puritanernas och Pilgrimernas historia* (Boston: Pilgrim Press, 1901). If Ris-

the suburbs.⁴⁵ Thus the influence of the AHMS and CTS had virtually no impact in areas where the Covenant was strongest. Churches in the East were founded at least a decade later, were more urban and separated geographically from church life in Chicago, and were in close proximity to New England history and culture as well as to theological schools at New Haven, Hartford, and Boston.

As the relationship between Congregationalists and the Swedish Mission Friends changed after 1890, the place of Fridolf Risberg, relatively quiet up to this point, came into greater prominence. Even then, in the absence of his papers, we know most about him from others and by his actions. Though not a Congregationalist himself until 1894, Risberg was the symbol of Swedish Congregationalism. At the same time, his close ties to the Covenant were evidenced by his declining the invitation to become president of the new Covenant school in Minneapolis in 1892—thus giving the opportunity to Nyvall—and his prominent place in the dedicatory ceremonies of Old Main at North Park in 1894, and providing the school its motto: “In Thy Light, Shall We See Light” (Psalm 36:9). Of even more importance, however, was Risberg’s connection to a third group, which he most personally identified with, namely the mission activities associated with Fredrik Franson’s Scandinavian Alliance Mission (SAM), in direct competition with Covenant missionary activity.

Franson’s mission was organized in 1891, the year after the Covenant sent its first missionary to China, and Franson began mobilizing young people, “without reference to their affiliation,” to go to China and elsewhere.⁴⁶ Risberg moved, therefore, increasingly away from the Covenant after 1891, at the same time that he was the most visible proponent of Americanization among the Swedes and deeply involved with the more radical Scandinavian Free congregations in the alliance mission. Since

berg had had Nelson’s promotional energy, the history of Swedish Congregationalism might have been different.

45. For a discussion of Congregational work in the EMA, see Paul A. Day, *Unity and Freedom: One Hundred Years of the East Coast Conference of the Evangelical Covenant Church* (East Coast Conference, 1990). For the Northwest, see Philip J. Anderson, *A Precious Heritage: A Century of Mission in the Northwest, 1884–1984* (Minneapolis: Northwest Conference, 1984); and “Protokollbok för svenska kongregational predikantföreningen i nordvestern,” 1898–1918, MS, Covenant Archives and Historical Library (CAHL), Chicago.

46. Ironically, the Scandinavian Alliance Mission was organized in the Swedish Tabernacle in Minneapolis, the very place and in the same year that the Covenant school took its home, demonstrating the fluid lines of division among Mission Friends. Cf.

his friend Franson was the traveling carpetbagger, Risberg, as secretary, ran the SAM from his office at CTS, a position he held until his death in 1921. In effect, he was the director. Because of these connections, the churches in the East supported the SAM rather than Covenant missions, a most uncomfortable development. Though Nyvall admired Risberg and prized his friendship, he wrote in 1930 that all Covenant “hardships” with the Swedish Congregationalists were “symbolized in the personal factor of Risberg.” Because of him, it was possible for many churches in these groups to be “separated yet federated in spirit.”⁴⁷

These complex relationships, however, were not to be played out on the level of church mergers. Rather, it was in a series of attempts to unite schools representing the Covenant, the Swedish Congregationalists, and the Free that the different perspectives on mission, institutions, assimilation, and ethnic consciousness and boundaries were shown. It can be argued that in these relationships one can see the stronger role of urban networks and institutions when compared to older rural environments. It may also be asserted that groups rooted in revival and the folk movements in opposition to the Swedish state church could more readily adapt to the competitive American environment of religious pluralism and voluntarism.

The Covenant school moved to Chicago in 1894, became known as North Park, and entered into more direct competition with CTS, though it was unable to offer comparable aid to students studying for Covenant ministry. Young immigrants were poor, and CTS attracted many of these students and often continued the aid as they went on to serve Swedish Congregational churches. A sizable number, however, remained with Covenant congregations. The Swedish Free churches began their own school in Chicago in 1901 under the leadership of Princell, which always struggled, moved for a time to Minneapolis and Franconia, Minnesota,

Josephine Princell, ed., *Alliansmissionens tjugu femårsminnen* (Chicago: Skandinaviska Alliansmissionen, 1916); and Frederick Hale, “Norwegians, Danes, and the Origins of the Evangelical Free Tradition,” *Norwegian-American Studies* 29 (Northfield: Norwegian-American Historical Association, 1979), 82–108.

47. Nyvall, *Swedish Covenanters*, 78. Risberg wrote, “There were never two persons more unlike each other than Franson and myself, but for many years we knew each other and worked together for the Mission, [and] we never had an unkind word between us,” quoted in J. F. Swanson, ed., *Three Score Years . . . and Then: Sixty Years of Worldwide Missionary Advance* (Chicago: The Evangelical Alliance Mission, 1951), 446.

and finally returned to Chicago—affiliated loosely with Moody Bible Institute. Nyvall said that whereas the Mission Friends should have been united, they “were now divided not only in two organizations, as at the onset, but in *partes tres*, to borrow from Caesar, a division accentuated by the three schools serving practically the same constituency.”⁴⁸ Consequently, all three schools struggled with limited resources and students.

The lengthy merger discussions between 1902 and 1911 consistently encountered two differing convictions. First, the Covenant and North Park, concerned for an emerging identity as a Swedish-American church and with a more comprehensive vision of liberal and professional education, wished only to absorb Risberg’s school into its existing seminary program. Because of historic differences and the Free’s anti-denominational spirit, North Park wanted nothing to do with Princell’s school. Second, leaders at CTS worked diligently for a new union of the three schools. Amid the talk, meetings, and correspondence, there was little hope of bridging these differences, despite the universal admiration of Risberg, personally and symbolically.

Nyvall proposed in 1902 the transfer of the Swedish department at CTS to North Park. In a lengthy reply, Scott and Curtiss refused the offer, no doubt with memories of Nyvall’s “disloyalty” a decade before, and proposed instead a new “Union Theological Seminary” of the three schools under Congregational auspices, where North Park would provide undergraduate preparation in its college.⁴⁹ This same scenario was repeated in 1906 (in Nyvall’s absence) when representatives from the three schools convened at the Oak Street Mission in Chicago.⁵⁰ By early 1907 the discussions had died.⁵¹ The Covenant was now over two decades old, more secure in its prospects of moving into the second generation,

48. Nyvall, *Swedish Covenanters*, 76. The Danish-Norwegian free churches opened a seminary in Rushford, Minnesota, in 1909, with the cooperation of CTS. It moved to Minneapolis in 1916. For the context of Scandinavian Free Mission Friend identity, see David M. Gustafson, *D. L. Moody and Swedes: Shaping Evangelical Identity among Swedish Mission Friends 1867–1899* (Linköping: Linköping University, 2008).

49. H.M. Scott and S.I. Curtiss to David Nyvall, February 11, 1902, David Nyvall Papers, CAHL.

50. H.M. Scott to E.G. Hjerpe, April 26, 1907, CAHL.

51. “Risberg’s School: North Park Seminary Correspondence on Union 1910–1911,” MS, Covenant Archives and Historical Library, Chicago. For example, it was agreed to publish a directory of associated ministers, congregations, and mission organizations to be of value especially to new immigrants and those moving to other places. The Covenant and Congregationalists complied, but the Free did not.

and more firm in its prejudices, especially since the publication of Melander's stinging attack on the Congregationalists in 1900, *Betänkande i kongregationalist-frågan* (Thoughts on the Congregationalist Question).

Two events in 1908 portray vividly the hopes and disappointments born of deep division. In the North Park archives is a silver loving cup with three unusual handles, presented to Risberg on his sixtieth birthday in 1908 by the graduates of his school at CTS. Algoth Ohlson, a graduate in 1907 and later president of North Park (1924–1949), remembered:

The presentation of the gift, as I recall it, took place on a festive occasion where there were a large number of people present, representatives of the three Swedish theological seminaries in Chicago. . . . During the program someone suggested that one representative of each school should grasp a handle of the cup simultaneously while someone else led in prayer for harmonious cooperation and possible future consolidation. . . . So far as I know, this ceremony was never repeated; nor was there any deep feeling of symbolic meaning in the first and only expression of it.⁵²

Also in 1908, the loose association of Free congregations organized itself in Minneapolis as a denomination, the Swedish Evangelical Free Church. Princell, who was present, protested that a mission association should not have the word "church" in its name, that such an organization was premature. He wanted room for independent congregations, yet he too harbored hope for a merging of all three groups. His passionate speech to the delegates was not recorded in the minutes, but in it he said,

In order that a kettle shall be able to stand up straight, it must have at least three legs. And we ought to wait in adopting the name "Free church" until the kettle has three legs to stand on. And you know what they are: the Covenant, the Free, and the Congregationalists. For it is evident that they will become one if we wait a little.⁵³

The final discussions occurred between September 1910 and May 1911. With Nyvall away from North Park in voluntary exile between

52. Algoth Ohlson to Oscar E. Olson, December 9, 1959, CAHL.

53. Josephine Princell, *J. G. Princells levnadsminnen* (Chicago: J. V. Martensons Tryckeri, 1916), 265.

1905 and 1912, the EMA had passed a resolution in Brockton, Massachusetts, to revive the idea of a union of the three theological schools. The North Park board endorsed it, renewing the proviso that Risberg's school should be transferred to North Park, and that he would be invited to become president. The Free Church school was not mentioned. E.G. Hjerpe, the new president of the Covenant, conveyed this decision on March 29, 1911, to Ozora Stearns Davis, president of CTS since 1908. Davis—who desired a permanent solution and no doubt was weary of a discussion that had gone on for a quarter-century—insisted in his reply that it be a union of *three* schools in order to “promote the union of three bodies.” And while Chicago Covenant pastors had written to Davis saying that “Risberg commends the highest respect of our people and possesses such sterling qualities and thorough learning and experience that would make him an ideal President for such a school,”⁵⁴ Davis countered that Risberg was too old to change positions and “not fitted” to be president of North Park, only the dean of a seminary. When the boards of North Park and CTS met together on May 6, 1911, tempers flared, and the stalemate continued. Davis finally concluded “that the obstacles in the way of union are so many and so great that for the present it is impossible.”⁵⁵ It was never brought up again.

The Danish-Norwegian Institute closed in 1913 and, upon Risberg's retirement in 1916, so did the Swedish Institute. Nyvall paid tribute to Risberg by saying that his “ability, and the confidence he inspired, kept his school going long after it had ceased to be necessary or even helpful to its original purpose of training ministers for the Mission Friends.” By the early 1890s, and certainly by the turn-of-the-century, Risberg's school “had no purpose of its own” since most of its graduates “associated themselves with the Covenant.”⁵⁶

The Upshot

What is interesting in this history of American aid is not so much the Congregationalists' desire to incorporate a significant section of the Swedish-American people, which may easily be overstated, but how the various Mission Friend groups responded to the overtures. On one hand, the distinctives that divided the Covenant, the Free, the Swedish Con-

54. Chicago Swedish Mission Ministers to O.S. Davis, March 27, 1911, CAHL.

55. O.S. Davis to E.G. Hjerpe, May 11, 1911, CAHL.

56. Nyvall, *Swedish Covenants*, 76.

gregationalists, and the independents, come into sharp focus. On the other hand, one can also see the development of a pan-ethnic “mission” identity that embraced all the Scandinavian free churches and fostered cooperation and hopes for merger, driven by religion and held together by ethnicity. The challenge was to steer between the Scylla of assimilation without tradition and the Charybdis of tradition without assimilation.

The divisions, however, were products both of religion and ethnicity. Among the Swedish Congregationalists was an uncritical accommodation to the American world of Reformed theology and culture, while remaining essentially Swedish and free Lutheran. Among the Free churches was a far more sectarian view of religion and life and an almost total disregard for ethnic distinctives, while accommodating almost fully to Anglo-American theologies and methods of revivalism and culture, essentially Reformed and dispensational. Among Covenant leaders was a distinctive articulation of an emerging Swedish-American consciousness as an ethnic group in transition and a concern for institutional completeness, sensitive to the intergenerational challenges of immigrant life, not sectarian but rooted in the inheritances of the Old and New Worlds. It is especially interesting that the clashing of rhetorical traditions between Congregationalists and Covenanters was partly based on invented histories, celebrating the Anglo-American destiny through colonial Puritanism, and the Swedish-American consciousness through Viking history and retention of Scandinavian language and culture.

To adopt language from family systems theory, on matters of ethnicity David Nyvall was a highly “differentiated” leader within the Covenant, meaning “the capacity of a family member to define his or her own life’s goals and values apart from surrounding togetherness pressures, to say ‘I’ when others are demanding ‘you’ and ‘we.’” It means “the capacity to be an ‘I’ while remaining connected” to the larger group, to be a non-anxious presence in the midst of anxious systems.⁵⁷ In ethnic terms, the leadership of Risberg among the Congregationalists and Princell among the Free was far less differentiated because the emphasis was more strongly on Americanization and less on generational ethnicity.

Another way to look at this would be to use John Higham’s leadership

57. Edwin H. Friedman, *Generation to Generation: Family Progress in Church and Synagogue* (New York: Guilford Press, 1985), 27. See also Michael E. Kerr and Murray Bowen, *Family Evaluation: An Approach Based on Bowen Theory* (New York: Norton, 1988).

types.⁵⁸ According to Higham, “leaders focus the consciousness of an ethnic group and in doing so make its identity visible.” Of the three types of leader (received, internal, and projective), the Mission Friend movement in general was too new and varied to produce “received” leaders, where one made traditional claims upon the group. Nyvall probably came closest to this. Rather, the voluntary nature of these groups meant that leaders were either “internal,” who arose from within the group, remained there, and addressed the external world as its representative and advocate; or they were “projective,” who came from the group but acquired a following outside the group, thus affecting its reputation without being directly subject to its control. Though Risberg gave much of his energy to Free Scandinavian causes across the spectrum (thus appearing as an “internal” leader), his role at CTS and his views of Americanization made him symbolically a “projective” leader among Swedish Americans. Nyvall, on the contrary, was firmly an “internal” leader, necessary to self-conscious and self-activating bodies because these leaders helped build psychological and economic security. The role of the Covenant and North Park in the merger discussions was consistent with this pattern. Had Risberg been a more aggressive activist as a leader, this advocate of American unity perhaps could have built more of the bridges he symbolically represented.

The entire story is a test case of generational themes. Princell’s school, today’s Trinity International University and Trinity Evangelical Divinity School (affiliated with the merger of the Swedish and Danish-Norwegian Free churches in 1950), has no substantive tie to an ethnic heritage. “Risberg’s School” at CTS closed when he retired in 1916, and Swedish Congregationalism ceased all institutional forms by 1921. But North Park, according to Nyvall, “was built right, and withstood, therefore, the test of the storm.”⁵⁹ It survived without him, and throughout its history has seriously addressed issues of denominational identity and Swedish-American culture and consciousness in its urban and richly multiethnic setting, a flourishing Christian university in a world-class city.

58. John Higham, “Leadership,” in Michael Walzer, et al., *The Politics of Ethnicity* (Cambridge: Belknap Press, 1982), 69–91.

59. Nyvall, *Swedish Covenanters*, 77.

David Nyvall's Enduring Impact on Christian Higher Education

*Scott Erickson, head of school, Phillips Brooks School,
Menlo Park, California*

David Nyvall (1863–1946),¹ founding president of North Park University and Theological Seminary, was an impactful leader. He was purposeful in requiring his church to think innovatively about its philosophy of education. He is relevant today because he established an academic culture that has sustained and extended an immigrant community beyond its first generation. “Full of ambition,” he addressed the student body on North Park’s tenth anniversary (1901) and shared his vision for the young institution:

I would fain make this school a college, yea, a university. . . . I would make this dear community of ours a center of thought and art to the whole civilized world. . . . making this school a center from which radiates to all ends of the world the light of Christ’s truth, and the warmth of Christ’s love, and the

1. For treatments of David Nyvall, other than denominational and institutional histories, see the following: Leland H. Carlson, “David Nyvall—An Appreciation,” *Our Covenant* 17 (1942): 33–43; Zenos E. Hawkinson, “The Pietist Schoolman,” in Philip J. Anderson, ed., *Amicus Dei: Essays on Faith and Friendship* (Chicago, 1988), 96–108; Philip J. Anderson, “David Nyvall and Swedish-American Education,” in Philip J. Anderson and Dag Blanck, eds., *Swedish-American Life in Chicago: Cultural and Urban Aspects of an Immigrant People, 1850–1930* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1991), 327–42; Steven Elde, “The Hearth and the Chimney: Covenant Attitudes Toward Education,” *Covenant Quarterly* 49, no. 2 (1991): 3–43; and Scott E. Erickson, *David Nyvall and the Shape of an Immigrant Church: Ethnic, Denominational, and Educational Priorities among Swedes in America* (Uppsala: Uppsala University, 1996).

beauty of Christ's character. [This would be] a school with a schedule [for] becoming a Christian university."²

I begin with Nyvall's vision for the Christian university because it so clearly demonstrates his leadership, foresight, and call to action at the end of North Park's first decade. By that time Nyvall had already articulated a conceptual framework for the Covenant Church's school: theological training for pastors and a liberal arts curriculum for immigrants who otherwise would not have access to the American academy. Although his desire for a Christian university was not in near-term reach in 1901, it is clear that Nyvall wanted to inspire other leaders to carry his vision forward—a vision that is now a reality and that was made possible by his intentional leadership as North Park president for a quarter-century. As we celebrate North Park University and Theological Seminary at 125, it is important to reflect on Nyvall's philosophy for Christian higher education, the leadership that was required to establish the school, and what he did to ensure its success 125 years beyond its founding.

Nyvall's Early Faith and Intellectual Temperament

David Nyvall's leadership is rooted in his precocious character and complex personal history. It begins in youthful self-discovery in Vall, his rural family homestead near Karlskoga in the south-central county of Värmland, Sweden. David later reflected on mid-nineteenth century life with a brooding, troubled mother and an absent father whose religious fervor took him on frequent preaching trips. He wrote: "Things were as they were because of circumstances and responsibilities. And there was a certain temperament, which for lack of a better term, I choose to call a Karlskoga temperament—half cautious, half modest and shy—when it comes to expressing more tender feelings."³ David's father, C.J. Nyvall, was a traveling preacher, riding his horse Hulda with Bible in hand, always ready to preach a sermon. Formidable, he was an organizing force behind the Mission Friends movement. He was present at inaugural meetings for the Covenant Church in both Sweden and America.

2. David Nyvall, "The Poetry of Missions," reprinted in *Linnea, 1901*, p. 333. Karl A. Olsson has stated that a "Covenant university" was an "unfading dream" of Nyvall's. Olsson, *Into One Body... by the Cross*, vol. 1 (Chicago: Covenant Publications, 1985), 202.

3. David Nyvall, *Min Faders Testamente* (Chicago: Tryckt å Scandia Print Co., 1924), 373, my translation.

While his siblings and others around Vall worked in field and meadow, David read books, lying in a ditch or by a tree. When the others reported the bookworm's lack of cooperation with practical chores, C.J. Nyvall took David's side. David later reflected in an interview that his young mind was buzzing with new ideas and goals.⁴

When his parents left for a visit to the United States, David began a series of studies that ultimately prepared him for matriculation at Uppsala University. This opportunity was atypical for a farm boy who liked to read books in a ditch. But his father had contacts and opened doors, and David harbored ambitions and what he called intellectual pursuits: "I wrote volumes before I was fifteen. For the wastebasket. Before I was fifteen. . . . It seems that my pen is my permanent instructor."⁵

David toyed with being a poet. His father worried about his son's ego and lack of spiritual purity. The father wrote a prayer: "God, you know [David's] heart, that he does not want to live in accordance with your will, but rather to be something great in this world."⁶ For the traveling preacher, Christian faith was of preeminent importance, and religious conversion was what his movement called the "one thing necessary." This renewal movement was led by Mission Friends and fueled what would become the Covenant Church. Paul Peter Waldenström articulated a clear, simple theological framework for the Mission Friends when he proffered that there was one question required for the Christian: "Where is it written?"

In today's language, these were the branding promises of the Mission Friends movement and, eventually, the Covenant Church: conversion as the one thing necessary and "Where is it written?" as the interpretive cipher. These religious commitments make sense when seen in the context of mid-nineteenth-century Sweden, where the national church was corrupt and not meeting the spiritual needs of the people. It is understandable that P.P. Waldenström, C.J. Nyvall, and the Mission Friends would reject the perceived worldliness of the established church

4. Interview of David Nyvall by Olga Lindborg in *Friska Vindar*, April 1, 1933, pp. 97–99. Interview manuscript also found in David Nyvall Collection 1:6. Covenant Archives and Historical Library (CAHL), Chicago.

5. David Nyvall to Theodore W. Anderson, fall 1942. David Nyvall Charn Collection 1:10. CAHL.

6. C.J. Nyvall diary entry, December 28, 1878. C.J. Nyvall Collection. Riksarkivet (National Archives), Stockholm.

in favor of a return to the Bible, an evident conversion experience, and a Christian faith expressed through daily action.

The young David Nyvall was wrestling with this new approach to Christian faith. He did not despise “worldly” things. He found his faith something of a question mark and was attracted by the intellectual pursuits that his father and the Mission Friends had eschewed. David later reflected on what was for him a Christian faith filled with complexity and enigma:

One could just as easily have put out a volcano with a pail of water. It was like a fever that boiled and burned within me, all that cools notwithstanding, and was maintained by all the irreconcilable incongruities with which I had been raised from my early childhood. Despite all the doubts, questions, and adventurous thoughts, I still had a deeply religious nature. The faith of my father was not something to be questioned. Above all, my father’s life was one of praise. But I questioned and wondered about the revival preachers around me, while deeply despising religious radicals. Instead, the best people I found... were those who did not consider dancing to be a sin. I was split and divided from within.⁷

One remedy enacted by David’s father was to send this brooding teenager to study with Waldenström, who had a doctorate in classical languages. David would learn to read the Bible in its original languages and to answer the single question proposed by his new mentor and the Mission Friends movement: *Where is it written?* It is clear that the father hoped his son’s time with Waldenström would create an opening for a conversion experience and more joyful Christian living. Yet, at the time, North Park’s eventual founding president was living and writing “primarily in the minor key,” according to Nyvall’s presidential successor Karl Olsson. David himself was concerned about his lack of direction and was depressed because he felt that “all doors were closed” to him and that all “desires of [his] heart were cast down.”⁸ He wrote in his diary in 1882:

My sins! Got up without desire to work, without gratitude

7. Interview of David Nyvall by Olga Lindborg.

8. David Nyvall diary entry, November 27, 1881. David Nyvall Collection 15:11. CAHL.

in my heart to God, without adoration or praise on my lips to my righteous God, under whose protection I have rested. Worked with no diligence or concern. Even prayer was lacking. Went to school without praying. Attended the morning prayers with indifference and inattentiveness. My life in school lacks Christian seriousness. . . . O God . . . you know the deep misery of my heart.⁹

He wrote that same year about “working with a thousand subjects” without being able to bring any of them to fruition.¹⁰ He told his diary about his intellectual “shipwrecks” and that “with every day my future becomes darker and I become more of a riddle.” In contrast to his father’s straightforward faith, David’s mind worked like this: “I can ask and make a question of the answer” because “in reality my whole problem seems to be to encompass everything in questions.”¹¹

David Nyvall’s unpublished writings are invaluable sources for understanding this significant time of spiritual, emotional, and intellectual development prior to his twentieth birthday. In addition, the unpublished primary sources available in C.J. Nyvall’s archive provide insight into the father’s faith and lifework. David was clearly troubled that his approach to Christian faith was not as clear-cut as his father’s. When he performed his own “self-examination,” this was David’s conclusion: “I am a putrefied, bloodless cadaver, where my desires tremble about like worms in possession of the field.” The result: “I cannot work myself free from a Scylla without falling into a Charybdis.”¹²

Compounding these spiritual and intellectual troubles, young David Nyvall was soon confronted with the tense intellectual and religious atmosphere at Uppsala University, where he matriculated in 1883. The Bible was not on the syllabus for the spiritually tormented student from Vall. Instead, his reading list included Darwin’s *Origin of Species* and Viktor Rydberg’s *The Scripture’s Teaching about Christ*, a perspective on the life of Jesus with a biblical criticism that was considered shocking at the time. The most important work for David was Kierkegaard’s *Sickness*

9. David Nyvall diary entry, March 31, 1882. David Nyvall Collection 15:11. CAHL.

10. David Nyvall diary entry, August 6, 1882. David Nyvall Collection 15:11. CAHL.

11. David Nyvall diary entry, April 8, 1882. David Nyvall Collection 15:11. CAHL. Translated by Karl A. Olsson, *By One Spirit* (Chicago: Covenant Publications, 1962), 166–67.

12. Ibid.

unto Death. He referred to this work over and over and related its challenges to his own search for meaning in life and his desire to accomplish his own impossible possibility. David's pen remained his "permanent instructor," as evidenced through long, unpublished treatises. He wrote critical, intellectual, and faith reflections on topics such as greed, idleness, respectability, and conceit as well as on numerous theological and philosophical topics: What is the difference between imagination and reality; concerning irony; Christ's suffering and a Christian's suffering.¹³ David made a decision to prepare for a career in medicine. This is certainly surprising given the subjects that occupied his thinking and writing, yet it is clear in the sources that this was the only alternative acceptable to his father. C.J. Nyvall wanted his son to be a traveling preacher like himself but would accept medical studies for his intellectually inclined son.¹⁴

At this juncture, we encounter David's inner conflicts as well as the conflict between father and son—and, most importantly, clear differences regarding how Christian faith is experienced and expressed. C.J. Nyvall's best friends were his Bible and his horse Hulda, with whom he traveled thousands of miles as a revival preacher. He had had a dramatic conversion experience. His response to God's gift of grace and faith had been to dedicate his entire being to the gospel, often at the expense of his own family. He traveled on dusty roads, treacherous oceans, and rickety railroads with little financial support, and he delivered a straightforward message of faith and conversion. C.J. Nyvall did not give his listeners complex theology or spiritual cynicism; he preached the good news straight and simple. Simple does not mean simplistic; rather, people were hungry for a gospel they could understand and to which they could cling in troubled times. The traditional religious and societal institutions had been failing them for decades, and C.J. Nyvall's message rang true. For his listeners, it was a matter of acceptance or rejection—the former resulting in a pious life and the latter resulting in damnation. C.J. Nyvall was highly successful at a time of great spiritual crisis in Sweden, and the response was tremendous.

Things were different for the founding president of North Park University. David Nyvall never mentioned a dramatic conversion experience, and he disliked the religious radicalism of some of his father's contempo-

13. David Nyvall diary entries: April 29, May 22, and June 5, 1883. David Nyvall Collection 15:11. CAHL.

14. Erickson, *David Nyvall*, 61–63.

raries. His intellectual struggle with the issues that challenge Christian faith presented no easy solutions. He said himself that, while pondering Christian faith, he could not work himself “free from a Scylla without falling into a Charybdis.” He did not possess or write about spiritual clarity, rather “shipwrecks” caused by intellectual challenges to his faith.¹⁵ David’s best friends were ideas and questions, on which he reflected critically and freely with his pen and later his Corona typewriter. His pen and Corona produced what would become fifty-two archival boxes illuminating his thinking, leadership acumen, Christian character, emerging philosophy of education, and the mustard seed that would eventually grow into a Christian university.

Two stories from an interview with Karl Olsson, North Park president from 1959 to 1970, further illuminate Nyvall’s faith development and intellectual temperament. Olsson built the university in a manner consistent with Nyvall’s vision and oversaw the expansion of the junior college to a four-year liberal arts institution. In his boyhood home, the young Olsson overheard a heated debate on evolution. Olsson heard David Nyvall say, “If God could make man from dust, why couldn’t God make man from apes?” Many years later, Olsson asked Nyvall, now his professor, “Have you ever doubted God?” Nyvall answered, “I have never doubted God. But I have doubted Christ.”¹⁶

In his youth and beyond, David Nyvall allowed questions and ideas to influence his faith. His leadership gifts were developed through a process that included mystery, doubt, ambivalence, questions, and complexity. This process was not straightforward, as it never can be for educational visionaries and leaders of Nyvall’s strength and quality.

Establishing an Academic Culture

Something significant was missing for David Nyvall at age twenty-three when he left Uppsala for a trip to the United States, at first to visit his father, then to remain as an immigrant. He needed a classroom—a place where his questions and ideas could flourish in dialogue with students. He found his first teaching space in Minneapolis in the fall of 1886. It was a classroom for immigrants, in which Nyvall said he taught “everything I could persuade anybody to learn.”¹⁷

15. Erickson, *David Nyvall*, 56–66.

16. Scott Erickson interview of Karl A. Olsson, November 3, 1994.

17. David Nyvall, “Dreams That Come True,” *North Park College Cupola* (1923): 32.

It was tough going in Nyvall's first classroom at "Skogsbergh's School," named for the famous evangelist and preacher at the large Minneapolis Swedish Tabernacle. Most immigrant students had little formal education. C. V. Bowman, president of the Covenant Church from 1927 to 1932, noted that Nyvall attempted to "awaken thought," "sharpen insight," and help students learn "the detail and beauty of Swedish grammar." While seeking to warm student intellects in the cold temperatures of the church basement, Nyvall lectured in a fur coat for fear of frostbite.¹⁸ Nyvall remained in Minneapolis for one year, followed by one year of parish ministry and two years as an assistant instructor at the Swedish Department of Chicago Theological Seminary, a Congregational Church institution responsible for educating ministers in the infant Covenant Church.

During his first half-decade in America, David Nyvall had become increasingly concerned about the future of education in a largely poor Swedish immigrant community. It was a community struggling to survive and negotiate its ethnic identity. Swedish immigrants were navigating their way in unfamiliar territory without a school, educational plan, or academic culture of their own. If Swedish immigrants assimilated readily into the American culture, Nyvall feared they would get lost like small plants in the large American garden. They would become "foreign flowerpots" hidden inconspicuously "in the window of an attic."¹⁹ Urged by Nyvall, the Covenant Church voted to establish a school in 1891, with Nyvall appointed as president, located first in Minneapolis and by 1894 in Chicago.

In 1896, Nyvall reiterated the importance of immigrant education as a means of bolstering the strength and identity of his community:

Americanization is not becoming less and less Swedish. It is not disposing of an iota of our language or even one good and noble custom. It is not forgetting the good that I know nor the language I speak. Rather, the opposite: making use of the best of me in a new place by mastering a new language, the language of this country. As long as Swedish is our own

18. C.V. Bowman, *Son of the People: The Autobiography of C.V. Bowman* [1929] (Chicago, n.d.), 164–66.

19. David Nyvall to Erik J. Ekman, March 19, 1896. David Nyvall Collection 24:1:36–37. CAHL.

language, it will be a flowerpot that we guard so delicately inside the house. . . . Learn English. And do not forget Swedish! It is therefore no danger if friends of Swedish learn English. English will save Swedish.²⁰

Nyvall did not want his immigrant community simply to “Americanize” and thus lose its identity in a melting pot. He rejected an easy and straightforward cultural assimilation, causing some to accuse him and his immigrant community of denying their American citizenship. When a journalist charged immigrant schools with being un-American, Nyvall retorted in 1899:

Our American friends ought to be patient with us. We are coming. But it takes time to die for a nation so much alive as we are; it takes time to die when to die should mean to live again. If we are too early in season in planting ourselves, we will be squandering our national inheritance. . . . We might have occasion to get lost in this country like drops of water in the sand. But we might also have the opportunity to unite and become a flood watering many fields and driving many wheels. It is up to us to say what we choose. But whatever we choose, we will have to decide soon.²¹

To strengthen immigrant identity, North Park’s founding president had a plan for his school’s curriculum. It would offer courses typical for American schools. His vision was to establish a liberal arts model in addition to theological education for Covenant pastors.

When North Park was founded, few argued about or disagreed with the *need* for a school. Many agreed about the inadequacy of the arrangements for Covenant ministerial training at Chicago Theological Seminary. Many also believed that the children of Swedish immigrants needed a school. But several of Nyvall’s contemporaries drew different conclusions about the *kind* of education for the school and the *kind* of academic methodologies and practices Nyvall was establishing. Some in his immigrant community did not understand why limited funds should support the

20. David Nyvall, “Att amerikaniseras.” Article from March 1896. David Nyvall Collection 24:1. CAHL.

21. David Nyvall, “Among Swedish-American Colleges,” *North Park College Journal* (October 1899): 2.

liberal arts and professional courses. Some believed the Covenant school should simply supplement the American public school, with classes only in religion and Swedish language for Covenant pastors.

Those who questioned Nyvall's vision for a liberal education argued for a "simple Bible school."²² Others proposed that only training for pastors take place at North Park, while general education should be organized at other institutions. Skogsbergh argued that it was hard to support a school making the wild claim that being educated was important for "Christian mission."²³ Another Covenant leader proposed a church resolution that the Covenant maintain its "preacher's department" and that North Park suspend the teaching of anything other than courses for Covenant pastors. This would dispel concerns about the misuse of Covenant money supporting a liberal education.²⁴

The theories that North Park should be a Bible school were directly opposed to Nyvall's consistent vision for North Park. In two letters from 1893, he sharply criticized the philosophy of a simple preacher's school, insisting that North Park would not and should not be "merely a preacher's school," as that would not be a school at all.²⁵ Rather, it would include three academic departments: business college, seminary, and academy for the liberal arts.²⁶

E. Danielsson, an immigrant in the Covenant Church, offered a biblical argument against Nyvall's vision. In an unpublished letter, Danielsson warned the North Park president of the evils of education: "You know very well that it is forbidden to eat from the tree of knowledge." How can we follow Christ if we engage in "worldly wisdom and business"? The "snake of knowledge" would lure precious money to a worldly school when those funds were desperately needed for the work of God's kingdom. Danielsson concluded: "The harvest is great, but the workers are few."²⁷

22. See correspondence from September 1894. David Nyvall Collection 2:7. CAHL.

23. E.A. Skogsbergh to David Nyvall, June 20, 1898. David Nyvall Collection 26:3. CAHL.

24. Salem Covenant Church in Des Moines, Iowa, to Covenant Secretary David Nyvall, May 16, 1899. David Nyvall Collection 2:6. CAHL.

25. David Nyvall to C.A. Björk, August 14, 1893. Covenant Ministers Collection: Zenos Hawkinson Addition. CAHL.

26. David Nyvall to Gustaf Almfeldt, August 14, 1893. Covenant Ministers Collection: Zenos Hawkinson Addition. CAHL.

27. E. Danielsson to David Nyvall, 1892. The sources do not indicate Danielsson's relationship to the Covenant or any previous contact with David Nyvall. David Nyvall Charn Collection 5:113. CAHL.

Indeed, many contemporaries of David Nyvall were clearly and actively opposed to his educational philosophy. They drew conclusions about education resulting from the trepidation by which they approached intellectual disciplines and the exploration of ideas and questions. Based on their immigrant and religious experiences, they believed that education should be approached informally. Like C.J. Nyvall, they would ask: When did an intellectual discussion ever convert someone to Christ? How can a liberal education ensure faith? Like P.P. Waldenström, they would also ask, “Where is it written” that Swedish immigrant Christians should have a liberal arts school?²⁸

Richard Hofstadter, in his seminal work, *Anti-intellectualism in American Life*, describes impulses in the American context that align with the views of Nyvall’s detractors: “Biblical individualism” and “lack of firm institutional establishments.” Intellectual activity was “instrumental” (a simple preacher’s school) rather than instructional (Nyvall’s vision for a Christian university with a liberal arts curriculum). While the Puritan minister was considered well-educated, even an intellectual, Hofstadter notes that the nineteenth-century revival preacher was a “crusader.” The emphasis was on saving souls rather than on a liberal education.²⁹

Waldenström’s theological approach reflects Hofstadter’s description of anti-intellectual impulses. Indeed, many in the Covenant Church’s early immigrant community were under the spell of Waldenström, who challenged educational norms, church authority, and traditional confessions and structures. He criticized practices of the national Swedish church in his allegory *Squire Adamsson*. His four-word question defined an approach that jettisoned the established theological method and opened the door for biblical individualism and anti-institutionalism. Without a sustained and community-wide dialogue, theology was relegated to each individual Christian. One result of his influence is that many in the Swedish immigrant community viewed Nyvall’s educational philosophy with skepticism.³⁰

28. Scott E. Erickson, “Ethnic and Religious Education in Swedish America: David Nyvall and the Nature of Academic Culture for Immigrants,” *Swedish American Historical Quarterly* 47, no. 4 (1996): 207–208.

29. Richard Hofstadter, *Anti-intellectualism in American Life* (Knopf: New York, 1963), 56–59, 86, 108f.

30. Cf. Karl A. Olsson, “Covenant Beginnings: Doctrinal,” *Covenant Quarterly* 13, no. 4 (1953): 99–114.

Waldenström's former student, now president of the Covenant's immigrant school, believed that a single question was an oversimplification. In order for the immigrant church to survive and thrive, Nyvall argued that it was necessary to establish an academic culture defined by a care for the life of the mind, embracing theological complexity and developing an intellectual life. He further believed it was unsustainable for North Park to separate Christian faith from a liberal education. In 1895, he wrote:

North Park College strives to attain the high mission of becoming a school home for knowledge thirsting youth from a thousand homes throughout the country. It aims with God's help to offer the clear and unadulterated waters from the springs of knowledge to the thirsting ones. . . . We are trying to establish this education on a broad foundation. . . . Our opinion is that a preacher needs to be a [person] also educated in the liberal arts. He should not be educated into a separate caste and thus through his education destined to live in a world totally alien to the life interests of common people.³¹

Nyvall's leadership ensured that North Park would not adopt the "simple preacher's school" model. He set in motion many broadly conceived and far-reaching initiatives. Theological education, according to Nyvall, would not indoctrinate the preacher; instead, it would nurture and develop the preacher's intellect. Nyvall knew that second- and third-generation immigrants in the Covenant Church would not benefit from a Bible school. The American culture they were navigating was far too complex. In 1898, Nyvall clarified his philosophy for North Park: "Education means . . . all that culture implies. . . . To further the cause of Christian Education is the high aim of. . . North Park College. It is the ambition of every teacher here to see that all the studies and all the methods of studying are of the highest choice."³² North Park University's founding president established early the high pedagogical and curricular standards his school would uphold.

Yet, in the first decade of North Park's history, the issues and countervailing forces that confronted Nyvall were significant: the Swedish renewal

31. David Nyvall, "From North Park (1895)," *Covenant Quarterly* 13, no. 2 (1953): 36–38.

32. David Nyvall, "Some Plain Facts about Education," *Linnea* (1898): 46–47.

movement that proposed a different theological method; the desire to fund only a preacher's school; informal attitudes about education among his peers; and anti-intellectual attitudes both fueled by Waldenström and in the larger American evangelical context. Historian Sydney Mead has noted that, after about 1800, Americans were forced to make a choice between "being intelligent according to standards prevailing in their intellectual centers, and being religious according to standards prevailing in their denominations."³³ This was a choice akin to Nyvall's diary entry about his difficulty working himself "free from a Scylla without falling into a Charybdis," which in the early twentieth century had developed into an unhelpful dichotomy: the piety of the Mission Friend religious experience over against a rigorous academic culture that would support and sustain the immigrant community in the Covenant Church.

If one were hesitant about intellectuals and their educational goals, Nyvall's Uppsala-inspired notions about an academic culture for the Covenant Church would indeed sound foreign. Many of his contemporaries were unsure of, and even suspicious about, the founding president's 1901 goal for North Park to be a Christian university and a "center of thought and art to the whole civilized world." With the benefit of historical reflection, it is clear that Nyvall's vision endured amidst significant challenges both inside and outside his own church and his own immigrant community.

Further Defining an Academic Culture

David Nyvall's views about Christian higher education and the liberal arts between 1914 and 1918 are further illuminated in a series of unpublished correspondence with Charles Blanchard, president of Wheaton College. Blanchard was aligned with the Moody camp in Chicago and sought to shape Wheaton's developing fundamentalist position. For Blanchard, the "secularization" of society was a loss of the Christian ideal. He criticized the University of Chicago, which did not work for the "kingdom of God" but instead worked on behalf of "money and members and athletics and smokers and dances." Blanchard believed universities were "institutions where the Word of God is set aside and the law of God is treated as unimportant." He wrote to Nyvall in 1914:

33. Sidney E. Mead, "Denominationalism: The Shape of Protestantism in America," *Church History* 23, no. 4 (1954): 314.

President [William Rainey] Harper [of the Divinity School at the University of Chicago] said that a university could not be the advocate of a cause but must teach everything and let people choose what they will believe and do for themselves. I think [this] is a devil's doctrine for school life and that the further it goes the more harm it will do.³⁴

In replying to Blanchard, Nyvall expressed disappointment that Blanchard would seek to attract students to his Christian college by attacking the “policy of the universities.” Nyvall resisted characterizing universities as evil and of the devil. He wondered: Was it wrong to explore scholarship and science in an open environment? He asked Blanchard several questions: “Is every good thing divine? Is everything bad the devil himself? If a university is not Christian, may it not be a university? May I learn a handicraft wherever I may find it, but sciences only from the church?”³⁵

Blanchard was not interested in the relationship between science and faith. He questioned the demands of the secular university. He doubted the intentions of these institutions because they allowed discussion of “everything which some people believe to be true, atheism, infidelity, as well as Christianity.” Students in universities would be “expected to select that which was true from the teaching of the school.” He was concerned that this “universal learning” brought out “evil habits” in students who otherwise were from “clean and wholesome” homes. Blanchard concluded that universities were not fitting for North Park graduates.³⁶

Blanchard wondered why North Park would be “sustaining” a secular university (like the University of Chicago) that was “absolutely opposed” to the kind of biblical teaching and general instruction available at Christian schools like Wheaton.³⁷ Blanchard revealed that he had “known men to go into universities where drinking, gambling, profanity, and other vices were rife, and [they] live through it all [with] beautiful Christian lives.” Yet he reiterated his belief that most Christian parents “who value

34. Charles Blanchard to David Nyvall, October 26, 1914. Covenant Ministers Collection: Zenos Hawkinson Addition. CAHL.

35. David Nyvall to Charles Blanchard, October 30, 1914. Covenant Ministers Collection: Zenos Hawkinson Addition. CAHL.

36. Charles Blanchard to David Nyvall, October 31, 1914. Covenant Ministers Collection: Zenos Hawkinson Addition. CAHL.

37. Charles Blanchard to David Nyvall, February 5, 1915. Covenant Ministers Collection: Zenos Hawkinson Addition. CAHL.

their sons and daughters” would not desire to “subject them to that sort of influence.”³⁸

David Nyvall had a different view: “I have still to know of the first student who went from our [North Park] academy to the University of Chicago and lost faith and zeal. . . . I also know from conversation with not a small number [of them] what sort of temptations can meet students in class rooms in psychology and other subjects.” And the crux of Nyvall’s position: “[H]ow can ambitious students be persuaded to choose their colleges because of religious atmosphere? They would have to be able to see that [as a] choice between efficiency and character.”³⁹

Nyvall again makes it clear that he does not believe in creating dichotomies with opposing choices. This time he resists following Blanchard’s fundamentalist logic of choosing “character” over “efficiency.” For Nyvall, the life of the mind never required a choice against faith. The strength of a person’s Christian faith and character should be nurtured to withstand the very vices Blanchard feared. Avoiding the world should not be the goal of the person of faith, as Blanchard would argue. Cordoning off intellectual challenges was not Nyvall’s vision. Instead, Christian character would be developed in young people through their liberal education. Christian faith and a liberal education should have a constructive relationship in the Christian university, and not be relegated to a Scylla-Charybdis dichotomy. Nyvall wanted to inspire young people to welcome critical intellectual reflection in the context of their Christian faith.

Conclusion

North Park University, now 125 years since its humble founding, has been successful and is thriving today because of Nyvall’s inspirational leadership and the enduring strength of his vision. Education in the Covenant Church was not relegated to a simple preacher’s school because David Nyvall inspired his church to embrace an expansive view of the Christian academy. He established an academic culture to nurture the intellect and sustain Christian faith in an increasingly complex world. He required his first-generation immigrant peers to stretch their thinking about education in their adopted country. Nyvall led intentionally

38. Charles Blanchard to David Nyvall, June 8, 1918. Covenant Ministers Collection: Zenos Hawkinson Addition. CAHL.

39. David Nyvall to Charles Blanchard, May 22, 1918. David Nyvall Collection 10:7. CAHL.

through words connected to actions, and he did so amid significant resistance. His philosophy of education, developed over four decades, would deepen and grow to benefit his immigrant community and its successive generations.

There are clear intersections between the North Park story, the Swedish immigrant story, the Covenant story, and David Nyvall, who emerged on the scene at a time of epic change in his immigrant community. A complex, on-fire Christian intellectual, he did not shy away from hard questions about faith and learning, about the relationship between intellect and religion, or about the challenges of establishing an immigrant school in America. Rather, he engaged his detractors as well as his supporters. He welcomed discussion and disagreement. He seized the moment and established North Park as a liberal arts school rather than a Bible school. He created a curriculum not to indoctrinate but rather to nurture the intellect, ensuring that his immigrant community would be educated and equipped to navigate the American culture.

The practical outcome of his leadership, the institution he led, was neither a fundamentalist school nor an unsustainable, one-generation school for immigrants. Rather, the result is evident in the fruit of his lifework: North Park flourishes today as a university with deep institutional roots, a commitment to higher education, and a clear Christian identity. North Park still embodies the vision articulated by Nyvall in 1901: to be “a center from which radiates to all ends of the world the light of Christ’s truth, and the warmth of Christ’s love, and the beauty of Christ’s character.” Many generations of North Park graduates are the beneficiaries of David Nyvall’s lifework as well as his 1901 vision of the Christian university. I hope this article inspires you to carry David Nyvall’s vision forward for the sake of the gospel and to continue strengthening the Christian university he built.

Inhabiting a Dwelling Place: Reflections of a Seminary Student and Professor

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In his famous essay, “The Narrative Quality of Experience,” Stephen Crites writes that stories are not monuments people simply observe but dwelling places they inhabit.¹ The metaphor of dwelling places evokes conversation, encounters, faces, memories, work, and service—all that takes place within a dwelling place. It is through the dwelling place of narrative that this essay finds its voice. What follows is neither travelogue nor memoir, but the vehicle of story, of dwelling places—sometimes a location, sometimes a teaching situation, sometimes a relationship—suggested an appropriate resource for my reflections on the seminary at its 125th year.

The Education of a Student

I graduated from North Park Theological Seminary in 1961. In my senior interviews I was asked a question by the superintendent of the (then) Middle East Conference, J. Theodore Johnson, that proved to be more personally probing and vocationally prophetic than either of us realized: “How would you describe your theological position?” I responded, “I am a Lutheran Pietist.”

My response was rooted in my North Park education. At the time of my graduation, the earning of a bachelor of divinity degree (BD), now a master of divinity degree, was contingent on meeting several weighty requirements. By the end of the middle year the student became a can-

1. Stephen Crites, “The Narrative Quality of Experience,” *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 39 (1971): 295.

didate for the BD degree by passing written comprehensive exams, three hours in length in each of the three fields: Bible, theology, and history. The student who failed in one of the fields had a single opportunity to repeat the exam successfully. Those who passed exams then served a one-year internship in a congregation.

During the senior year the student wrote a thesis in one of the three fields, according to university dissertation standards. My thesis research on Philipp Jakob Spener's doctrine of the church was my first introduction to classical Lutheran Pietism—and my first experience translating a seventeenth-century German text, written in the old Gothic print type. In however elementary a fashion, this was my introduction to the antecedents of Covenant history. Little did I know this project would lead to my academic vocation and the study of another German Lutheran Pietist, Johann Albrecht. Little did I know their world would undergird a teaching ministry at the seminary. All I knew at the time was a call to the ministry of word and sacrament.

The seminary carried out with attentive stewardship its vocation of preparing persons for the ministry of word and sacrament. Competency at pulpit, table, and place of baptism, together with that of the “care of souls” was ours to be tested and mastered. We even had exams in parliamentary procedure. The seminary cared deeply for the church in all its facets and taught us to do the same in our person and in our practice of ministry.

I left North Park with a historical and theological identity. That identity has not changed. I am still a Lutheran Pietist with only this difference: that which was a latent Lutheran dimension has become more theologically articulate. I still have a clear sense of the vocation I was taught at North Park Seminary but with a profounder confidence in the God who is at work through his word. The educational methodology that fostered this identity was in no sense a form of indoctrination. It did include a disciplined learning of the church's confession of faith and the Scripture on which that confession is based. It is that material, long in formation, endowed with faith, hope, and love, that was mediated to us at North Park. It was an education rich in reading original sources—patristic, Reformation, and contemporary—as well as the required textbooks that provided students with a treasury of wisdom and knowledge.

The Education of a Professor

The seminary is full of places of encounter: the classroom, chapel, hallway, and lounge, to name a few. I learned to listen in all of these places. Here

I began to encounter diverse thinking processes, to learn how geography affects relationships, including the student-professor relationship, and how social and political location impacts theological discourse. I offer three vignettes by way of example.

I recall asking a student from Kenya or Nigeria (my memory is not sure which) how he might teach the doctrine of the church in his culture. He told me of a certain tree whose age was older than his people. This great tree had collected so much dust in its branches, crevices, and leaf structures that seeds borne by the winds took root in the collected dust. The seeds grew into a diversity of trees, all living together in the big host tree. Birds of species normally hostile to each other lived in peace in this tree. I learned to not do the “western” thing and analyze this rich response. Theological thinking by storytelling allows the story to disclose its meaning—although I wonder if “meaning” is even too immobile a word. The story itself releases its power, enfolding the listener in it, rather than simply disclosing an interpretation or deducing a conclusion from it.

When I first had the privilege of teaching students from Korea, I had great difficulty knowing how to evaluate papers that called for critical reflection on an author’s ideas. These students were conscientious in the mastery and the restatement of ideas but less so in critical engagement. What I did not know initially was the authority structure of Korean culture, beginning with the family and then relating to other institutions. As I began to see from this perspective, I realized that American efforts to develop critical thinking were more than educational efforts; they were laden with ethical overtones where such student critiques were an improper transgression of authority. It took me some time to work through this, to converse about educational methods in our respective contexts, and to find a way to dialogue between these contexts. I thank my Korean students, many of whom went on to serve Covenant churches, who helped me learn.

A third learning curve emerged when spiritual direction became a seminary degree requirement, and students came to live by its benefits. It was gratifying to be able to make available to my African American directees Cecelia Williams Bryant’s *Kiamsha: A Spiritual Discipline for African American Women*.² “Kiamsha” is a Swahili word that means “that which awakens me.” This book is replete with judicious prayer disciplines

2. Cecelia Williams Bryant, *Kiamsha: A Spiritual Discipline for African American Women* (Baltimore: Akosua Visions, 1991).

and gives African heritage its place as a blessed inheritance. Another key book in this field was James Melvin Washington's *Conversations with God: Two Centuries of Prayer by African Americans*.³ Washington's extensive introduction is a masterpiece of both personal and theological reflection. He recounts his own movement through four identities, from "Negro" to "Black Man," from "Black Man" to "Afro-American," and finally from "Afro-American" to "African American." The movement Washington narrates is pertinent to what spiritual directors might encounter, either in themselves or in others.

Seminary education embraces more than the traditional images of classroom, professor, and student. As a professor I was invited into worlds I had never before entered and to learn from the perspectives of others. Perhaps the seminary, if not already doing so, can facilitate this mutual learning by ensuring faculty receive education on the particular needs of each cultural and ethnic group comprising its student body.

Travel Encounters in Sweden, Estonia, and West Africa

While serving at North Park Seminary, international travel opportunities also deepened my awareness of the world outside of the United States.

Sweden. My wife, Lois, and I were privileged to participate in an exchange professorship with our sister seminary in Lidingö, a suburb of Stockholm. While in Sweden we made it our "tourist vocation" to visit as many cathedrals as possible. In interviews I arranged with the cathedral deans in Uppsala and Stockholm, I asked one question: what is the ministry of a cathedral in modern Sweden? At the time of my visit to the Uppsala cathedral, which is unique in serving as both parish church and national cathedral, the parish was experiencing change and renewal. A survey had revealed a desire for greater intimacy and participation among the younger generation. In this cathedral the high altar was located at the end of the chancel, at some remove from the congregation. The older members of the parish knew only this as the place of the communion liturgy, kneeling toward the altar. The younger generation wanted a simple table around which they could gather face-to-face with one another. These congregants desired immanence. They also desired more lay participation in the liturgy.

3. James Melvin Washington, *Conversations with God: Two Centuries of Prayer by African Americans* (New York: Harper Collins, 1994). The anthology covers the years 1760–1989. Washington was ordained at age nineteen and concluded his life teaching church history at Union Seminary in New York.

The cathedral dean, building on the Lutheran doctrine of the priesthood of all believers, began the practice of having four to five lay people offer the prayers of the church, traditionally offered at the altar. He taught the laity how to form the prayers, but he did not prepare the prayers. On a Sunday Lois and I were present for worship, it was a joyous occasion when five people came forward at the time in the liturgy for the prayers of the church. These were persons engaging in ministry for the first time, doing what the word “liturgy” means: the works of the people. And there it was—a simple table in the midst of the people for the celebration of Holy Communion.

The dean told me that when he preached from the high pulpit it was interesting to observe who sat behind the gothic arches. He noticed that over the weeks many inched their way out into the pew. This led him to reflect on some people’s need for a place to hide or, we might say, for anonymity. At the entrance of the Episcopal cathedral in San Francisco, a statement is posted from the bishop ensuring anonymity to those who desire such. Do we ever think about whether in welcoming people at public worship they may feel too exposed? Is anonymity a gift or a slight?⁴

Estonia. On this same visit to Sweden, Lois and I accompanied a group from Immanuel Covenant Church in Stockholm to Tallin, Estonia, for a weekend visit. At this time Russian hegemony was being lifted, and the Estonian people were reestablishing their own government. Russian tanks were still present in Latvia to the south. I asked our guide, a retired schoolteacher recently baptized, what would happen if such tanks appeared in Tallin’s ancient city square. Her answer was that ten thousand Estonians would gather to sing. Can you image that choir staring down the barrel of a tank gun singing “A Mighty Fortress Is Our God”? Lois and I knew the power of this act after worshiping at St. John’s Lutheran Church and listening to that vast congregation sing. We were told that the human voice is the central musical instrument in Estonia.

After worship we met with Pastor Tomas Paul who spoke about his ministry. The year he was ordained, his name was put in the press for purposes of public ridicule. We learned of two major deportations of the Estonian intelligentsia to Siberia. He told us of his great joy in hav-

4. David Eigel explores similar themes to that of the Uppsala dean in his article on megachurches: (1) there is more “space” for anonymity so one’s presence or absence is not noticed and (2) a larger staff makes lay service less urgent. “More People, Looser Ties,” *Christian Century* (April 13, 2016): 13.

ing baptized more than 950 people the previous year—and that the children were the chief evangelists. When Russian hegemony began to give way, parents wanted their children confirmed. The children came home from confirmation with questions that their parents, educated in Marxists schools and living apart from the church, could not answer. The parents went to the church for help, and God blessed the ministry of word and sacrament.

Congo. My encounters in Sweden and Estonia, distinct as they were as to content and learning, bring to mind a third learning context. About two years after our work in Sweden, I was asked by the Covenant Department of World Mission to conduct a continuing education seminar in what is now the Democratic Republic of the Congo. I spent three weeks in Africa, including one in the Central African Republic, where at the time the Covenant had a distribution center in Bangui, the capital. I had the joy of preaching at the Covenant church in Gemena with my former student, Mossai Sanguma, as a translator. During the liturgy of the morning it was a joy to watch this vast congregation dance the offertory as they brought their gifts to the altar. My former student, Kenneth Satterberg, was engaged in Bible translation with two Catholic priests, trying to render the Gospel of John into the language of a small and largely unrecognized tribe. After many visits with the elders of this tribe to build a basic lexicon, the three translators presented the elders with their first attempt at rendering John's gospel in this tribal language. All they wanted to know was whether or not the meaning was clear. They were astounded at the elders' response: "Even God speaks our language!" Imagine the sense of worth coursing through those words."

World Christianity

The fixed world of my education with which I began this article met its challenge in my introduction to world Christianity. World Christianity is not simply a topic but an entire discipline, challenging church history as it is conventionally understood and taught, drawing attention to the fact that early Christianity was far more geographically vast than conventionally presented.⁵ This growing discipline is too complex to summarize, but I want to call particular attention to the work of Philip

5. See the entire issue of *Theology Today* 39 (July, 2014), devoted to world Christianity. Consult also Philip Jenkins, *The New Faces of Christianity: Believing the Bible in the Global South* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006) and Clifton R. Clarke, ed., *Pentecostal Theology in Africa* (Eugene, OR: Pickwick Publications, 2014). Note in particular the

Jenkins, a regular contributor to the *Christian Century*. In “Christians in the Gulf,”⁶ Jenkins tells of the remains of a pre-Islamic Christian monastic complex, dating back to around 600 CE, unearthed by archaeologists on Sir Bani Yas, an island of the Persian Gulf emirate of Abu Dhabi. At the time this monastery was built, Christianity had a strong presence throughout eastern and southern Arabia, although the strand of Christianity was mainly the “Nestorian” Church of the East. No later than the fifth century a diocese covered the lands we now call Oman, United Arab Emirates, and Bahrain. In the time of Muhammad (d. 632), five Christian sees covered the Gulf’s western shores; by the end of the millennium that Christian history had come to an end.

Christians have since returned to the Gulf. As birth rates fell and the oil industry expanded, workers were needed. And so immigrants came from diverse places, many of whom were Christian: 17 percent of the population of Kuwait, 14 percent of Bahrain, and 9 percent of the United Arab Emirates and Qatar. The current Christian population of the entire Arab Gulf region is between 5 and 10 percent. While Christians are prohibited from evangelizing, they are free to worship and build churches. The Roman Catholic cathedral in Bahrain sits on land donated by the king, a devout Muslim. Even mega-churches thrive. But as if to come full circle, St. Thomas Orthodox Cathedral, seating 3,500, is part of the ancient Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church, which traces its origins to Christian missions to southern India during the first and second centuries. This church is a living heir to the very same tradition that built the monastery on Sir Bani Yas Island some 1,400 years ago. How little I know about the world church!

Not least of the value in this global historical awareness is that congregations today are increasingly ethnically diverse. Depending on location, one’s parish may include refugees, immigrants, exchange students, and American citizens of various ethnicities. Some knowledge of this “world church”—at least enough to know where to look for the specific data one needs to do ministry—is a key component of pastoral competence. Knowledge of world Christianity also contributes to pastoral care in preparing congregants for international business, educational, and philanthropic assignments.

chapter by North Park Seminary graduate Valerie Landfair, “Eschatological Prayer in African Pentecostalism,” pp. 93–111.

6. Philip Jenkins, “Christians in the Gulf,” *Christian Century* (March 16, 2016), 45.

The Domestic Front

Pastoral competence is equally tested on the domestic front. That portion of the population called the “spiritual but not religious” (SBNR) now outnumbers mainline Protestants in America. On the basis of extensive interviews, Linda A. Mercadante identified six positions that were distinctly disallowed by SBNRs:⁷ (1) an exclusionism that rejects all religions but one’s own, (2) a wrathful and/or interventionist God, (3) a static and permanent afterlife of glorious heaven and fortuitous hell, (4) an oppressively authoritarian religious tradition, (5) a non-experiential repressive religious community, and (6) a view of humans as “born bad.” A careful study of this book will show that pastoral care and responses to these persons cannot be thoughtless. In fact, many of their disaffections with the church involve its teachings, especially those concerning God. “In the end, no matter how they explain it, most interviewees seemed to blithely abandon the idea of a personal God who is deeply involved in each individual life.”⁸

A second factor of note is what Mercadante calls “the righteousness of not belonging.” This is a crucial part of the designation “spiritual but not religious,” where “religious” is associated with authority, organization, rules, and dogma. Mercadante observes that for SBNTs, the spiritual pursuit is individualistic. Personal growth takes priority over group identity, and authority is relocated from the external to the internal. Thus long-term commitments are generally eschewed, and religious communities come in for hard times.⁹ This trend demands some hard thinking by institutions of ministerial education.

In his perceptive article on church planting in Holland, Stefan Paas notes that it took a millennium to Christianize Europe and only a century to secularize it.¹⁰ A contribution to this issue of ministry to the secularized comes from Wolf Krötke’s “A Jump Ahead: The Church as

7. Linda A. Mercadante, *Belief without Borders: Inside the Minds of the Spiritual but not Religious* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 21.

8. *Ibid.*, 102.

9. *Ibid.*, 192. A painful but intensely self-probing account is John Marks’s *Reasons to Believe: One Man’s Journey among the Evangelicals and the Faith He Left Behind* (New York: Harper Collins, 2008). Among his vocational positions, Marks had been a producer for Morley Safer on *60 Minutes*. Seminarians would do well to engage this text.

10. Stefan Paas, “Church Renewal by Church Planting: The Significance of Church Planting for the Future of Christianity in Europe,” *Theology Today* 68 (January 2012), 470.

Creative Minority in Eastern Germany,” a masterful essay on the post-communist culture of former East Germany where the atheism is, interestingly, not militant but passive resignation to life.¹¹ Krötke’s focus on the human relationship of Christians to their neighbors—the mutuality of creation in the image of God—offers a basic starting point. Because of the nature of this atheism, an ethic is needed to help deepen their humanity. What is needed is relationship and, by means of relationship, perhaps the deeper humanity of the person can be recovered so that they do not see themselves simply as products of nature but rather as having a genuine humanity.

The communication of the infinite value of a person’s humanity is gospel. It is not the entire gospel—and we cannot fail to preach and teach the full intellectual content of the faith—but it is the beginning. In Irenaeus’s bold gospel claim, the glory of God is the “human being fully alive.” The “human being fully alive” begs to know what dehumanizes the person, what vandalizes the divine image. I learned this doing more than ten years of pastoral work with survivors of domestic and sexual violence. Both forms of violence usually begin with an attack on the victim’s self-image, aiming to tear it down by words, insults, and accusations. I tried to show victims that they were created in the image of God, that, whereas their abuser used many words in rapid-fire, God uses only one word: you are my *image*.

In order to get a hearing for the gospel, whether from the SBNR or East Germans, we must first come as fellow human beings. In meeting human to human, the Holy Spirit will show the other that we can be trusted with the deeper matters of their lives. Effective pastors know something about context. And they do not make the mistake of respecting the fully human and calling it secular humanism.

To Your Own Self Be True

The study of Pietism has enjoyed a renewed interest. Douglas Shantz has recently published a 499-page history that belongs in the library of every descendant of the movement.¹² Roger E. Olson and Christian T. Collins Winn have recently published a work that puts Pietism in conversa-

11. Wolf Krötke, “‘A Jump Ahead’: The Church as Creative Minority in Eastern Germany,” *Theology Today* 68 (January 2012): 438–47.

12. Douglas H. Shantz, *An Introduction to German Pietism: Protestant Renewal at the Dawn of Modern Europe* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2013).

tion with American evangelicalism,¹³ and Michelle Clifton-Soderstrom's *Angels, Worms, and Bogeys* will open the door to ethical reflection.¹⁴

The *Christian Century* published a tribute to Bartholomäus Ziegenbalg, the first Protestant missionary to India.¹⁵ Danish King Frederick IV recruited him from the University of Halle, and Ziegenbalg and Heinrich Plutschau arrived in India in 1706. Ziegenbalg quickly mastered the Tamil language and dropped the European idea that the Tamil had to become European in order to be Christian. He even attended classes for children in order to learn. He lived among the slaves, seeing all people as made in the image of God. He was learning to contextualize his work and himself. Ziegenbalg began studies of other religions and became the first European expert on Hinduism. He began collecting Tamil palm leaf manuscripts and studied Bhakt's spirituality within Hinduism, which was dominant among the Tamil. He is credited with the origin of women's liberation in India.

Ziegenbalg served the *missio Dei* and within it the *missio Christi*. His capacity to interface with various populations is what the East German theologian Krötke calls for, namely to let the basic humanity of each individual be at work. I give this lengthy introduction to Ziegenbalg's work to show that his preaching the gospel did not have to come at the expense of the Tamil people. Rather, he valued their persons and literature, even their religious literature. My point is that Pietism is populated with people who thought biblically and theologically, pressed for new media of ministry, and were able to see the places where they were already a part of the Lord's vineyard. Pietists contextualized their witness so that their gospel witness could be heard. There is no reason for students not to have a reasonable understanding of the writings that gave shape to the Covenant story; this heritage too must be mined for its riches. Is there a reason the seminary does not offer a required course in "Source Studies in Pietism"?¹⁶

13. Roger E. Olson and Christian T. Collins Winn, *Reclaiming Pietism: Retrieving an Evangelical Tradition* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2015).

14. Michelle Clifton-Soderstrom, *Angels, Worms, and Bogeys: The Christian Ethic of Pietism* (Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2010).

15. Sarah Hinlicky Wilson, "Mission in Spite of Empire: The Story of Bartholomäus Ziegenbalg," *Christian Century* (September 8, 2014).

16. This would include reading wider than the Swedish component. My suggestions include the foundational document, Philip Jacob Spener, *Pia Desideria*, trans. Theodore G. Tappert (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1964); Peter Erb, ed., *Pietists: Selected Writings*

Conclusion: God's Two Books

John Calvin attributed to God two books: the book of nature (i.e., creation) and the book of the church (i.e., Scripture). At North Park scientists study the book of nature in the Johnson Center, while exegetes study the book of the church in Nyvall Hall. But these two books studied in separate buildings have one author, God. "We believe in one God the Father Almighty, the maker of all things visible and invisible. And in one Lord Jesus Christ," so the Nicene Creed confesses. Great good would come from colleagues from both faculties regularly "reading" each other's books together. Pastoral candidates need to know that science is the exegesis of God's book, thereby perhaps mitigating some misconceptions about science. Scientists would likewise benefit from reading the book of the church in community, engaging the very questions that seem to posit a conflict between science and religion.

Public controversy surrounding gender underscores this point. The deeply complex matter of transgender and intersex persons asks Christians to do their homework in preparation for the congregation to be a faithful "hermeneutic of the word." Two carefully crafted books on these subjects demonstrate why theology and science need to converse. One is Megan K. DeFranza's *Sex Difference in Christian Theology: Male, Female, and Intersex in the Image of God*; the other is Mark Yarhouse's *Understanding Gender Dysphoria: Navigating Transgender Issues in a Changing Culture*.¹⁷ Seminary students must develop a certain comfort level with the terms of the discussion as it is carried out in the church, in science, and in public discourse. In this they would benefit from the expertise in the science faculty regarding current work in brain research with regards to psycho-social development and the complexity of genetic factors in certain sexual manifestations.

(New York: Paulist Press, 1983), especially Spener's "The Spiritual Priesthood"; Gary R. Sattler, *God's Glory, Neighbor's Good* (Chicago: Covenant Press, 1982); Mark Grandqinst, *Scandinavian Pietists* (New York: Paulist Press, 2015), which includes the writings of Swedes, Norwegians, Danes, and Finns beginning in 1771 in Norway; Mark Safstrom, ed. and trans., *The Swedish Pietists: A Reader: Excerpts from the Writings of Carl Olof Rosenius and Paul Peter Waldenström* (Eugene, OR: Pickwick Publications, 2015).

17. Megan K. DeFranza, *Sex Difference in Christian Theology: Male, Female, and Intersex in the Image of God* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2015); Mark A. Yarhouse, *Understanding Gender Dysphoria: Navigating Transgender Issues in a Changing Culture* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2015).

It is imperative that, as much as possible, fear be removed, and what better way to mitigate fear than by obtaining information and practicing conversation. Then, possibly, the New Testament text will come to pass, namely that perfect love will cast out fear, for there is no fear in love. God has not given the spirit of timidity and fear but of love and a sound mind. Therewith is a mind and heart well-equipped for a new era.

The Graduate

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The first book of the Bible I read when I came to faith in Christ at age seventeen was Revelation. I wanted to know how the story ended, what I signed up for. This evidently set the tone for my life as a theologian, because in my mind it still makes perfect sense to begin theology with the future of God. *God's* future of peace, justice, and joy on the other side of tears and mourning and suffering and death is so certain—so “trustworthy and true,” in the words of the seer—that I don't see the present determining the future so much as I see God's certain future determining how we should live in the present.

I mention this orientation of working backward from the destination in order to explain the approach I've taken in reflecting upon the meaning and purpose of theological education. The framing question that makes most sense to me is not, “What are the component parts of quality theological education?” but rather, “What would be the after-picture of a person who has been authentically trained in theology?” Allow me to describe marks I want to see in the graduate who has fully integrated the best of what theological education can offer.

The Graduate Loves God

Inherent in quality education is developing the ability to think critically, to question assumptions, and to be willing to abandon beliefs that don't hold up in the crucible of honest investigation. Theological education is no exception, as we help students to question their assumptions about God, truth, church, and mission. If I may boast, I can deconstruct,

interrogate, subvert, and turn tables with the best of them. However, if at the end of students' harrowing theological journey their love for God has not been deepened and strengthened precisely by the transforming process of quality education, then we have failed.

In other words, theological education must have a spiritual formation component to it. Without this component, students can study theology devoid of spirituality, devoid of God. As a sibling of philosophy, theology can be approached as dispassionately as any academic discipline. I remember a fellow doctoral student who was an atheist. Whenever we discussed his fascination with theology despite his unbelief, I would act nonchalantly and offer an occasional, "Hmm, interesting." But my insides would be screaming, "But why?!"

By way of contrast, I am reminded of the crucial relationship between theology and spirituality by the example of the Apostle Paul. Of all of his letters, the Epistle to the Romans is arguably his most theologically sophisticated. A highly educated and philosophically adept man, Paul waxed eloquent about the nature of salvation, justification, divine election, Israel, and other theological hot potatoes in the first eleven chapters. At the end of his profound theologizing, and before he shifted gears to practical theology starting in chapter 12, Paul seemed compelled by the Spirit to pen, "O the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God. . . . For from God and through God and to God are all things. To God be the glory forever" (Romans 11:33a, 36, *New Testament and Psalms, An Inclusive Version*). Paul's complex theologizing climaxed with worship. Like Paul, graduates finish their grueling, assumption-smashing, paradigm-shifting education with a deeper, stronger, more mature and creative love for the maker of heaven and earth and lover of our souls.

The Graduate Lives and Imparts Biblical Wisdom

The graduate also lives and imparts biblical wisdom. I mean this in two important ways. First, graduates have a healthy respect for the Bible. I say this ultimately irrespective of the debates regarding the inspiration, infallibility, and inerrancy of Scripture. In other words, I am not saying that graduates adhere to the "three I's" of biblical authority. Rather, I am saying that after grasping the complicated history of canonization, after analyzing the books via lower and higher criticisms, after acknowledging the disparate accounts and stories that make up Scripture, and even after interrogating some of those stories through a postcolonial lens, graduates still see the indispensable value of the Bible for faith and practice. They

even appreciate it more in its ability to guide, encourage, challenge, and correct the people of God on their way to maturity. If graduates leave with more suspicion and deeper disdain than with more respect and reverence for the Bible, their theological education has failed them.

If the first point emphasizes the “biblical” part of biblical wisdom, then the second stresses the “wisdom” part. Graduates live according to biblical *wisdom*, which is not the same as head knowledge. It is possible to attain a vast wealth of knowledge from one’s theological educational journey but gain little wisdom. Each of us can probably think of one or two extremely smart people whose lives are characterized by bad relationships, frivolous debt, awful decisions, moral failure, and/or scandal—i.e., highly educated people who are not very wise. I lament, for example, what has been uncovered in the life of John Howard Yoder, one of the most brilliant theologians of the twentieth century. How can the great influencer of gospel peace and reconciliation also have rationalized sexually assaulting women throughout his career?¹

Not only do graduates live wisely, they also impart biblical wisdom to others. Wisdom—not primarily doctrines or ear-tickling new theologies or Sunday-school Bible trivia—is what exudes from the life and teaching of the one who has been excellently trained in theology for the good of the whole.

The Graduate Lives in the World but Is Not of It

The graduate lives in the tension between affirming and transforming culture. Several years ago, I wrote a book containing a chapter on inculturation (or contextualization), followed by a chapter on the need of the church to become an alternative, countercultural community.² Writing these chapters one right after the other was deliberate in order to draw out the tension between living fully in the world while “keeping oneself unstained by the world” (James 1:27). Taken together, the two chapters call the church both to love culture and to take part in culture’s transformation; to incarnate itself in the life of the neighborhood while also bearing witness to the power of the gospel to bring about the transformation that God desires in that neighborhood.

1. See David Cramer et al., “Scandalizing John Howard Yoder,” *The Other Journal* July 7, 2014, <http://theotherjournal.com/2014/07/07/scandalizing-john-howard-yoder>, accessed March 7, 2015.

2. Al Tizon, *Missional Preaching: Engage, Embrace, Transform* (Valley Forge, PA: Judson, 2012), 37–66.

If seminary does not teach graduates to live creatively in the tension between being in the world but not of it, they will tend either to assimilate in a given culture—perhaps offering at best a nice, non-offensive religious word that affirms all (I’m OK, you’re OK)—or to go against the culture, cultivating a “church versus world” understanding that stands in judgment over those not of the fold. Neither extreme is acceptable. The graduate recognizes this tension and lives in it, thus becoming both a lover and a transformer of culture.

The Graduate Is Committed to Interdisciplinary Praxis

Paulo Freire’s definition of praxis, “action and reflection upon the world in order to transform it,”³ has the power to sustain the theological life, and the graduate is committed to this process. More than mastering a systematic theology inside and out, graduates have learned the art of theologizing, which consists of lifelong learning, continuing to reflect deeply on Scripture and theology; as well as lifelong practice, living out the radical implications of the faith in society for the common good.

In contrast to the conventional, linear understanding of education as obtaining knowledge and skills over a period of three or four years and then applying them in a given context for the rest of one’s ministerial life, the genius of Freire’s praxis is that it is circular. Reflection and action inform each other in a mutually benefitting way—our pastoral and missional actions in the world define our ongoing reflections as much as our reflections inform our ongoing actions in the world. Praxis is a lifelong, transformative process of action and reflection, and graduates are committed to it.

An important warning for champions of praxis is that the term cannot devolve into a mere synonym for “practice,” which seems to be a tendency among liberationists and activists. Thinking—deep, reflective, research-soaked, academic investigation—must always be a part of the formula, or it is less than praxis. To be sure, praxis—action and reflection upon the world in order to transform it—challenges pure academics in that thinking for thinking’s sake is pointless and even irresponsible in light of the world’s desperate needs. But it also challenges unreflective practice, knowing that ignorance can lead to all sorts of misguided behaviors, church malpractice, and discriminatory public policies. Praxis is both

3. Paulo Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (New York: Crossroad, 1970), 36, 66.

thinking and doing, doing and thinking, in a mutually beneficial process for the transformation of the world in Christ's name.

There are other perspectives for the action-reflection process besides the theological, however, and graduates mine the value of these other disciplines in order to understand a given phenomenon or movement or culture more fully. They know that theology cannot explain everything; so ideas, principles, and approaches from other disciplines, such as the social sciences, economics, area studies, literature, and the arts, are also employed in the action-reflection process.

Moreover, an interdisciplinary approach to life is more effective in serving people—important for theology graduates whether they end up in professional ministry or not. Integral to the healing arts of the church is the ministry of referral, leaning on other types of healing that psychologists, social workers, medical doctors, and others can provide. Graduates think and practice, i.e., engage in praxis, in an interdisciplinary way for the overall good of others.

The Graduate Is Committed to the Health and Growth of the Church

A commitment to interdisciplinary praxis is within the context of the graduate's commitment to the health and growth of the church. Graduates know the inadequacy of private, overly individualistic faith and are committed to participating in Christian community, despite its imperfections, blemishes, and even scandals.

Sometimes I am tempted to do what novelist Anne Rice did a few years ago. Rice shocked her fan base when she publicly came to faith in Christ in the early 2000s. But then in 2010, she wrote the following on her blog: "Today I quit being a Christian. . . . It's simply impossible for me to 'belong' to this quarrelsome, hostile, disputatious, and deservedly infamous group. For ten years, I've tried. I've failed. I'm an outsider. My conscience will allow nothing else." She went on to say, "My faith in Christ is central to my life . . . but following Christ does not mean following his followers."⁴

O the temptation to follow suit! But alas, my theology of community prevents me. In fact, I believe that commitment to community, broken as it is, makes us stronger, better people. And by the way, I'm certain

4. Anne Rice, "Reason for Quitting Christianity," www.annerice.com/Chamber-Christianity.html, accessed March 8, 2015.

that each of us contributes to the brokenness, including Anne Rice and myself! Lurking behind the pursuit of unbroken community, the perfect church is a denial of our brokenness, a disengagement with reality, an excuse not to be in deep relationship with others. To be committed to the church is to be committed to real relationships with real people, and quality theological education fosters this commitment.

I once lived in intentional Christian community with a diverse group of students and musicians called Praxis House in Upper Darby, Pennsylvania. As I compare this experience with Sunday church (which Praxis House did not replace), I can say that discipleship occurs much more deeply not when we are at our Sunday best but when we are at our Monday worst. It happens in the context of community meals, shared chores, hard meetings, invigorating conversations, and regular prayer times throughout the week. It happens in relationship. Whether they end up living in intentional Christian community or not, graduates from the best of what theological education can offer have this commitment to authentic, healthy relationships, to genuine *koinonia*, to real church.

Furthermore, graduates not only love the broken church, they also invite others to come to faith in Christ and to join the broken community. In other words, they believe in evangelism in the best sense of that word. Evangelism has gotten a bad rap in recent years, and in many respects, rightfully so; for who can't relate to the repulsion many have for impersonal formulas, tacky tracts, big-haired televangelists, and street preachers with megaphones?

Despite these things, however, the church still has good news to tell. The answer to bad examples of well-meaning but embarrassing evangelism is not to dismiss the practice altogether. In light of my own journey to faith, where certain Christians were faithful to share the gospel with me in a way to which I could respond, how can I abandon evangelism? How can I not also be the bearer of good news for others? How can I possibly not believe that the transformation of the world does not also include the transformation of individuals? Graduates long to see others experience the love and grace of God, even amid the imperfect, broken community, as part of their commitment to the health and growth of the church.

The Graduate Has a Preferential Option for the Poor

Alongside authentic, biblical evangelism and integral to the church's overall mission is the call to love mercy and do justice—yes, to serve all,

but especially the poor, oppressed, and marginalized in the world. This perspective is captured in the phrase, “preferential option for the poor,” which emerged out of the work of the Catholic Bishops of Latin America (CELAM) following Vatican II.⁵ It has since been adopted by those sympathetic to liberation theology across the denominational spectrum.

Essentially, the phrase conveys that God’s heart beats for the poor in the world. Embarrassingly, there was a relatively short season in the history of the evangelical church (with which I self-identify) wherein social justice was not considered a valid form of mission.⁶ Although vestiges of the “evangelism versus social concern” antithesis still remain, for the most part, compassion and justice ministries now occupy a significant place in evangelical theology and mission. Graduates are acutely aware of the softness of God’s heart for the world’s suffering and live and lead accordingly. The gospel is for underdogs, and graduates do their part to “conscientize” people, to draw again from the liberationist lexicon, to the plight of the poor, oppressed, and marginalized, and to take concrete action on their behalf.

The integration of evangelism and social justice constitutes what has become known as holistic or integral mission. Classic texts that have made the case for holistic mission would include Harvie Conn’s *Evangelism: Doing Justice and Preaching Grace*, Ron Sider’s *Good News and Good Works*, Melba Maggay’s *Transforming Society*, and Vinay Samuel and Chris Sugden’s *Mission as Transformation*.⁷ Call me biased, but such books populate the shelves of graduates who have earned a quality theological education—or if not these books, then other titles that demonstrate a strong commitment to holistic mission.

5. The Latin American Bishops’ Conference at Medellín (1968) affirmed the preferential option for the poor without using the exact phrase, http://www.celam.org/doc_conferencias/Documento_Conclusivo_Medellin.pdf, “Preferencia y Solidaridad,” pp. 50ff. The phrase was popularized by Gustavo Gutierrez, *A Theology of Liberation* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1971), and canonized at the third CELAM meeting at Puebla, Mexico (1979), http://www.celam.org/doc_conferencias/Documento_Conclusivo_Puebla.pdf, see especially chapter 1, “Opción Preferencial por los Pobres,” pp. 151ff.

6. See Al Tizon, *Transformation after Lausanne: Radical Evangelical Mission in Global-Local Perspective* (Oxford: Regnum, 2008), 17–97.

7. Harvie Conn, *Evangelism: Doing Justice and Preaching Grace* (Philipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 1992); Ronald J. Sider, *Good News and Good Works: A Theology of the Whole Gospel* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1999); Melba P. Maggay, *Transforming Society* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2011); Vinay Samuel and Chris Sugden, eds., *Mission as Transformation: A Theology of the Whole Gospel* (Oxford: Regnum, 1999).

The Graduate Embraces Diversity and Works for Reconciliation

The church's mission of compassion and justice is of course done indiscriminately across gender, race, and class. This should go without saying, but the hope of theological education must not only include identifying and purging prejudice from the hearts of students; graduates must also become *champions* of gender equality, racial righteousness, and economic justice. Graduates fight against sexism, racism, classism, and all other injustices, beginning in their own hearts and then extending this fight to society.

This affirmation turns graduates into reconcilers in the world, challenging human-made lines in the sand and creating spaces for enemies to embrace. At the very least, this means affirming women as full partners in ministry, ordaining them alongside men according to their gifts and not their gender. It means creating healing spaces for black, white, and brown peoples to repent, forgive, be reconciled, and eventually to become partners, working together for the sake of the gospel. It means not favoring the rich among us and in fact giving the seats of honor to the poor and vulnerable.

This commitment to diversity and reconciliation can and must inform the structures and practices of theological educational institutions. This includes not only specific diversity-related courses, but the commitment to diversity in every course offering. It means mandatory diversity in the required readings of all courses. It also means diverse faculty and administrators. Such structural commitment ensures that graduates of this kind of school embrace diversity and engage in the ministry of reconciliation.

The Graduate Demonstrates Humility

And finally there's humility, with which I have chosen to cap my list. Graduates can be all of the above—they can love God, live and impart biblical wisdom, live in the world but not of it, be committed to interdisciplinary praxis and to the health and growth of the church, serve the poor, and embrace diversity and reconciliation—but if they are all of this without humility, something has gone awry along the way. Knowledge puffs up, as Paul remarked (1 Corinthians 8:1), and knowledge of God has the potential to make us the puffiest. God spare the church and world from know-it-all, condescending, Greek-spouting seminary graduates!

At its best, theological education produces not arrogance but humility. Such humility emerges from our acceptance of at least two realities. First, to quote Paul again, “We see through a glass darkly” (1 Corinthians

13:12). This should remind us of the limitations of all knowledge. We can't know everything. Our minds have been clouded and our eyes blurred by the limitations of our traditions, the dysfunctions of our upbringing, the brokenness of culture and society, and the sin in our own hearts. Insofar as we are products of these things—and we unavoidably are—we cannot see it all. The graduate knows this acutely and does not “think of themselves more highly than they ought to think” (Romans 12:3).

Beyond our disability to see perfectly, humility is engendered by recognizing the vastness of God, the mystery of God. Even if we could see clearly, we are confronted with a force, a personality, far more complex than even our most enlightened selves could fully take in. Indeed, the All-Mysterious can be known because of God's self-revelation in Jesus Christ—but fully known? The impossibility of grasping the fullness of the Divine keeps the graduate forever “walking humbly with God” (Micah 6:8).

Let this be true of all of us.

Strategic Initiatives: Planning for the Future

*David Kersten, dean of seminary,
North Park Theological Seminary, Chicago, Illinois*

As we mark the 125th anniversary of North Park Theological Seminary (NPTS) and celebrate the school's history, we also look to its future. Speaking to a group of Covenant leaders a few years ago, John Wimmer, program director of the Lilly Endowment's religious division, said that the line between the laity and clergy is blurring today to an extent not seen since the Reformation. In this changing context, North Park Theological Seminary seeks to be an institution committed to serving the whole church. We endeavor to do this by leveraging the gifts of our talented faculty and staff, through new pedagogical models, institutional and denominational partnerships, and our location in one of the world's leading cities.

In planning for the future we strive to live into the following strategic initiatives: (1) theological education for the whole church, (2) missional alignment with Evangelical Covenant Church (ECC) partners, (3) missional and multicultural competency, (4) innovative pathways to sustainability and affordability, and (5) ecumenical partnerships. These initiatives will guide NPTS into the future as we work to share the riches of the theological academy with the whole church.

Theological Education for the Whole Church

In the past decade, the seminary classroom has been changing. No longer are seminary courses filled primarily with those in pursuit of a senior pas-

I would like to express my deep gratitude to Tyler Menssen, director of Solid Rock School of Discipleship, for his partnership in crafting this article.

tor role. Many bi-vocational pastors and lay leaders now attend seminary to earn degrees or certificates. Many students, whether admitted into a traditional degree program or a certificate program, are taking classes online and in intensive-hybrid formats rather than relocating to Chicago. As the ECC becomes more multiethnic and multicultural, the seminary is working with denominational partners (e.g., CHET, Centro Hispano de Estudios Teológicos) to provide all pastors an opportunity to enjoy the richness of a Covenant theological education.

In meeting the needs of the changing demographics of the church, we have embarked on a vigorous strategy of “right-sizing” and “right-timing” our master of divinity degree, launching a revised degree in the fall of 2015. This degree requires fewer credit hours, decreasing its cost by 14 percent, with a strengthened and simplified core curriculum and a renewed emphasis on preaching, intercultural studies, and pastoral leadership. While we have reduced the number of credits needed to earn a degree, we anticipate the number of courses taken over a graduate’s lifetime to increase as the interest in and demand for lifelong learning opportunities grow.

We now offer two certificates aimed at practitioners in the field. In partnership with the Covenant mission priority of Start and Strengthen Churches, we have launched certificate programs in church planting and in congregational vitality, taught by teams of denominational practitioners and seminary scholars. Additional certificate programs in development include missional preaching, pastoral care, conflict mediation, and church administration. In addition to their educational value, certificates offer a unique environment within the classroom, as current seminary students, seasoned pastoral and church leaders, and lay leaders participate together, enhancing the educational experience.

Finally, to provide theological education for the whole church we must continue to expand our teaching platforms. This involves enhancing our extensive online and intensive-hybrid offerings and building partnerships with denominational and affiliated groups to ensure we are reaching a diverse array of people—especially those groups who have experienced barriers to pursuing theological education historically. To this end, NPTS will lead a collaborative effort in innovative models for theological education, giving structure and providing resources to CHET, the ECC’s emerging partnership with the Urban Ministry Institute (TUMI) of World Impact, the pastoral training center in Alaska, and other regional training centers in our conferences.

Missional Alignment with ECC Partners

Not only does NPTS seek to provide theological education for the whole church, we also endeavor to bring the seminary, the denomination, and its partners into greater missional alignment. In the years ahead, NPTS will continue to strengthen these relationships, developing partnerships that foster streamlined student learning and stronger, more diverse community relationships.

We are exploring options for establishing a center for lifelong learning in cooperation with the Covenant Ministerium to offer and coordinate educational programs for ministry leaders. The center would offer symposia and workshops on critical issues in ministry practice. It would continue to build on the seminary's network of relationships with field education and CPE sites, providing ongoing hands-on training for ministry leaders. The center would work with the denomination to offer multicultural and diversity training as well as promote denominational initiatives such as Sankofa and Journey to Mosaic within the pastoral community.

In addition to denominational partnerships, we are pursuing further opportunities for collaboration with our university colleagues. These include joint teaching between the seminary and the university's Biblical and Theological Studies (BTS) Department, providing students with a broader spectrum of professors. Also in collaboration with the BTS Department, we envision developing a "fast-track" undergraduate to seminary degree. The seminary currently cross-lists its courses, allowing undergraduates to take seminary classes for undergraduate credit. We hope to expand this partnership, providing undergraduates advance standing toward a seminary degree and making it possible to complete both a bachelor degree and an MDiv degree within five to six years.

NPTS and the university's School of Business and Non-Profit Administration have a long history of collaboration that will remain strong into the future. Our dual degrees allow students to gain both a theological education and skills for the all-important administrative side of running a ministry or non-profit organization. A new master's degree in counseling, offered through the School of Professional Studies (formerly the School of Adult Learning), holds great potential for workshops and symposia on pastoral care for current students and ministers in the field.

Missional and Multicultural Competency

In alignment with NPU's core value of being purposely multicultural and

the ECC's mission priorities Love Mercy Do Justice and Serve Globally, NPTS strives in both faculty and student body to reflect the image of God as it is seen in the faces of all nations and cultures. This compels us to create recruitment strategies and employment practices that seek out underrepresented populations. It also compels us to foster an environment at NPTS that is welcoming and open to all people.

NPTS has enjoyed a strong relationship with Serve Globally of the ECC. This is further strengthened by our appointment of Al Tizon, current executive minister of serve globally, as affiliate associate professor of missional and global leadership. Tizon and Paul de Neui, director for the Center for World Christian Studies, have excelled in building relationships with partner institutions in South America, Africa, Europe, and Asia. Through the Center for World Christian Studies, NPTS serves as a resource for partner churches across the globe. Next spring, in collaboration with Serve Globally and Start and Strengthen Churches, we will begin offering the church planting certificate to the Covenant Church in Taiwan. We also hope to offer our certificates and potentially degree programs to our partner churches in the International Federation of Free Evangelical Churches. These partnerships strengthen the cross-cultural competency of NPTS students and Covenant pastors. As the ECC becomes more reflective of all of God's people, NPTS intends to be at the forefront of engagement with the world.

Sustainability and Affordability

The ongoing need to keep seminary education affordable and our institutional operation sustainable has led to innovative solutions. Working with Covenant Trust Company, National Covenant Properties, and the finance division of the ECC, as well as North Park University, we are in the process of developing the North Park Plan—an interest-free lending strategy meant to keep overall lending costs low for our students while increasing per student tuition revenue to the institution.

In 2012 the Lilly Endowment awarded NPTS a \$250,000 grant to establish a program to address economic challenges facing future ministers. This grant enabled us to pursue our MDiv curriculum revision, offer financial counseling to every seminary student, and implement programing aimed at raising our students' financial acuity. An additional three-year sustainability grant of \$125,000, awarded by Lilly in November 2015, has enabled us to research and develop new strategies for funding theological education.

We are researching the viability of a plan that would supply all of our students with a modest interest-free loan to cover their tuition costs. Such loans would come from major initial gifts from donors that will be invested and will also secure a larger credit facility. This would form a captive loan pool to cover seminary tuition, allowing students to defer all payment until graduation. Students would make a modest monthly payment for seven years following graduation. These payments will go back into the loan pool to help replenish funds. Through investment and program management provided by affiliates of the ECC, there is also a significant tuition discount built into the program, and the interest-free nature of the loan reduces the overall costs of seminary further. Students will also be encouraged to form a team of ministry partners to help support a portion of their education, financially and in prayer. These ministry partners can help reduce costs even further while bringing a sense of support and community to the students. Students will be held to minimum standards of performance in order to continue to qualify.

This plan offers benefits to the institution and the broader church. Financially healthy ministers are healthier ministers in general. The North Park Plan invites the seminary to practice responsible, Christ-centered stewardship toward its students and gives students the opportunity to partner with individuals, churches, and organizations to help fund and support their theological education. This lending strategy is founded on the conviction that we are all in this together—the seminary, students, congregations, organizations, and the ECC as a whole are all impacted by the education that takes place at NPTS.

Ecumenical Partnerships

Our founders called themselves “Mission Friends,” and as heirs of this tradition NPTS seeks to collaborate with denominations and organizations as well as local, state, and federal government to live out the gospel of Christ, serving our city and world. Located in America’s third largest city, NPTS seeks to be the world’s foremost urban center for theological training and missional leadership. Currently we are building educational partnerships with Volunteers for America, Salvation Army, Assemblies of God Church, Young Life, Vineyard, and the Community Christian Development Association.

NPTS also seeks to develop a center for holistic evangelism and urban ministry, to serve as a bridge to our doctor of urban ministry leadership degree and provide ministry training and resources to inner-city churches

across the United States. Under the Urban Evangelical Grant Initiative, “Exploring the Spirituality and Religious Expressions of Millennials/ Gen Y within the United States,” the center would research methods of engaging urban, multiethnic evangelicals.

A highlight for North Park in the area of ecumenical partnerships has been the development of a course taught by Michelle Clifton-Soderstrom at Stateville Correctional Facility in Chicago. This course involves both seminary students and Stateville students learning together. Some Stateville students have expressed the desire to continue their education at North Park after their release. This endeavor shines light on the type of restorative justice we as a community of believers can bring about in our city and world.

Looking Back to Go Forward

In 1901, ten years after the seminary’s founding, the school’s president David Nyvall shared with graduates his vision for the young school’s future. He desired North Park to be,

an institution which may deserve to bear the name of a mission school, a school where the gospel of Christ is the acknowledged standard of culture, fostering a school life whose very pulse is the love of Christ and of all those whom he loves, making this school a center from which radiates to all ends of the world the light of Christ’s truth, and the warmth of Christ’s love, and the beauty of Christ’s character.¹

One hundred and fifteen years later, North Park Theological Seminary’s mission and vision remain that of Nyvall’s: to be a center from which the light of Christ’s love, truth, and character radiates to the ends of the world. We set our hearts, minds, and dreams on this vision. We pray our students, lay and clergy, are inspired by their seminary education to become missional leaders to the global church, and thus fulfill the mission of Christ.

1. Quoted in Scott E. Erickson, *David Nyvall and the Shape of an Immigrant Church: Ethnic, Denominational, and Educational Priorities among Swedes in America* (Uppsala: Uppsala University, 1996), 267.

I Believe in the Future of North Park Theological Seminary

Gary Walter, president, Evangelical Covenant Church, Chicago, Illinois

I am a grateful graduate of North Park Theological Seminary (NPTS). When I think of experiences God used to orient my life's direction, there is no question that my time at NPTS ranks near the top. I needed seminary for biblical and theological foundations; North Park gave me that—and more. It matured my faith and hewed my nascent gifts. It gave me classmates who morphed into colleagues who morphed into lifelong companions. It rooted me in the denomination I love.

All seminaries, including our own, are navigating precarious times. The three-year, full-time residential model of seminary preparation that has been the standard for decades is under pressure at schools of all stripes. In the meantime, some schools are closing and others are consolidating. When I gather with leaders of other denominations, conversations about the future of theological education are common. No one is confident they have “figured it out.” As I distill the complexities that mark our present and future, two broad sets of considerations emerge. One is student-centered, the other is ministry-centered.

Students are more cautious about entering a full-time, multi-year program for a profession with less tangible return on the educational dollar invested—or debt incurred—for a career they are less certain they will be undertaking for their entire vocational life. They perceive the value of a seminary education but carefully “count the cost” of economic, relational/familial, and time investments in plotting if and how to proceed, especially if longer-term vocational direction is not settled.

In previous generations, the general consensus held that a seminary degree was the threshold for entering the ministerial vocation appropri-

ately prepared. If you wanted to be in ministry, you went to seminary, just as you went to law school to be a lawyer or medical school to be a doctor. While this is still broadly true, increasingly churches are calling ministry staff based on observed rather than “projected” effectiveness. In some quarters a seminary education is viewed more like an MBA—a value-added degree to enhance the efficacy of those *already in* ministry rather than the necessary gateway to ensure readiness *prior to* ministry. This is particularly true for special focus positions such as youth, children, worship, and others, which comprise more than half of all ministry positions in the Evangelical Covenant Church (ECC). The percentage of seminary students already in ministry positions is higher than it has ever been.

In combination, both sets of considerations produce a cumulative effect: in the aggregate, students are taking fewer courses at a time and, if they are in a degree program, are taking longer to complete their studies. This reduces the fulltime equivalents (FTEs), which in turn puts economic pressure on tuition-driven institutions. Despite being embedded in a solid university and tied to a growing denomination, NPTS is in this wobbly megatrend.

Yet even in this era of uncertainty in theological education, I am certain of this: North Park Theological Seminary can be—and must be—a pace-setter among schools preparing leaders in service to the mission of God in the world. My macro view is that the seminaries with meaningful futures will be committed to a particular framing concept—not merely to theological education but to *missional* theological education. A commitment is more than an implicit hope; it is an explicit frame of reference. Consider the individual elements of this commitment:

- **Missional:** Students know that they are being prepared to make a difference in the serious matter of God’s work in the world.

- **Theological:** “Missional” does not imply a reduction to pragmatism. Rather, mission is informed and undergirded by rigorous biblical and theological conviction.

- **Education:** A varied pedagogy incorporates instruction, reflection, experience, and community, leading to greater insight of living with God and for God.

By virtue of our historical identity as missional Pietists, NPTS already tends toward this framing concept. I believe further that the schools that will have the best traction toward being centers of missional theological education are the schools that understand the “power of multi.” Here

too NPTS is already well positioned.

Schools will need to see students as *multi-dimensional* and not merely consumers of biblical and theological content. One “quick fix trap” for schools is to think the answer to future viability will be found simply in varied content delivery channels, such as a mix of online classes, short intensives offered in various locations, and traditional campus-based offerings. This must be done to increase access, but if content delivery is *all* that matters, we may as well secure top lecturers from every seminary to record courses, start an online subscription service, and shut down every brick and mortar school. Intellectual preparation is only one dimension of seminary training. It is never less, but it is always more. Simply figuring out better ways to deliver content is overly simplistic. Even within new content delivery modalities, a comprehensive view of student preparation for ministry must integrate spiritual, character, and skill development. Historically, North Park has had this very posture. It has taken a comprehensive view of the demands of ministry and so too the dimensions of preparation to sustain a person in ministry. Those personal demands are only increasing.

Seminaries will need to be *multi-lateral*. Effective seminaries of the future will provide instruction by partnering scholars and expert practitioners. The incline for ministry is getting steeper. Seminaries that draw on the insights of effective practitioners will extend the classroom. This adds to the value proposition when students select a school. NPTS is taking steps in this direction, particularly in areas of ministry concentrations such as congregational vitality and church planting. Seminary scholars partner with recognized leaders in the field. This partnership brings together theological foundations and applied practice, critical reflection and pragmatic concern. The academy and apostolate in dialogue refine both for the good of the mission.

Finally, seminaries will need to be authentically engaged in *multi-ethnic* realities and opportunities. Most seminaries in the United States and Canada were founded on or largely followed a model of higher education imported from Europe. Furthermore, European immigrant descendants have proportionally been the largest clients of seminaries, both as students and hiring agencies of graduates. Consequently, many seminaries do not have credible engagement and mutuality across the burgeoning demographic mosaic that is both the church and the mission field in which we are situated. To not engage seriously is to become weaker in character and marginalized in mission. This is about more

than connecting to more students and faculty of color. It is about cross-cultural competency. It extends to the dimensions of power, pace-setting, participation, and purposeful common journey. NPTS and the ECC are taking halting steps. We confess we don't always get it right, but that doesn't mean it isn't right. And so we press on to be a fuller expression of God's church in service to God's world.

We live in an increasingly post-Christendom, post-modern, multiethnic, global world. Preparing students to serve effectively in this emerging context is at the center of what is meant by missional theological education. NPTS, by virtue of its heritage of missional Pietism and by its existing "multi" posture, is uniquely situated to become a pace-setter and model. In being smaller we can be nimble, a "controlled experiment" of sorts that can disseminate lessons learned. There is no road map, which means it will not be easy, formulaic, or guaranteed. But I have every hope that NPTS, more than any other seminary, has the compass to step into the future.

As we celebrate North Park's 125th anniversary, we celebrate the inestimable contribution its seminary, our seminary, has made to our mission. Looking ahead, we need an even stronger seminary, not for reasons of institutional survival but because, in the demands of the day, we need an even stronger mission.

Book Reviews

*Mark Safstrom, lecturer in Swedish and Scandinavian studies,
University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign*

*Cindy M. Wu, freelance writer and researcher,
Access Evangelical Covenant Church, Houston, Texas*

*Stephen J. Chester, academic dean and professor of New Testament,
North Park Theological Seminary, Chicago, Illinois*

Alice Hague, PhD candidate, University of Edinburgh, Scotland

Jesse Slimak, pastor, Evangelical Covenant Church of LeRoy, Michigan

Christopher Gehrz, ed., *The Pietist Vision of Christian Higher Education: Forming Whole and Holy Persons* (IVP Academic, 2015), 236 pages, \$26.

The relationship between Christian denominations and their colleges and seminaries is seldom a dull subject, particularly when it comes to the history of American evangelicalism. Fierce battles have been waged between self-proclaimed liberals and conservatives over ideologies, curriculum, and faculty of these schools regarding professors suspected of heretical leanings, campus life becoming too “worldly,” and the curriculum too secular—or conversely, whether the school has retreated too far from the mainstream culture or has abandoned its emphasis on academic excellence. Even the 125-year-long history of North Park University and Theological Seminary has witnessed similar episodes, and early opposition to the school almost derailed the enterprise altogether. Why should a denomination have a school at all? Isn’t a Bible college sufficient? What does studying biology and literature have to do with Jesus? Or the classic question, “what has Athens to do with Jerusalem?”

Readers with these kinds of questions and concerns may benefit the most from reading *The Pietist Vision of Christian Higher Education*. History professor Chris Gehrz and sixteen additional contributors with ties to Bethel University in St. Paul, Minnesota, explore the legacy of the Pietist heritage of their school and its implications and benefits for their research, teaching, and campus life. As the authors make a range of connections between academic pursuits and the Christian faith, the touchstone in all of their essays is the conviction that Christian liberal arts education ultimately must be part of the formation of students into “whole and holy persons.” This volume follows a flurry of other conferences, books, articles, and blog posts that Gehrz and other Bethel faculty have produced in recent years on this subject. For instance, readers of this publication may recall a review of the multi-author volume *The Pietist Impulse in Christianity* (2011), which was the product of a major colloquium on Pietism studies that Bethel hosted in 2009. This event inaugurated the “Bethel Colloquium on Pietism Studies,” the third installment of which the university will host December 2016.

As the editor of this current book, Chris Gehrz gives an overview of these previous research collaborations as well as a brief state-of-the-field regarding the relevance of Pietism studies in relation to the concerns of higher education today. These themes are picked up and expanded upon by the other contributors and are grouped in four sections: the integration of teaching, scholarship, and community; “changed people changing the world,” focusing on the university community’s engagement in outreach and service; perspectives from the natural sciences, including science education and nursing; and identification of problems and proposed solutions to the challenges facing Christian universities in the twenty-first century. A strength of this book is the breadth of topics covered, which provides readers a chance to glimpse the wide vision the authors are attempting to cast. Although some of the essays are highly specialized, there will be something here for most university educators and administrators, as the book takes into account student campus life, philosophies of the classroom, and service learning. Denominational presidents and administrators should also take note of this book, as it has much to offer in fostering understanding between churches and their schools.

From a historical perspective, this book makes a valuable contribution by identifying a trans-denominational conversation that stretches back to at least the 1940s between Baptists (such as Adolf Olson, Virgil Olson,

Carl Lundquist) and Covenanters (T.W. Anderson, Karl A. Olsson, Zenos Hawkinson), in which concerted efforts were made to articulate how the Pietist heritage ought to inform the educational priorities of denominational schools. The Baptist General Conference (now Converge Worldwide), Bethel's founding denomination, and the Evangelical Covenant Church share a considerable amount of history, with common roots in the Lutheran Church of Sweden. In the United States, the two groups have danced around one another for more than a century.

For many years North Park has been referred to jokingly as the "citadel of Pietism." Perhaps that distinction now belongs to Bethel. What Gehrz and other Bethel faculty members have managed to do in these Pietism studies conferences and publishing ventures is remarkable. They have engaged and inspired Covenant scholars, as well as Lutherans, Methodists, Baptists, and several other traditions, in an ongoing discussion of the "useable past" that can be found in Pietism as it appears in the background of the history of American Christianity.

MARK SAFSTROM

Jonathan Sacks, *Not in God's Name: Confronting Religious Violence* (Schocken, 2015), 320 pages, \$28.95.

Sociologists once predicted the demise of religion in the modern technological era. The opposite has happened. In fact, religiosity is on the rise. If religion is the source of violence, as some suggest, then we are in trouble. But is religion the root of violence? How can we confront religious violence, and what is at stake if we don't? These are the questions Jonathan Sacks, former chief rabbi of the United Hebrew Congregations of the Commonwealth, sets out to address in his timely and incisive work, *Not in God's Name: Confronting Religious Violence*.

The book is divided into three parts, beginning with a philosophical, theological, and Scriptural analysis of religious violence among the three Abrahamic faiths—Christianity, Judaism, and Islam. The second part frames religious violence as sibling rivalry at its worst. The third part issues a sober, humanitarian call to mutual love and understanding.

Sacks opens the book with this statement: "When religion turns men [sic] into murderers, God weeps" (p. 3). According to Sacks, while many invoke religion to justify violence, God does not rejoice at this distorted form of service. Instead, he weeps: to commit violence in God's name is to take his name in vain. Perpetrating harm against others, whether

they are of the same or different faith tradition, is to commit what Sacks calls “altruistic evil”: evil committed for a sacred cause and in the name of high ideals (p. 9)—resulting in an ideology taking the place of God.

According to Sacks, altruistic evil derives from “pathological dualism”—an “us” versus “them” mentality. Pathological dualism “sees humanity itself as radically, ontologically divided into the unimpeachably good and the irredeemably bad” (p. 51). In this line of thinking, the “other” becomes a dehumanized enemy. Viewing the “other” as an evil force helps one think more positively about oneself. It also helps to explain suffering in the world, thus placing the blame on the other without having to ponder one’s own complicity. This dualistic thinking seems to resolve complexity, but it is, in fact, the root of many evils against humankind.

The fifth chapter of the book, “Sibling Rivalry,” stands out as the most salient exposition of Sacks’s ideas. He draws from philosopher René Girard’s mimetic theory, which views desire as imitative. Mimetic desire often leads to violence because each side wants what the other has or wants to be what the other is, resulting in sibling rivalry. The book of Genesis opens with this motif in Cain’s fratricide of Abel. The theme of sibling rivalry runs through the patriarchal narratives as sibling pairs seek to harm or deceive one another. Sacks makes the case that the sibling relationships between Judaism, Christianity, and Islam are also shaped by each tradition’s desire for the same thing: Abraham’s promise.

But how does each faith understand Abraham’s promise? If differently, then rivalry is inevitable. For Sacks, the solution is a radical rereading of the classic Bible stories, “tak[ing] seriously not only our own perspective but also that of others. The world has changed. Relationships have gone global....For the first time in history we can relate to one another as dignified equals” (p. 103). This rereading involves a clear understanding that the Genesis narratives of sibling conflict and the counter-narratives of God-facilitated sibling reconciliation ultimately reveal that brothers *can* live together in harmony.

Not in God’s Name is a stimulating read. Sacks’s interpretations and insights from Jewish scholarship are fascinating. His tone is forceful but irenic. With its broad outlook, this book would serve as a great platform for interfaith discussion. Sacks appeals to a common humanity as a foundation for peace. His prescriptions for peace are more theory than praxis, yet it is clear he believes something can be done. Sacks is convinced that bad religion causes violence; good religion does something about it. Christians can start doing something about religious violence

by listening to authoritative voices like Sacks's. Christians, Muslims, and Jews together must disavow violence and oppression that exploits God's name for evil. Too much is at stake if we don't.

CINDY M. WU

Richard N. Longenecker, *Paul, Apostle of Liberty*, 2nd ed. (Eerdmans, 2015), 435 pages, \$34.

It is not often that a scholar is blessed with sufficient longevity to publish a second edition of a book more than fifty years after the first. Yet happily Richard Longenecker has been able to do just that with the republication of his classic 1964 treatment of the main themes in Paul's theology. The original text is unaltered, but a lengthy addendum supplements this edition. An additional foreword by Douglas Campbell praises Longenecker's work as an evangelical forerunner to E.P. Sanders's *Paul and Palestinian Judaism*, published in 1977. Sanders's text initiated significant changes in Pauline interpretation, often subsequently summarized as "the new perspective." As a consequence, within contemporary scholarship, Second Temple Judaism is usually described in positive terms, as itself a religion of grace rather than simply a negative foil for Paul's theology. Like Sanders, Longenecker refuses to caricature Judaism as a religion of works righteousness but is arguably more nuanced than Sanders in his insistence that there was more than one possible approach to understanding law observance within Second Temple Judaism. Also like Sanders, Longenecker highlights the significance of being in Christ ("union with Christ" or "participation in Christ") and life in the Spirit for Paul's theology. Longenecker's book was well ahead of its time and should now be given recognition for the paradigm shift it truly represented.

Is Campbell correct in this assessment of Longenecker? The answer is both yes and no. On the positive side, Longenecker's exegetical skill and theological good judgment are evident everywhere. Even if readers do not agree with all his conclusions, they will be enormously helped in their efforts to understand Paul's texts. A particular highlight is his treatment of Romans 7. It is also undeniable that dominant scholarly opinion is now much more favorable toward Longenecker's perspectives on Judaism and central issues in Paul's theology than when the first edition was published in 1964. The passage of time has vindicated Longenecker in many details.

Yet, perhaps inevitably, the book is not only ahead of its time but also

of its time. Longenecker describes Second Temple Judaism in a manner much more accepting of a clear distinction between Palestinian and Hellenistic Judaism than recent research suggests, and he relies on later rabbinic materials to an extent that would be unusual today. Further, parts of the book are preoccupied with answering the allegation that Acts must be historically unreliable in its portrayal of Paul since he is there portrayed as participating in Jewish practices inconsistent with the Christian freedom from the law articulated in his letters. Longenecker provides a compelling case for consistency between Paul's own statements and his actions as portrayed in Acts, but he does not directly ask whether the tension only arises because Paul's statements about the law were misinterpreted. Similarly, he rejects the view that Paul's detailed ethical instructions to his congregations contradict his emphasis on the inward guidance of the Spirit but does so without questioning whether there really exists a tension to be explained. In retrospect, Longenecker did not quite shatter the paradigm of Pauline interpretation as it existed in the 1960s, but he did contribute greatly to the build-up of pressure within it.

In the new material included in this second edition, we might have expected Longenecker to provide a judicious reflection on subsequent developments in Pauline interpretation, locating his book in relation to them and indicating what he would write differently today. Instead he offers a lengthy overview of the history of Pauline interpretation, with detailed consideration of significant interpreters from a number of different eras. There is much valuable material here, and the characterization is often deft, although he contrasts Alexandrian and Antiochene exegesis in terms that fail to reflect recent research. The overall impact is that Longenecker's added section reads like a short second book. Yet his emphasis on the history of reception does yield some interesting results. A strong appreciation emerges at some points for Luther as an interpreter of Paul. Longenecker also sharply rejects James Dunn's interpretation of Paul's insistence that justification is not by "the works of the law." Dunn's contention that the phrase denotes boundary markers, such as circumcision, food laws, and Sabbath observance, that separate Jews from Gentiles is often understood as one of the main planks of "the new perspective" and as essential to a more positive appreciation of Second Temple Judaism. Yet for all that Longenecker refuses to regard Jewish law observance in general as characterized by works righteousness, he insists that Paul's use of the phrase reflects and rejects the conviction of some (but not all) Jews that human actions in fulfilling the Torah bring

about righteousness and acceptance before God. In this crucial respect Longenecker does not simply anticipate contemporary scholarship but perhaps points back to earlier interpretations as well as forward to future ones. Ironically, it may be that fifty years is actually too short a time for the full significance of *Paul, Apostle of Liberty* to emerge.

STEPHEN J. CHESTER

Norman Wirzba, *From Nature to Creation: A Christian Vision for Understanding and Loving Our World* (Baker Academic, 2015), 176 pages, \$19.99.

In this insightful book, Norman Wirzba, professor of theology and ecology at Duke Divinity School, traces the development of modern and postmodern thought regarding the place of humans in the world. He analyzes how utilitarian thinking, modern economic practices, and “pervasive ingratitude” have distanced and disconnected humanity from God and God’s creation. This sense of disorientation has led to ways of human living that are destructive to creation. The author calls on Christians to develop “an imagination of the world as created, sustained, and daily loved by God” (p. 3) in order to reframe their understanding of creation as a gift from God, thereby impacting their action in the world.

From Nature to Creation begins with Wirzba’s emphasis on the formative role of words in determining how one views and responds to the world. How we treat a plant, for example, depends upon whether we are told it is a flower, a weed, or a vegetable. He suggests that, in the same manner, “the way we name and narrate the world determines how we are going to live within it” (p. 18). Embracing an understanding of creation not simply as a one-time account of the world’s origin but rather as an ongoing process and an expression of God’s love, reframes our relationship with the world with a sense of humility and gratitude. It is this reframing that ultimately enables us to live in the world in a manner that reflects and shares God’s love.

Wirzba argues that modern, industrialized societies have idolatized nature, seeing it either as a pristine wilderness or as an endless source of natural resources. He explains how this idolatry is grounded in self-worship, denying dependence on God and others. The author challenges his readers to not view themselves as autonomous individuals but instead to embrace their “creatureliness,” understanding themselves as fundamentally connected with and dependent on the land as the source

of life. Doing so requires pursuing “economies that promote the health of people and land *together*” (p. 99).

While the language of creatureliness can seem odd—and Wirzba acknowledges that we do not like to think of ourselves as creatures—he helpfully explains the impact of such thinking. Drawing on the work of Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Wirzba argues that human life is irreducibly interdependent. Our daily need to eat, drink, and breathe demonstrates that “we cannot stand on our own” (p. 133); it is only through relationship with others that life is possible. The author closes by inviting his reader to adopt practices and postures of gratitude as an acknowledgment that all of life and its sustenance are gifts from God.

From Nature to Creation is a detailed and thought-provoking book that starts by outlining “a Christian vision for understanding and loving our world” and leads well beyond to deep theological reflection on how to live well as a follower of Jesus in God’s world today. It offers an insightful perspective for reflection and action, challenging the reader to embrace creation as the embodiment of God’s love and to understand human beings as interdependent creatures within creation. In doing so, we reorient ourselves within the world to live more faithfully in a way that honors God.

Alice Hague

Gerald Hiestand and Todd Wilson, *The Pastor Theologian: Resurrecting an Ancient Vision* (Zondervan, 2015), 187 pages, \$19.

Historically pastors have been the primary theologians of the church, yet in today’s church what once was the rule is the exception. *The Pastor as Theologian* attributes to the loss of this vision theology that is “ecclesially anemic” and a church that is “theological anemic” (p. 13). This book identifies the divisions between the academic and pastoral worlds and offers suggestions for reclaiming the vision of the pastor as theologian as antidote to the anemia of both church and academy.

Authors Hiestand and Wilson begin with a brief overview of the long history of ministers serving as practicing theologians. They discuss the relatively recent bifurcation between professional academic theologians and pastoral practitioners, resulting from the European Enlightenment and the Revolution and the Second Great Awakening in North America. It would be easy for the authors to blame the academy for perpetuating the divide between theological and pastoral work, but they do not. Instead

they claim, “The problem is not that we have academic theologians; the problem is that we no longer—in the main—have pastor theologians” (p. 78). Pastors should not expect the academy to have the same concerns as the church. On the other hand, scholars should avoid the temptation to direct the intellectually gifted exclusively into the academy.

The alternative model to the existing paradigm is the “pastor theologian,” that is, “a pastor who is engaged in a kind of theological scholarship that is as intellectually robust as academic theology yet distinct from academic theology” (p. 18). Hiestand and Wilson contrast this person with the local theologian or the popular theologian. Some have argued that the pastor’s job is to be a liaison between the academy and the church. Although pastors often find themselves in this position, the authors contend that this model is insufficient. Instead of merely acting as brokers of theology, pastors should themselves be *doing* theology.

Ecclesial theology is “a theology that is germinated within the congregation, that presses toward distinctively ecclesial concerns, and that is cultivated by practicing clergy” (p. 18). Ecclesial theology is important because pastors are the church’s natural theological shepherds; individual churches and the church as a whole will not grow beyond the theological maturity of their pastors. According to the authors, direct service in clerical ministry gives pastors a distinct perspective for doing theology that can contribute to academic theology. The functions of the pastorate shape ecclesial theology in unique ways, and pastors are able to avoid the scholarly pressures that many academics encounter. Pastor theologians do theology that is driven by the needs of the church and are not burdened by the narrow specificity of their expertise. The authors encourage theologians in the academy and the pastorate to work alongside one another.

Hiestand and Wilson recognize that not every pastor is necessarily gifted for this task, and they make clear that ecclesial theological work does not mean that one neglects the ministerial work to which he or she is called. However, they persuasively argue the irreplaceable benefit of gifted pastoral theologians engaging in ecclesial theology and give suggestion for how pastors may pursue this.

I recommend this book to every pastor and especially to those who have not experienced the pastorate as a welcome home for the serious theological work to which they feel called. Even for those who do not feel gifted for ecclesial theology, this book explains the necessity of recovering this ancient model of doing theology within the pastorate.

JESSE SLIMAK

