
The Baptist Pietist CLARION

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Previous issues can be found at http://www.bethel.edu/cas/dept/history/Baptist_Pietist_Clarion

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Tribute to My Father: Speech in Honor of Virgil Olson on the Occasion of his 94th Birthday Celebration



DAN OLSON, Associate Professor of Sociology, Purdue University, son of Virgil Olson, June 19, 2010 at Grace-Point Church, New Brighton, MN | We

are here today to honor my father Virgil Olson. This honor is partly based on his contributions to the writing of the history of the Baptist General Conference. Today I also want to talk about my father as a church historian. But the thing I want to emphasize is that my dad is interested in church history not just as an interesting academic subject, but also because in church history he finds

models for how to live as a Christian in today's world.

I was fortunate to have a dad who, though he was often very busy, also made time to be with his family. I grew up having plenty of time to talk with him about all kinds of topics. I feel especially privileged in this regard since I was the youngest child. I had my parents to myself during the years I was entering adulthood. We often talked around the dinner table. My dad and I enjoyed occasionally taking walks together in the evenings. He also took me on several long camping trips, just the two of us. We talked about lots of things. I remember pressing him to talk about the first girl he had a crush on. Don't worry Dad, I'm not telling. We talked about presidential poli-

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A Review of *Five Decades of Growth and Change, 1952-2020: Pondering the Future of the Baptist General Conference*



GLEN G. SCORGIE, Professor of Theology, Bethel Seminary San Diego | Spickelmier, James and Carole, eds. *Five Decades of Growth and Change, 1952-2002:*

The Baptist General Conference and Bethel College and Seminary. St. Paul, MN: The History Center, 2010. xi + 676 pp., index.

DENOMINATIONAL HISTORIES: CHARACTERISTICS AND VALUE

This impressive collaborative historical work, edited by the husband and wife team of BGC leaders James and Carole Spickel-

mier, is a sequel to Adolf Olson's *A Centenary History* (1952), which documented the first century (1852-1952) of the Baptist General Conference. As such, this new volume carries forward the story of Swedish Baptists in North America through their next important half-century of expansion, enculturation and maturation—across a span, as the book's subtitle declares, of "five decades of growth and change." The book is published under the auspices of the History Center, the archives of the BGC and Bethel University, located on the latter's campus. Since the study does not extend beyond 2002, there is no coverage of the denomination's subsequent adoption of the mission-oriented

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Inside this Issue of the *Baptist Pietist Clarion*



G. WILLIAM CARLSON, Professor of History and Political Science

This is the eleventh issue of the *Baptist Pietist Clarion*. The first issue emerged in March 2002. Earlier issues focused on the theological vision of John Alexis Edgren, Baptist pietist spirituality as expressed in the life and witness of Carl H. Lundquist, Baptist commitments to religious liberty and the separation of church and state (exploring the contributions of Dr. Walfred H. Peterson and Dr. C. Emanuel Carlson), the history of Swedish Baptist pietism, the history of theological disputes in the BGC and a celebration of Gordon Johnson's *My Church*. Previous issues of the *Baptist Pietist Clarion* can be found at: http://cas.bethel.edu/dept/history/Baptist_Pietist_Clarion.

1. The first theme of this issue of the *Baptist Pietist Clarion* is to celebrate the life and witness of Dr. Virgil Olson. Many of the articles come from presentations made at the 94th birthday celebration for Virgil Olson on June 19, 2010 at GracePoint Church and sponsored by the Friends of the Baptist General Conference History Center. Dr. Olson has been a significant chronicler of BGC history, especially the celebration of its Baptist, pietist heritage.

2. A second theme of this issue of the *Baptist Pietist Clarion* is to explore the significance of a new monograph on Baptist General Conference history entitled *Five Decades of Growth and Change*. Dr. Glen Scorgie, Professor of Theology at Bethel Seminary, San Diego was asked to reflect on the significance of this account and its potential contribution to understanding current issues facing the denomination. The monograph was edited by Jim and Carole Spickelmier.



3. The third theme is an interesting discussion concerning the convocation invitation to Dr. Martin Luther King at Bethel in November 1960. Historian and Archivist Diana Magnuson and Librarian Kent Gerber were able to access the King archives and developed an interesting broader analysis of this event. Also included is Angela Shannon's Martin Luther King Sunday reflective sermon given at Central Baptist Church, St. Paul, Minnesota in January 2011.

4. A fourth theme is the recognition of the passing of several significant supporters of the *Baptist Pietist Clarion* and its message. These include Webster Muck, Stan Rehndahl, Gordon Johnson, and Roy Dalton. Included is a personal reflection on the life and witness of Roy "Doc" Dalton who was an extremely important contributor to my Christian journey and commitments to our Baptist, pietist heritage.

5. A final theme is Terri Hansen reflections on BGC publications on Christian spirituality. This issue's book is Greg Boyd's *Present Perfect*.

Adolf Olson writes the *Centenary History: The Story of the First 100 Years of the Swedish, Baptist, Pietist Community*

VIRGIL A. OLSON, Professor Emeritus of Church History, Bethel Seminary, "Preface" *Five Decades of Growth and Change*, p. viii | *Centenary History* by Adolf Olson told the story of men and women in Sweden who had been touched with a revival spirit, known

as pietism, which could not be quenched. The idea of a church made up of regenerate believers, baptized by immersion upon confession of faith, accepting the New Testament as being more authoritative than creeds and confessions, and committed to a life-style of godly living, gave the pietists a spiritual vehicle that ran counter to the formalistic, rationalistic, legalistic structure of the national church. Persecution arose against these pietistic Baptists and the consequences were that they became refugee emigrants to the new world of freedom and promise, America.

for years combed through the denominational papers, like *Nya Vecka Posten* and *Standaret*, all in Swedish, gathering data for the history. Adolf was my father. I remember, when I was a student in the Seminary, how the dining room table of our home was stacked with these bound volumes of old papers, much to the consternation of my mother who was an open door entertainer.

My father commissioned me to write chapters 26 and 27, Youth Activities and Men's and Women's Organizations. My father's manuscript was written in longhand. Adolf had beautiful handwriting, all the lines were even and clear. No computer in those days. I remember how, when father had completed the final paragraph, mother and I knelt with him by the dining room table and thanked God that the writing of the hundred year history of the Baptist General Conference was completed...



Adolf Olson celebrates publication of *A Centenary History*.

...At the time of the writing Olson, was Professor Theology and Baptist History and Missions at Bethel Seminary and the Archivist for the Swedish Baptist General Conference. Adolf Olson

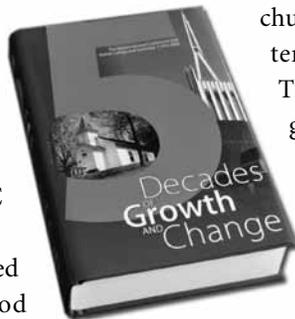
The Writing of *Five Decades of Growth and Change*

JAMES AND CAROLE SPICKELMIER

HOW DID THIS BOOK ORIGINATE?

The history of the BGC and Bethel has been recorded in a number of ways, perhaps most notably in the *Centenary History* by Adolf Olson, which covered the years 1852-1952. More recently the BGC published decade books to preserve the history of the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s. But no book was published for the 1990s. Concerned about this omission, the Friends of the History Center wanted to look into the possibility of another decade book. Jim met with Gary Marsh, editor of *BGCWorld*, to explore this possibility. Gary felt that what was really needed was a 50-year history to take up the story of the years since 1952. Interested in this possibility, the History Center pledged to provide funds toward this project, and the BGC agreed to match that amount.

Over thirty writers volunteered to help us chronicle what God has been doing in world missions, church planting, literature and Christian education, cultural associations, ministries of the districts, and at Bethel College and Seminary. The writers were men and women who have been intimately involved with



these ministries. They wrote about what they knew. We were designated as the co-editors. Gary Marsh, now running his own independent graphic design company, was chosen as our layout editor. Virgil Olson, son of Adolf Olson and premier BGC historian, gave us the name *Five Decades of Growth and Change* and wrote the preface.

WHAT INSIGHTS DID YOU GAIN AS THIS BOOK WAS WRITTEN?

A dominant theme is that this was a time of great growth and blessing from God. While many mainline denominations were declining, the number of BGC churches nearly tripled, and attendance increased four-fold. The BGC world mission force grew from 50 to over 200. The formerly Swedish BGC expanded to include people of all races and backgrounds, until today we are a growing, multi-ethnic fellowship.

Similar growth was also happening at Bethel as we built a new campus in Saint Paul, established new seminary sites in San Diego and on the East Coast, added many programs at the college level, and began a graduate school. The student body grew

from 600 in 1952 to over 4,000 in 2002.

A second strong impression from these chapters is that God used many humble people to do his work among us. Many of the leaders who made strong, lasting and strategic contributions to the BGC and at Bethel were not flashy people, but rather humble, hard-working, practical, persistent, and highly dependent on God.

WHO SHOULD READ THIS BOOK?

Since the first chapter of the book is a condensation of *Centenary History*, this means that this book can serve as a one-volume history of the BGC and Bethel from 1852 to 2002. Those who have participated in the ministries of Bethel or the Conference during these years will want to have this book because it is really their “story” too. Current missionaries and pastors of the Conference should have this book so they will know on whose shoulders they stand as they do ministry today. It would also be a great addition to the library of all our Conference churches. God has been at work in the BGC and at Bethel. Read about it and see for yourself!

(*Five Decades of Growth and Change* can be obtained through Harvest Books or the Bethel University Book Store. Many of the district offices also have copies for sale.)

A Review of *Five Decades of Growth and Change*, from p. 1

name Converge Worldwide in 2008.

Denominational histories, as a genre, are seldom riveting literature—except, perhaps, for a few well-connected insiders. Usually they do not generate the same level of excitement as, say, an action thriller, or the same wide-eyed suspense as a cleverly constructed whodunit. But such histories remain nonetheless important; each is a repository of a religious movement’s collective memory and a source of wisdom to grasp its core values and to perceive its true historical trajectory. It is standard practice in the business world to loop back and review a corporation’s recent performance, to see what lessons might be learned to create an even more effective future. Histories like this are the functional equivalent for fellowships of churches.

Denominational histories vary consider-

ably in quality and expertise. This particular one shows numerous signs of attention to detail, competence in editing, and aesthetic appeal in layout and binding. It is evident that the editors and contributors value their spiritual heritage, and as a result their collective achievement brings that heritage further honor.

FIVE DECADES OF GROWTH: AN INFORMATIVE EFFORT TO UNDERSTAND BGC HISTORY

The volume begins with a brief, but delightfully informative preface by Dr. Virgil A. Olson, one of the elder statespersons of the Baptist General Conference. Among his many roles through the years Virgil Olson has served as a pastor, dean of Bethel College, and executive secretary of world missions

for the BGC. He is also the son of Adolf Olson, the editor of the original centenary history of the Baptist General Conference. At his father’s request, Virgil contributed two chapters to the older work, so he is the perfect bridge person between the older history and this, its recently released sequel.

The new volume has 23 chapters in all. In the first of these, editor Jim Spickelmier summarizes the Conference’s first century—rehearsing the highlights of Olson’s original account and thereby laying a retrospective foundation for what follows. In doing so the author notes that the decisive factor ensuring the survival and flourishing of the Baptist General Conference as a distinctive denomination—clearly differentiated from the much larger English-speaking American Baptist denomination with which it initially

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had close ties—was a decision reached by BGC delegates in 1944 to establish and support their own more doctrinally-conservative mission board (p. 12). Thus, while the BGC was borne in the mid-nineteenth century of practical immigrant expedience, it evidently endured and flourished because at a subsequent critical juncture it embraced a fresh and invigorating vision for mission.

Thereafter the structure of the book is straightforward and consisting of two sections. The first (chapters 2-8) is a topical one. These chapters treat key divisions or aspects of the overall BGC enterprise—including Bethel (its flagship school) and its global missions enterprise, as well as such important spheres as (and this list is not exhaustive) home missions, publications and literature, and “cultural ministries” to Native Americans, African-Americans, Hispanics, Filipinos and Vietnamese. A full chapter, the ninth, is devoted to the history of the BGC above the forty-ninth parallel, in Canada—a work that began directly north of Minnesota, in Winnipeg, Manitoba in 1894.

The second major section of the volume (chapters 10-22) surveys the history

geographically. These chapters explore the history of the BGC one regional conference at a time—not in chronological order or according to size, but alphabetically. The thirteen conferences are presented in order from the Columbia to the Southwest. They are authored or co-authored by persons intimately acquainted with their subject matter through a lifetime of personal participation and service. Not too many readers will be inclined to read these chapters right through in order, certainly not in one sitting. These chapters function more in the order of valuable reference works—pages to which one may return more than once for reliable details and clarifications. The typical reader, I suspect, will begin with the chapter on the conference with which they are most familiar, and move outward from there.

Perhaps the most interesting, and certainly the most interpretive, chapter is the final one on “Trends in Faith and Life.” Here editor James Spickelmier casts his informed eye back across more than 600 pages and a lifetime of experience to offer some summative perspectives and insights. This is the sort of thing that separates genuine history writing from

merely chronicling names and dates, and it constitutes a valuable capstone for the project as a whole. The editor presents trends he has observed within his faith community over a half century, and suggests various broad cultural factors that influenced these trends and help to account for them. The chapter concludes by identifying some significant changes that have occurred within the BGC itself during the five decades under scrutiny.

There are also some appendices to this volume of almost 700 pages. They include a helpful timeline and even some well-chosen color photographs. The volume wraps up with a thorough index in which Scandinavian surnames still predominate, but in which the emerging multicultural face of the fellowship is also now evident.

THE PICTURE REVEALED: MOVING BEYOND THE SCANDINAVIAN HERITAGE

The BGC story told in this volume is a colorful chip in the larger mosaic of the history of Christianity in America in the second half of the 20th century—a story ably narrated in such works as Martin Marty, *Pilgrims in Their Own Land* (1984), Mark Noll,

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Scorgie Edits New Book on Christian Spirituality

Zondervan Dictionary of Christian Spirituality, gen. ed. Glen G. Scorgie (July 2011), 864 pp. In recent decades Christian spirituality, spiritual formation and spiritual theology have become important concepts in the global evangelical community. Consequently, a need was recognized for an accessible and reliable academic resource on these topics—one that offers a discerning orientation to the wealth of ecumenical resources available while still highlighting the distinct heritage and affirming the core grace-centered values of classic evangelical spirituality.

The *Zondervan Dictionary of Christian Spirituality* reflects an overarching interpretive framework for evangelical spiritual formation: a holistic and grace-filled spirituality that encompasses relational (connecting), transformational (becoming), and vocational (doing) dynamics.

At the same time, contributors respectfully acknowledge the differences between Pietist, Reformed, Holiness, and Pentecostal paradigms of the spiritual life. And, by bringing together over two hundred writers from around the world who share a common orthodoxy, this reference work is truly global and international in both its topical scope and contributors.

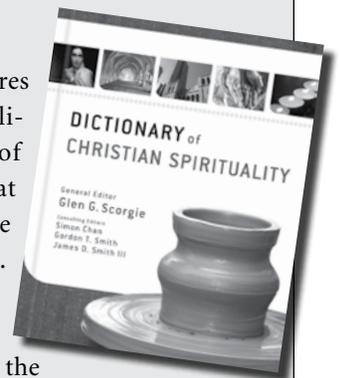
We are pleased to report that the number of contributors from Bethel exceeds that of any other institution. Dr. James D. Smith III, professor of church history at Bethel Seminary San Diego, served as a consulting editor. Altogether 34 Bethel faculty members, from St. Paul and both coasts, wrote pieces for the volume—an encouraging indication of ongoing commitment at Bethel to the university’s historic regard for “heart and mind.”

Over 700 essays and entries give appropriate attention to concepts, concerns, and

formative figures in the evangelical tradition of spirituality that other reference work neglect. They offer a discerning orientation to the

wealth of ecumenical resources available, exploring the similarities and differences between Christianity and alternate spiritualities without lapsing into relativism.

The *Zondervan Dictionary of Christian Spirituality* is a resource that covers a wide range of topics relating to Christian spirituality and is biblically engaged, accessible, and relevant for all contemporary Christians. We trust that this milestone work will prove very useful to the people of God in the days ahead.



History of Christianity in the United States and Canada (1992), and Thomas Askew and Richard Pierard, *The American Church Experience* (2004). The BGC story told here in *Five Decades* begins in 1952 when the denomination had 366 churches, most of them on the smaller side. For almost the entire previous half century the denomination had been in a post-immigration plateau, and in some ways it was showing signs of decline. Yet fifty years later, in 2002, the Conference had grown to 971 churches in the United States and Canada. This was roughly double the rate of general population increase during this same period of time. Because a significant number of these churches had become considerably larger than any of the BGC congregations back in 1952, the overall growth in the number of active members and adherents during this period was even more substantial.

The flow of Swedish immigrants to America during the second half of the nineteenth century had dried up years before, so that the growth experienced was due to factors other than the original ethnicity and linguistic distinctiveness that account for the origins and earliest expansion of the conference. The BGC, like so many other church groups, benefited from the general surge in religiosity and church attendance (not to mention the birth-rate) in America following the national crisis and eventual victory of the World War II years (1939-1945).

But there was more to it than just that. *Five Decades of Growth and Change, 1952-2002* is a quarry from which supplementary explanations for BGC growth can be mined. From a theological perspective, it appears that God has honored the BGC's faithfulness to the Gospel message and its vigorous proclamation in North America and beyond. Considering the same phenomenon from another angle, we might suggest that the BGC has grown because people with perennial human needs have been drawn to the Gospel and experienced its power, and have found meaning and personal significance through getting involved in Great Commission work.

In the period under review the number of full-time BGC missionaries grew from the

low 50s to 130, while the number of mission fields expanded from several to over twenty. During this same half-century span (1952-2002) Bethel College and Seminary, the BGC's flagship schools, experienced parallel patterns of growth and development. In 1952 there were approximately 600 students on the relatively confined Snelling Avenue campus in St. Paul. Fifty years later the schools had relocated to a spacious new home in Arden Hills, and had a total enrollment of over 4,000 students.

Against the backdrop of an increasingly populous America, the Baptist General Conference experienced substantial, if not exactly spectacular growth of its own. Yet for all of that it remains a relatively small

chip in the ecclesiastical mosaic of America, dwarfed by numerous larger denominations, and even by other Baptist groups like the Southern Baptist Convention. While the thirteen regional conferences of the BGC cover most of the map of the United States, the reality is that the BGC is still primarily a regional body, reflecting its historic origins in the upper Midwest. In 2000, for example, the number of church attendees in the Minnesota Baptist Convention alone was 48,000 (p. 517)—a considerable portion of the entire BGC constituency. By contrast, in the Northeast Baptist Conference (see chap. 19), whose sprawling geographic constituency encompasses tens of millions of Americans in some of the nation's largest

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The Baptist General Conference and Its Pietist Heritage: Pietistic Characteristics Among the Conference Baptists

Virgil Olson *Bethel Seminary Quarterly* Vol. IV, No. 3, May 1956, pp. 54-66.

1. The first principle characteristic of pietism is that of the centrality of the Bible in the life of the believer.

As pointed out, this is one reason why the Baptists made such headway among the *läsare* in Sweden. The one principle that the pietists kept alive, however, was that each individual believer should be a Bible reader and a Bible student.

2. The second characteristic of importance is that of insisting on a born-again experience for every believer.

...Conference Baptist churches in years gone by have insisted on a regenerate church membership. Great stress has been laid on the fact of whether or not a person has had an experience with the Lord.

3. The third characteristic that is always a dominant part of any pietistic movement is that of holy living.

...Abstain from every appearance of evil was a watchword. A favorite song of the old-timers was "I am a pilgrim" (*Jag är en främling*).

4. The fourth characteristic is that pietism is prominently a layman's movement.

Democracy in the churches has always been highly regarded... The free church spirit has revolted strongly against hierarchy and powerful pressure groups...

5. The fifth characteristic is that of revival.

Pietism was born and propagated in religious revival. It has come to the fore in times of national moral poverty, religious coldness and cynicism. Pietism seemed to be the breath of God moving among the dry bones, bringing life to the various valleys of arid skeletons of theology and religious formalism.



cities, churches are much fewer and farther between. Somewhat surprisingly, given its geographic remoteness from Minnesota, Southern California has a relative concentration of BGC churches. Perhaps this is partly a reflection of Swedish Baptist disenchantment with long northern winters!

CONCLUSION: PONDERING THE FUTURE OF THE BAPTIST GENERAL CONFERENCE

For the most part the volume can be classified as institutional history, inasmuch as it traces the development of such familiar denominational preoccupations as budgets, donations, administrative structures, membership roles, youth work, women's ministries, short-term missions and outreach teams, church planting, changing music styles, key leaders (almost exclusively men, incidentally), various program initiatives, Sunday School work, camping ministries and homes for seniors.

But something of the soul of the BGC is also revealed in this volume. As a whole, the BGC did not engage much with the issues of social conscience that energized and convulsed other groups. Not much progress was made, for example, on empowering women for church leadership. Nonetheless, while the conference remained theologically conservative in ethos, it deftly skirted the Fundamentalist option epitomized in the Minneapolis region by the influential William B. Riley of First Baptist Church and what became Northwest Bible College. The BGC clearly located itself in the emerging evangelical mainstream and has remained there ever since. Occasionally there are references to doctrinal controversies (e.g., pp. 46-50)—including the recent furor over Openness Theology (pp. 516-517)—but these are regarded largely as sidebars to the main storyline. Notorious scandals are omitted altogether, or treated very briefly and with considerable discretion.

Through the years there has been growing angst over the "all-white" face of the BGC, and more and more intentional efforts to diversify the denomination through the nurturing of more ethnic congregations. While their numbers remain relatively small, some of these fellowships are now among the more

robust in the entire conference.

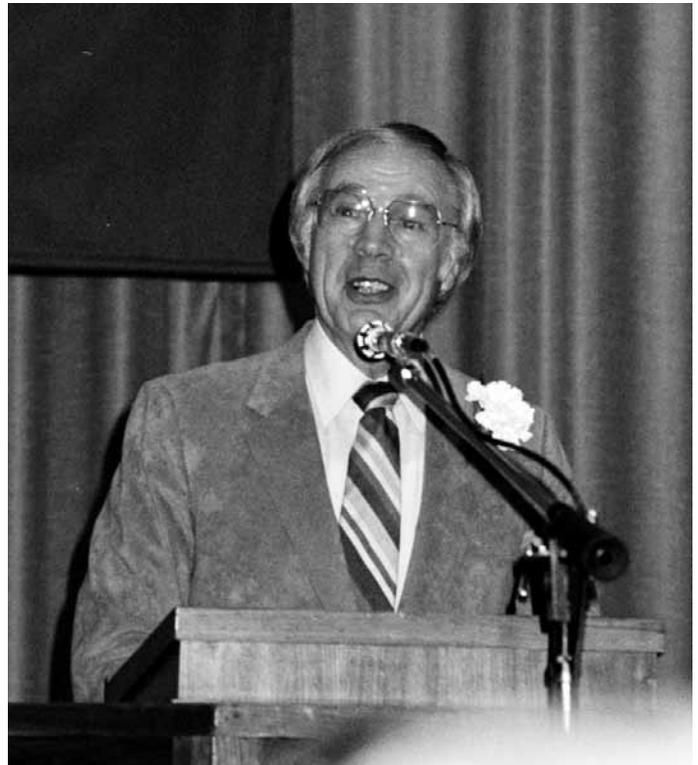
The "elephant in the room" of this denominational history is the emergence of multiple elephants—a number of so-called "mega-churches" that have altered the social dynamics of the entire conference. These congregations are large enough to be essentially autonomous; they no longer need the pooled resources of the larger denomination to achieve their local objectives. But we have also come to see how dependent they are upon capable leadership, and how wildly they can oscillate in size and health during times of transition.

What is somewhat surprising is the relatively modest attention given in this volume to the distinct spirituality and ethos of the BGC. The group's origins in biblically orthodox European Pietism are well known, and the saintly leadership of President Carl Lundquist at Bethel (1954-1982) is respectfully acknowledged (pp. 29-39). And yet for all of that there is relatively little emphasis in the book, or, apparently, within the BGC itself, on the distinct union of "heart and mind" that has been so central to our Pietist tradition ever since Philip Spener wrote his classic little *Pia Desideria* back in 1675. It is a tradition eminently suited to satisfy the heart-hunger of those who have grown skeptical of a purely rational and propositional religiosity.

As one concludes this important book, one cannot help pondering the future of the Baptist General Conference and its flagship university. Denominationalism itself is in general decline nowadays, so the safest prediction is that the cohesiveness of the BGC as a fellowship and creator of identity will probably fade in the course of the next half century. Powerful socializing trends are already blending a once-separate immigrant

church (symbolized by the little white Scandia chapel on the Bethel University campus) into the cultural and religious melting pot of the United States. What will the BGC keep alive? Will it have a narrative with which younger people will be able to identify? What will be its distinctive legacy and gift to the next generation?

We do know, thanks to the work of James and Carole Spickelmier, and a cadre of knowledgeable contributors, that the BGC



Bethel President Carl Lundquist (1954-1982)

experienced resurgence from the doldrums when it claimed a bold new vision back in the early 1940s. Surely this is instructive, for without an energizing vision even a denomination can perish. And just as certainly no church can expect to flourish in these challenging times unless there is a deep and profound reality to its walk with God. As Minnesota's own pop-theologian Garrison Keillor once insightfully commented in a *Books and Religion* interview: "If you can't go to church and, for at least a moment, be given transcendence; if you can't go to church and pass briefly from this life into the next; then I can't see why anyone should go." There's a still point, a constant, across any number of decades of growth and change.

Martin Luther King Invited to Address Bethel Convocation: Reaping the Legacy of President Carl Lundquist's Correspondence with Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.



DIANA MAGNUSON, PROFESSOR OF HISTORY BETHEL UNIVERSITY, DIRECTOR OF ARCHIVES, BGC HISTORY CENTER AND KENT GERBER, DIGITAL LIBRARY, BETHEL UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES | "Martin Luther King Will Address Convo" was the headline of *the Clarion* on November 23, 1960. This article was part of the promotion for the



launch of the digital collection of Clarion Student Newspapers for Bethel University Library's Homecoming event in October 2010. This expanded ability to use and display an historical artifact became the centerpiece of a conversation about Bethel's reconciliation roots, Bethel's irenic approach to Christian higher education, and the importance of stewarding Bethel's cultural heritage.

Examples of historic *Clarion* front pages were used to demonstrate the contents of the new collection in Bethel University's Digital Library, including the Martin Luther King, Jr. headline. In communications promoting the Homecoming event, the question was asked, "Did you know that Martin Luther King, Jr. came to Bethel?" Several individuals responded that they did not think he came and one mentioned that Dr. King was assassinated before he could come. No one was certain of the details of the oral history and there was no extant documentation to be found that confirmed or refuted the *Clarion* article.

As we sought to uncover why Dr. King did not speak at Bethel, we discovered a fascinating story surrounding his initial invitation and recovered a piece of our pietistic heritage. After consulting a number of references and institutions, Bethel University librarians received word from The Martin Luther King Jr. Research and Education Institute at Stanford University who had two documents dated near the time of the *Clarion* article. The two documents were correspondence written by President Lundquist to Martin Luther King, Jr. on November 8, 1960 and

a response from Dr. King's assistant, James Wood, on December 1, 1960. Lundquist's letter was written to confirm Dr. King's scheduled appearance and to ask after any further necessary accommodations during his visit. In the morning, he was scheduled to speak on the theme of the problem of racial discrimination, and in the evening, Lundquist had requested that King deliver a speech that he had heard before called "Paul's Epistle to Twentieth Century Christians". Wood wrote

on behalf of Dr. King that he must regretfully cancel because his leadership was needed for the "emergency situations" surrounding the student sit-ins in Atlanta which were renewed after a thirty-day truce. Upon this new evidence, supported by a chronology of King's activities and New York Times articles about the sit-ins, we were able to determine conclusively that King was indeed scheduled to speak but did not ultimately deliver his convocation addresses for the reasons stated

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PRESIDENT LUNDQUIST DEFENDS CONVOCATION INVITATIONS TO KING AND WEIGLE

"Dr. King has been invited because he is today one of the foremost leaders in promoting non-violent programs for racial equality. This is a concern for every Christian. As a matter of fact, the matters of social welfare constitute one area where theological differences among Christians are less significant and where we find that many of us can work together toward a common objective. This does not minimize our differences but indicates that there also exists some areas of agreement. In the case of Dr. Weigle, he has been invited because next year will mark the 350th anniversary of the translation of the King James Version of the Bible. While he has been identified with the Revised Standard Version, of course, he is also one of the acknowledged scholars of our day in his familiarity with the King James Version. His basic talk will be a historical approach to that version.

Because we do not agree with these men in all areas of their thought we ought not cut off listening to them in such important fields of concern for the evangelical church today any more than we would take out of our library all of the books with whose authors we disagree or refuse to handle in our bookstore materials not always sympathetic to Bethel's point of view. As a matter of fact, one of the finest places for dedicated Christian young people to come in contact with men and books like these is on a campus where alert and committed evangelical teachers can help to bulwark their faith while at the same time frankly face opposing points of view...."

in his assistant’s letter (King et al., 2005; Klan and negroes march in Atlanta, 1960; Truce on sit-ins ends in Atlanta, 1960).

SEARCH FOR THE LUNDQUIST/KING LETTERS

We later learned that there were ten other items of correspondence between Lundquist and King located in the holdings of Boston University’s Howard Gotlieb Archival Research Center spanning from 1957 to 1960. After acquiring the five letters that Lundquist wrote, we learned that Lundquist had first invited King to speak three years earlier in 1957 and then again in 1959. These invitations were declined but lead to the scheduling of the December 1960 engagement. We were not able to acquire the other five letters authored by Dr. King because of the difficulty in obtaining permission from the

King Estate to release the Boston University copies to us. Negotiations are still under way for these items.

THE KING INVITATION LEADS TO SIGNIFICANT CONSTITUENT CONTROVERSAARY

The letters answered the questions concerning when King was to come and why he cancelled, but they did not discuss another piece of the oral history involving the general atmosphere of controversy surrounding the invitation itself. Planning for the convocation was carried out by the Commencement and Convocation Committee, made up of members of the college and seminary faculty. The convocation series for the winter of 1960-1961 included ten morning convocations, four evening convocations and three seminary lectureships. Publicity announcing

the speakers prompted letters of concern to Bethel College and Seminary President Carl Lundquist by at least a dozen constituents. Only one of the dozen or so letters is extant. Dr. G. Archer Weniger, pastor, published his concerns in *The Blue Print*, a publication of Foothill Boulevard Baptist church, Oakland, California. The letter was reprinted in *Sword of the Lord* and *North Star Baptist*. The invitations to King and Luther A. Weigle, Dean Emeritus of the Yale University Divinity School raised serious concerns for Weniger. King’s presentation was titled, “A look at the problem of racial discrimination.” Weigle’s was billed as, “A historical presentation of the significance of the King James’ Version of the Bible during its 350th anniversary year.” Pastor Weniger’s primary concern with regard to both King and Weigle was not the topic of their convocation, rather, their association with “communist front causes.” According to Weniger, the invitation of King and Weigle was “evidence of penetration of pacifism, socialism, modernism, and subversion” to Bethel College. Weniger called for prayer to cancel these two speakers.

A copy of President Lundquist’s response to concerned Bethel constituents is among the minutes of the convocation committee. Lundquist’s letter is a clear exposition of liberal arts education, delivered in the irenic spirit that came to define his presidency. The need for this letter demonstrates that Lundquist made a choice that was not a comfortable one among some of his evangelical peers this early in the civil rights movement. While there are examples of evangelical engagement, like Billy Graham’s desegregation of his Chattanooga, Tennessee crusade in 1953, there are many more accounts of evangelicals, like Pastor Weniger, who were either indifferent or hostile to the civil rights movement (Gibreath, 1998; Graham, 1997; Moberg, 1972). King’s first invitation to speak at Bethel came six years before major events like the March on Washington and the ecumenical Chicago Conference on Race and Religion; seven years before King received the Nobel Peace Prize and the passing of the Civil Rights Act of 1964; and eight years before the passing of the Voting Rights Act of 1965 (Branch, 1998). Lundquist determined

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JOHN PERKINS SPEAKS ON WHAT IT MEANS TO BE THE CHURCH

G. WILLIAM CARLSON | John Perkins was a frequent preacher at Bethel chapel since the 1970’s. He remains a distinguished spokesperson for civil rights issues within the evangelical community. Bethel Business professor Robert Weaver took up John Perkins’ challenge. In 1983 Weaver used one of his sabbaticals and traveled to Jackson, Mississippi. He felt called “to go back to Mississippi to use his business skills for the development of jobs and businesses in poor communities.”

One of Perkins noted speeches preached at Bethel Chapel was his call for the Christian church to be agents of reconciliation and promoters of justice.

“To rediscover our identity as God’s people, we must begin with Jesus who saw himself as God’s instrument of liberation. The power of his liberation lay in the fact that Jesus was the very presence of God in the world - God in the flesh. In Jesus the word and the

person of God came together...

The church is the very body of Christ, the replacement of Jesus’ body on earth in the community where believers live... If he is living in us individually and corporately, then that fact should have some meaning.

First, it means that, like him, we relocate ourselves in the area of need. We identify with, we live among, we actively seek out those who are poor, in need, oppressed...

Second, our identity through Jesus’ presence in the body of Christ means that, like him, we reconcile ourselves with others across racial and cultural barriers...

Third, our identity through the presence of Christ means, that, like Jesus, we redistribute goods, our wealth, more equitably than do the distribution systems of the world.

Relocation, reconciliation, and redistribution. These are not qualities that one can pretend to have or generate by one’s own power. They depend upon the reality of God’s presence in our midst. They testify to who we are: the Body of Jesus Christ.”

(Voice of Calvary reprinted from *International Review on Missions*, July 1977)



John Perkins

Dale Johnson's Mural "Remember, Believe and Act" Explores Bethel's Commitment to Creating a Reconciled Community

G. WILLIAM CARLSON, *Professor of History and Political Science, Bethel University*
 | Since the 1980's Bethel has intentionally made a series of efforts to expand its commitment to the creation of King's "beloved community" on the Seminary and University campuses. These included the creation of the Bethel Antiracism and Reconciliation Commission (BARRC), the appointment of Leon Rodrigues as the Associate Dean of Diversity and Community, encouragement of multicultural commitments at Bethel Seminary through the leadership of Ralph Hammond and Mark Harden, the development of the Reconciliation Major through the work of Curtiss DeYoung and expansion of programming into the urban communities of St. Paul and Minneapolis. Trends are documented in the magazine *Bethel Tapestry*.

Karen McKinney, associate professor of biblical studies and a major contributor to the work of BARRC, stated that "President

Brushaber has led us into a commitment to become an anti-racist institution." With the reconciliation program we have a chance of exploring issues that Christian colleges don't always confront." Rev. Laurel Bunker, dean of campus ministries and campus pastor for Bethel University's College of Arts and Sciences, commented on why she accepted the position after an active ministry in St. Paul. She accepted the Bethel assignment because it is a place where the Word is not compromised. Bethel says we will "walk in love and in community, and we will not compromise. We will wrestle through the tough issues, and stay committed to spiritual formation and transformation."

The BARRC committee commissioned art professor Dale Johnson to create a three piece mural to frame remembrances and healing after several racial incidents on campus. Although the cases were isolated, graffiti and symbols of hate were used to target students of color. Bethel needed to

continue efforts to express its repudiation of all such acts and resume its progress toward multicultural unity.

On February 16, 2005, on Bethel's second annual Reconciliation Day, Johnson's three large 5' by 8' panels, titled "Remember, Believe, Act" were hung in the Academic Center lounge. The first panel, stated Johnson, recalls the pain of the incidents and all racial hate crimes; the second shows tools of healing, including the cross and prayer; and the third shows damage under repair along with other signs of hope. A three-dimensional pulley appears in suspension: Is racism a weight being lifted or does it continue to burden? The choice is ours.

This was not the first panel by Dale Johnson expressing a commitment to a multicultural society. He also has a large urban life mural in St. Paul's Frogtown community on the Lifetrack Resources Building.



Lundquist-King Correspondence, from p. 8

that this issue was an important one for the Christian community before the weight of these events brought King and the civil rights movement to the attention of a broader audience and helped garner wider acceptance and support from the general public.

Bethel's engagement with this social issue is another example that challenges the criticism of Pietism's aloofness to social problems. Pietist history has examples of social services spanning from one of its founders, August Francke, to more modern examples of Klingberg's Children's Home in the Baptist General Conference. (Carlson,

2002; Gehrz, 2011). Although involvement in race issues and civil rights are not numerous in the early history of these movements, there are examples of efforts made by Bethel community members. Individual professors engaged the topic with their writings like David O. Moberg and Michael O. Emerson (Carlson, 2002). The Bethel faculty as a group sent a corporate letter of support and financial support to a Mississippi congregation who was subjected to racially-motivated violence and discrimination (Another kind of involvement, 1964). To this list we can now add President Lundquist's letters invit-

ing King to speak as an early evangelical and pietist example of a leader in Christian higher education attempting to engage the community with the issue of race.

WHAT WOULD BETHEL HAVE HEARD? LUNDQUIST REQUESTS KING'S LECTURE: "PAUL'S LETTER TO AMERICAN CHRISTIANS"

President Lundquist mentions in the November 8, 1960 letter to Dr. King that he would like to hear a speech that he had heard before; "Paul's Epistle to Twentieth Century Christians". The speech involves

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King imagining what Paul would write to Christians in America if he were alive in 1956 and is loosely based on the style of the book of Romans (King et al., 1997, 414). Two likely venues where Lundquist would have heard this speech was either the Gloria Dei Lutheran Church for the 1957 annual meeting of the Minnesota State Pastors Conference, to which Lundquist refers in his first invitation to Dr. King in 1957, or the 1956 National Baptist Convention in Denver (Hulteen, 2008; King et al., 1997; King et al., 2000). It is possible to read the speech that the Bethel community may have heard, had King actually come. “Paul’s Letter to American Christians” is available in print and online from Stanford University’s Martin Luther King, Jr. Papers Project. Lundquist mentions that Dr. King was invited because of his Christian, non-violent approach to civil rights and here is a passage excerpt from King’s speech regarding that topic:

“May I say just a word to those of you who are struggling against this evil [segregation]. Always be sure that you struggle with Christian methods and Christian weapons. Never succumb to the temptation of becoming bitter. As

you press for justice, be sure to move with dignity and discipline, using only the weapon of love. Let no man pull you so low as to hate him. Always avoid violence. If you succumb to the temptation of using violence in your struggle, unborn generations will be the recipients of a long and desolate night of bitterness, and your chief legacy to the future will be an endless reign of meaningless chaos” (King et al., 1997, 418).

Bethel’s commitment to engaging in the issue of racial reconciliation has continued to grow from the days of Lundquist. David O. Moberg challenged the evangelical church to do more of this kind of thinking and influenced Bethel as a student, head of the Department of Sociology, and author of several books and articles on the topic of Christians and the biblical basis for social action. (Carlson, 2002). Moberg’s legacy is carried forward in the present by the third of five in a series of endowed lectures involving Christianity and Sociology called the Conference on Sociological Perspectives on Reconciliation. The program of Reconciliation Studies grew from courses taught by an adjunct professor, Curtis DeYoung, to

an official program whose name was added to an academic department, Anthropology, Sociology and Reconciliation Studies, of which he is now co-chair. Programs like the South Africa study semester and the Sankofa civil rights history trip encourage students, faculty, and staff to engage with civil rights issues outside of the classroom. Inside the classroom, reconciliation is integrated across the curriculum and all staff, students, and faculty are required to attend a training session on Racial Reconciliation upon hire or admission. Once on the periphery, reconciliation has become one of Bethel’s seven core values. Members of the Bethel community are “reconcilers...[who] humbly and honestly engage with our own biases and preconceptions [including the issue of race], ...[in order to] grow closer to understanding Christ’s infinite love and selfless mission of redemption” (Bethel University, 2011).

PRESERVING BAPTIST GENERAL CONFERENCE HISTORY: THE IMPORTANCE OF INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY AND DIGITAL ARCHIVES

Early in the process of investigating whether King appeared and what the condi-

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ARTHUR WHITAKER: CHRISTIAN WITNESS IN REVOLUTIONARY TIMES

G. WILLIAM CARLSON | In the 1960’s and 1970’s President Lundquist’s not only invited Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. to speak in 1960 he also encouraged Bethel to hear the voices of a number of leaders from the African-American community along with leaders of the Christian community from around the world. These included Carl Rowan, Gardner Taylor, Tom Skinner, Bill Pannell and John Perkins.

One of the valuable speakers was Arthur Whitaker who was pastor of Pilgrim Baptist Church in St. Paul from 1966-1970. He was a World War II veteran who had fought for freedom in Europe only to return to a segregated America. Whitaker is remembered for his sermon “Christian Witness in Revolutionary Times” which was given at Founder’s Week, Bethel College & Seminary, 1969. He challenged the community to take an active leadership role in the civil rights movement and as Christians, help to create a “reconciled community.”



Arthur Whitaker

“...Now I am distressed and troubled within my own heart because it appears at times that the Christian church does not seem to have the will to change the conditions which are deplorable in America. Let us therefore as Americans rise above the ugliness of racism and the problems of race and move to that high plane of human rights.

No man should have to be apologetic for his race, particularly when his birth is American. While America is nearly bankrupt in the arenas of civil and human rights, I would submit to you that we must become solvent in the national and international world bank of human relations on the one hand, and on the other hand, 1969 not 1970 must be a year of major surgery in inhuman relations if the decade of the 1970s is to be a time of healing.

Too much in America is being destroyed. Ours must be a time of healing and a time of building on the part of every American. Let it be said of America that in spite of her dilemma she was able to outlive her racism and her bigotry and live out her destiny of the American dream that future historians will say of us that in the period of crisis we were able to resolve our differences and solve our problems of race and inhumanity and in the process together we achieved the finest hour in human history, so help us God.”

tions were surrounding his appearance we looked into our own collection of documents in the History Center. We learned of the existence of correspondence, spanning from 1957 to 1960, between Lundquist and King from Stanford University, one of the institutions that Bethel Library contacted during the investigations. Although we have other materials of Lundquist's, we were not able to locate this particular series in our own archive. Although this was disappointing, our search process led us to more documents that provided context for the controversial nature of this invitation. We found the Convocation and Commencement Committee minutes from 1960-1961 that contained Weniger's letter and Lundquist's response. These minutes were fortuitously donated only a few months prior to our search by the family of professor emeritus, Dr. Roy Dalton. Without the stewardship of organizations and people who care about their own history, the only information we would have about this event would be anecdotal and incomplete. The distribution of Martin Luther King's papers is another good example of the need for good stewardship from organizations that wish to cultivate the efforts of those who attended them. King graduated from Morehouse College in Atlanta and had intended to donate his papers there but instead sent them to Boston University, where he earned his Doctorate in Theology, because they actively pursued them and he knew that they had the infrastructure and resources to support and care for his materials

properly (Branch, 1998).

The Archives and the Digital Library are actively pursuing the goal of stewarding the Baptist General Conference's and Bethel University's resources by strengthening our ability to care for and share our own materials. This partnership strengthens the foundation of storing and preserving our cultural heritage and helps to find new ways to engage the community in learning about the past and its influence on the present and future. Exposing the Martin Luther King, Jr. article led to a community-wide discussion

and awareness of a key moment in Bethel's past. We also want to raise awareness that active stewardship of our cultural heritage is necessary because it is not always clear what items will be needed in the future. The Bethel community was able to learn more about itself and some members were very encouraged by what they found out.

The website of The History Center is www.bethel.edu/bgc-archives. The digital library is found under "Links."

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A Review of Greg Boyd's book *Present Perfect*



TERRI L. HANSEN Greg Boyd *Present Perfect* Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, 2010 | As a person who reads a fair amount of popular Christian

material, I tend to have favorite topics and favorite authors. When one of my favorite authors and thinkers comes out with a book on a topic that is near and dear to me, I get particularly excited – sometimes overly excited, setting myself up for disappointment. When Greg Boyd's newest publication,

Present Perfect was put into my hands, I was leery. Greg Boyd is a revolutionary thinker – a breath of fresh air in the evangelical world. He stirs things up and often with great passion and interest. He typically addresses our ailing Christian culture by pointing out new truth through sound biblical exegesis.

Present Perfect is a new book on an ancient spiritual practice: practicing the presence of God. I was not interested in seeing a new twist put on this precious and dear practice – one that is at the very core of personal discipleship and spiritual formation. It requires a purity of attitude - a certain mindset, and

an individualized experience. I did not want to see it become just another new gimmick, losing its sacred, profound, and Christ-centered roots.

Rest assured – this was not to be the case with *Present Perfect*. Rather than putting a new twist on the practice of the presence of God, Boyd returns us to its roots. Boyd artfully incorporates the works of the masters on this topic, weaving in quotes and thoughts from Brother Lawrence, Jean-Pierre de Caussade, and Frank Laubach. He approaches the practice of the presence of God as a fellow pilgrim being schooled by

these masters, not adding to or trumping their teaching in any way. He speaks from his personal struggle and triumph in mastering this simple, yet easily forgotten discipline. He invites transformation by living out the transforming power of allowing thoughts of Jesus to permeate his thoughts and inform his ordinary life experiences.

ARE WE CONSCIOUS OF GOD'S PRESENCE

Of most importance when it comes to personal formation, Boyd also incorporates the element of grace. He teaches that all we really have is the present moment – the moment that we find ourselves in at any given time. If in that moment we are conscious of God's presence, then we have succeeded. The moment before and the moment to follow do not matter because all we really have is now. Being aware of Christ's presence now is enough to transform that moment completely.

Once he establishes this idea, Boyd spends the remainder of the book discussing its relative difficulty in light of the overstretched, stressful lives we all lead. In describing the many benefits of pursuing this discipline, he adeptly provides motivation to persist in this practice in order that we might rise above our busy and petty lives, and thus arrive at a higher plane of spiritual experience: the awareness of God's overwhelming love.

What Greg has been able to do is to normalize a spiritual practice that many might think is only for the ancients and the spiritual super-humans. He describes our common objections this way:

"The secular worldview causes us to compartmentalize our life, isolating the 'spiritual' from the rest of our experience. Our relationship with God is boxed into special prayer and devotion times along with weekend church services, all of which have little impact on us. But in the process of segregating God from our 'normal' life, we block the love, joy, peace, and transforming power of God.

If we're ever going to experience the fullness of Life that the New Testament promises us,

we're going to have to tear down the walls that compartmentalize the 'spiritual' and 'normal.' We're going to have to accept a new definition of 'normal,' and this means we need to get over our mistaken idea that the practice of the presence of God is only for the 'superholy.'

The call to practice the presence of God is not a hyperspiritual exercise. On the contrary, it's the core of what it means to surrender our life to Christ. Though few realize it, this practice is woven into the very fabric of the New Testament, written for all followers of Jesus." (pp. 29-30)

DEVELOPING A RELATIONSHIP WITH OUR CREATOR

Boyd explains that our very nature includes a desire, a craving to feel loved and to be happy. We all have a universal need to experience worth and significance. Only a relationship with our Creator can satisfy this craving. God wants to share himself with us, and have us participate in his divine nature. He longs for us to, "join in his eternal dance of perfect, ecstatic love." We come full circle as our insatiable hunger brings us to live in the present moment, which is the only state in which our hunger for God can be satisfied. This requires complete surrender to God, believing our own attempts to acquire worth and significance are not only unsatisfying, but idolatrous.

Dying to this false way of living is scary and difficult but, Boyd claims, nothing could be more liberating. "When we cling to things that are perpetually threatened and that we know we will eventually lose, it inevitably creates in us worry, anger, jealousy, envy, frustration, strife, violence, and despair... To die to the flesh is the greatest liberation possible. Now one is in a position to live in the moment and feel fully alive... We're on our way home" (p. 53).

And this road home is one of true transformation. Boyd states that we live in a culture that is the product of the scientific revolution where information is of primary importance. He says that while knowledge may give us power, it does not on its own empower us to become more Christlike. "Submitting to God in the present moment transforms us in a way that no amount of knowledge can... Relying

on very little knowledge, God's love compels us to do the things Jesus did and live out the things Jesus taught. Instead of merely learning about the Kingdom, we begin to sacrifice our time, energy, and money to feed the hungry, house the homeless, welcome outcasts, and befriend prisoners... as his life is poured into us, it can't help but be expressed through us." (p. 101)

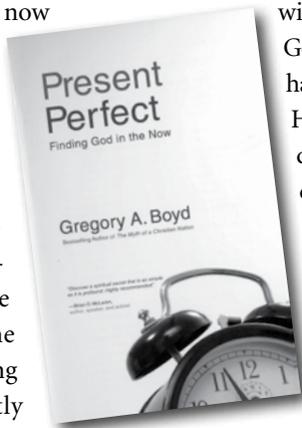
APPRECIATING SACRED MOMENTS

Boyd's use of Scripture is borne throughout the pages of the book. He includes practical exercises at the conclusion of each chapter drawing from his own experience and practice of being in the moment with God. Quotations from the three authors he draws his ideas from are sprinkled throughout instructing the reader that this is not something new, but a reminder to go back to what matters. He teases us into actual practice of God's presence with little handwritten notes that ask, "Are you awake," lest we be lulled into thinking that having this information on practicing God's presence is enough.

Pulling out of my garage this morning, I was aware of the chatter of a bird. I backed out in order to discern if the sound was inside or out, concerned that the bird may be trapped in my garage. Once out of my garage and into the sparkling beauty of the crisp fall morning, I found the source of the noise. Perched amongst the bright ornamental "apples" – the only life still clinging to the bare branches of my little flowering crab - sat a male cardinal. His crown was illuminated by the sun and his brilliant red feathers nearly glowing. Surrounded by the feast of fruit he found himself in, I was unnoticed in my appraisal and appreciation of this sacred moment.

How many moments like this are we not awake for? How many ordinary experiences are bursting with God's presence and overwhelming love for us, finding us lost in indifference? We must "practice" God's presence because it does not come naturally to us. We must make it a disciplined exercise in our spiritual fitness routine. Do not regret the past moments lost or the future moments far beyond our control. Be aware in the present! Open your eyes to the only moment we have – the present perfect.

Are you awake?



Dr. Martin Luther King: A Pastor Who Altered the Political Landscape of America



ANGELA SHANNON | ASSISTANT PROFESSOR OF ENGLISH AT BETHEL UNIVERSITY, CENTRAL BAPTIST CHURCH, MARTIN LUTHER KING SUNDAY, JANUARY 2011

“Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, before you were born I set you apart; I appointed you as a prophet to the nations.”

Jeremiah 1:5, NIV translation

MARTIN LUTHER KING AND THE CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT: PRAYER POWER

Martin Luther King, Jr., (January 15, 1929-April 4, 1968) was born Michael Luther King, Jr. to Alberta Christine Williams King and Michael King, Sr. He was one of a long line of preachers starting with his great-grandfather, Willis Williams, who was a slave-era preacher. His maternal grand-

father, Adam Daniel Williams, ignited the pulpit with his sermons. His grandfather was pastor of the famous Ebenezer Baptist Church in Atlanta from 1914 to 1931. His father then served as pastor when Williams died, and King became co-pastor from 1960 to his death.

King spoke glowingly of his childhood. He said his was “a family where love was central and where lovely relationships were ever present.” When King’s father, influenced by the great Martin Luther, decided to change his name from Michael to Martin, the teenage junior followed.

Even in King’s loving home questions arose regarding racism. King attended segregated public schools. He memorized Bible verses and went to Sunday school yet witnessed and experienced deep racial injustice.

Racism became personal and painful at the age of six, when King was not allowed to play with a white friend, because the friend’s

father did not want his child playing with blacks. Still, King was being taught to believe in a power higher than man.

King graduated with a B. A. degree from Morehouse College (1948), a distinguished institution for Black men also attended by his father and grandfather. He continued his studies at Crozer Theological Seminary and earned his B.D. in 1951. From there, King was awarded his doctorate from Boston University in 1955.

King entered the adult world equipped with both a heart for God and the education necessary to be a great leader. However, King did not choose his place in history; history chose him. After graduate school, King accepted the pastorate at Dexter Avenue Baptist Church in Montgomery, AL. He also was elected president of Montgomery Improvement Association. King was placed in Montgomery at a critical time, and less than a year later, the Montgomery Bus Boycott would begin. Addressing the issue at Holt Street Baptist Church, King was thrust into a leadership position. Because of his strong Christian foundation, King was properly prepared to lead.

The Civil Rights Movement would bring King and thousands of others to their knees, not in surrender but in prayer. In 1956, during the Montgomery bus boycott, King had received several death threats. He went to the kitchen table, and with a cup of coffee, prayed to God for help. His profound spiritual experience was expressed in his book *Stride Toward Freedom*.

“I was ready to give up. With my cup of coffee sitting untouched before me, I tried to think of a way to move out of the picture without appearing a coward. In this state of exhaustion, when my courage had all but gone, I decided to take my problem to God. With my head in my hands, I bowed over the kitchen table and prayed aloud.

...At that moment, I experienced the presence of the Divine as I had never experienced before. It seemed as though I could hear the quiet assurance of an inner voice saying: ‘Stand up for justice, stand up for truth; and

I was born in Tulsa, Oklahoma. In 1921, my family’s church, Mt. Zion Baptist Church, was burned. It was one of the worst experiences of racial violence in American history. Forty blocks were looted and scores of people were dead in the African-American section of the city. Twenty-three African-American churches and over one thousand homes were ruined. The efforts to rebuild the church and maintain a Christian witness in Tulsa is to be honored. Not until the 1980’s, seventy five years after the tragic event, did the Tulsa community try to heal the wounds. This poem is my effort to express the need for healing and reconciliation.

MOUNT ZION (AFTER THE TULSA RACE RIOT, 1921)

Tobacco tucked in his left cheek,
He says: they burned Mount Zion.

Sister Wiley’s spirit-driven voice
Wasn’t testifying, *Here I am Lord.*

Deacon Mack wasn’t thumbing through
His red-ink Bible looking for words.

No children in their Sunday best
were skipping past the pews.

Ms. Willie wasn’t bending on arthritic
knees. Rose wasn’t playing hopscotch in back.

Still, when they scorched Mount Zion,
they set the fire to the people.



~ ~ ~ continued on p. 14

God will be at your side forever.' Almost at once my fears began to go. My uncertainty disappeared. I was ready to face anything." (Martin Luther King *Stride Toward Freedom*, New York: Harper and Row, 1958, pp. 114-115)

Prayer sustained King and others who stood for justice. Many Civil Rights meetings were held in churches, and prayer was a pertinent part of the movement. God called Martin Luther King, Jr. to the forefront, and he was alone in every sense of the word. The

Civil Rights Movement grew and grew into an unstoppable mass of people. King traveled from Montgomery, Atlanta, Albany, Birmingham, Selma, Mississippi, Chicago, and Memphis seeking to turn unjust laws of segregation to just laws. In 1955, King said, "Christ gave us the goals and Mahatma Gandhi the tactics." King stood on the principle of love and non-violence. With God guiding him, he altered the political landscape of America.

CELEBRATING THE HEROES OF THE CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT: "LET JUSTICE RUN DOWN"

Let "*justice run down like water and righteousness like a mighty stream.*"

George McLaurin sat outside the classroom door, at the University of Oklahoma, while the lecture took place for the all-white student body. When he was finally allowed in the room, his seat was marked "reserved for Colored".

Let "*justice run down like water and righteousness like a mighty stream.*"

Linda Brown, a 3rd grader, had to travel an hour and twenty minutes to attend a black school. When the Summer School was 7 minutes away, Linda became the plaintiff in *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954).

Let "*justice run down like water and righteousness like a mighty stream.*"

Before Rosa Parks took her seat on the Montgomery bus, Claudette Colvin, 15 and pregnant, was arrested for not relinquishing her seat for a white patron, March 2, 1955.

Let "*justice run down like water and righteousness like a mighty stream.*"

Nine months later, Rosa Louise McCauley Parks remained seated for justice as a white man demanded her seat and the Montgomery Bus boycott launched.

Let "*justice run down like water and righteousness like a mighty stream.*"

King, speaking at Holt Street Baptist church, Dec. 5, 1955 connected America's core values and Christian tradition. In his Mass Meeting speech,

King preached with the power of his heritage, full spirit and God's guidance, his voice echoing over the unsettled assembly,

"And we are determined here in Montgomery to work and fight until justice runs down like water, and righteousness like a mighty stream. "

WE NEED TO KEEP ON WALKING: THE JOURNEY TO KING'S BELOVED COMMUNITY

A TESTAMENT

BY ANGELA SHANNON

Hands raised in struggle,
refusing to give up, a rising of
people, minds, and dreams.

"Ain't gonna let nobody turn me 'round"

Still about setting the wrongs, right,
removing the crooked from law books,
seeking social justice and personal justice.

"Ain't gonna let nobody turn me 'round"

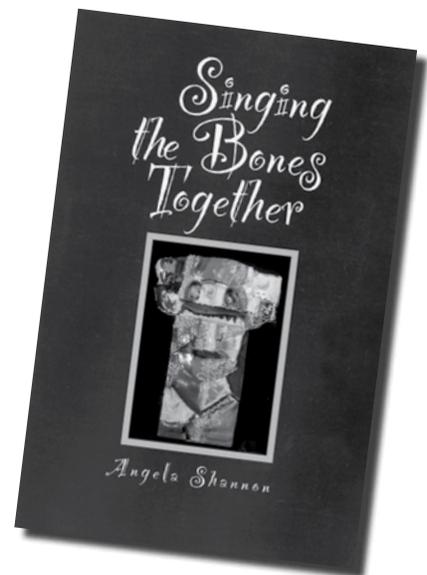
From the onset folk caring enough,
caring enough to be uncomfortable,
enough to stand, to march, to speak.

We start with a service of one,
one-life, one-dedicated heart,
one desire for justice.

"Ain't gonna let nobody turn me 'round..."

We start with Jesus and faith,
and a movement builds,
like a mighty wave into multitudes.

"I'm gonna keep walking, keep on talking,
marching down to freedom's land."



Virgil Olson: Pastor, Historian, Professor, College Dean, Mission Leader and College President

JIM SPICKELMIER | Virgil Olson was born into the home of Adolf and Esther Olson on June 17, 1916. His father Adolf was pastor of Bethany Baptist Church in St. Anthony Park, MN at the time. Adolf was also a teacher of Swedish and Bible at Bethel Academy (1915). In 1919, he left Bethany to become professor of church history at Bethel Seminary, and later professor of systematic theology. Virgil's dad was also secretary and archivist of the Historical Society of the Baptist General Conference from those early years until his death in 1955.

So Virgil grew up thoroughly embedded in the fellowship of the Baptist General Conference and in the community of students and professors which was Bethel College and Seminary. Virgil attended Bethel Academy graduating in 1934. He then earned his Associate degree from Bethel Junior College. He finished his college work at Macalester and returned to Bethel Seminary and graduated in 1941. While a student at Bethel he began to work with his father in the writing of church history. *Seventy Five Years: A History of Bethel Seminary* (1946) was jointly written by Virgil and Adolf but was rooted in Virgil's senior paper for his seminary graduation.

Adolf had begun work on *Centenary History*, a 100 year history of Bethel and the Baptist General Conference in 1931. Again he enlisted his son to work with him and Virgil wrote several of the chapters of the book that was published in 1952. He was off to a good start as the premier historian of Bethel and the BGC for the second half of the twentieth century. He continued making a contribution over the years in numerous *Standard* articles, monographs and Seminary Journal articles. More recently, he has been the impetus for many of the stories in *Trailmarkers* and has been the guiding star helping the Friends of the History Center determine their events and directions.

While earning his wings as a historian, Virgil was a pastor. Graduating from Seminary in 1941, he became pastor at the Dalton Baptist Church just north of Muskegon, MI. He was called from there in 1945 to be senior pastor at Emerald Avenue Baptist Church in Chicago where he served six years.

The next phase of Virgil's life brought him back to Bethel. He had been sought after by Bethel for some time but resisted. He says in a memoir "I did not want to go to Bethel to teach. I had a low view of the teaching situation at the Seminary in that my father sacrificially taught with low pay, little encouragement from the administration, faculty and students. . . . I announced when I graduated in 1941 that I would go anywhere the Lord leads me except two places which I would go with much reluctance, namely to be a pastor in Chicago and the other to teach at Bethel Seminary." In 1951, Bethel finally prevailed and Virgil began an 18 year teaching career at Bethel Seminary teaching church history. When Virgil's uncle, Walfred Danielson who was teaching missions at the seminary died, Virgil took over his uncle's responsibilities for teaching missions. That led to a place on the Board of World Missions of the Baptist General Conference and two years as its chair. In 1967, on a sabbatical leave from Bethel Virgil and his wife, Carol, visited church and mission leaders in Africa and Asia.

In 1968, Virgil moved from the seminary over to Bethel College to serve as Dean. It was a time of turmoil with the Civil Rights revolution and the growing protests to the Viet Nam war stirring tensions across the nation and especially on college campuses. In addition, Bethel College was planning a relocation to an entirely new campus in Arden Hills and was going through the decadal review for reaccreditation with the North Central Accreditation process. It was a busy time, but even in the midst of these pressures Virgil's mission concern continued and he took another sabbatical to teach at Haillie Selassie University in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

His strong mission interest and involvement led the BGC World Mission Board to extend an invitation to Virgil in 1974 to be-

come their leader. So, he followed in Uncle Walfred's footsteps again. (Walfred was the first world missions leader for the BGC.) Virgil led the board for seven years during part of the transition from American mission control to control of the mission through a partnership between the BGC mission board and the indigenous churches on the fields. He retired from BGC World Missions in 1981.

Upon retirement, Virgil stepped immediately into the role of President for William Carey International University, a college being developed by Ralph Winter and the U.

S. Center for World Missions in Pasadena, Calif. which was doing cutting edge development of distance learning. In this role, Virgil was able to combine his two passions of education and missions.

In 1986, Virgil retired for a second

time, only to begin a new part-time career in missions teaching at Bethel Seminary and in teaching Perspective classes around the country. Carol, his wife of nearly 60 years, died in 2002. Virgil went on alone until he married the wife of an old partner from his days in the World Missions Office. Dale Bjork had died in 1984. Virgil and Alma Bjork Olson married in 2004.

Those of us who are interested in what God has done through Bethel and the Baptist General Conference marvel that Virgil carries the answers to most of our questions in his head. He is a walking encyclopedia of Conference history. He knew all the Deans of Bethel Seminary but Edgren. He taught most of the BGC pastors of the second decade of the 20th Century. He served at Bethel and he served in the Chicago offices of the Baptist General Conference. He continues to help all of us remember our core faith commitments and to praise God for the way He has blessed Bethel and the ministries of the Baptist General Conference.



Gordon Johnson and Virgil Olson; Deans of Bethel Seminary and Bethel College in 1972

Virgil A. Olson: A Servant Leader

CLARENCE BASS, *Professor Emeritus Systematic Theology, Bethel Theological Seminary* | I became acquainted with Virgil fifty-six years ago when I came to Bethel to speak at Founders Week as a candidate for the position of professor of Systematic Theology. I vividly remember his interest in getting acquainted since I was to succeed his father who had held that position for over twenty years. I was not Swedish, didn't have a Baptist General Conference background, and my doctoral studies had been conducted in a suspicious European atmosphere. I was more than a little suspect.

We spent many hours of discussion and prayer that week. His first concern was to assess my personal and theological compatibility with Bethel and the BGC. I was impressed with how intensely he felt the examining process should explore all aspects of my candidacy. I was equally impressed that, once satisfied, he showed the same intense desire to convince me of the viability of ministry at both Bethel and the BGC. I remember Virgil's assurance that, "you can cast a long shadow from Bethel Seminary."

We ended the week with the mutual prayer that, should the Lord so lead, we could serve together in a fruitful ministry for Christ and His Kingdom. Fifty-seven years later I am pleased to write that that prayer has more than been fulfilled. I pay tribute to Virgil.

1. As a Friend and Colleague. Not only have we been colleagues on the faculty, but we had the pleasure of team teaching courses. We shared the same philosophy - to help students not only understand their theology, but to appreciate the historical context in which it was shaped. These were rich times not only for students, but for professors as well!

We lived across the alley from each other and enjoyed the privilege of being neighbors. Several evenings a week the telephone would ring at about 9 PM. If the call originated in Virgil's home the one-word conversation would be, "Coffee?" If it was placed from my home it was, "Tea?" We'd cross the alley with our wives for an hour of fellowship, ending the day sharing family problems and joys.

2. As a Servant Leader. Just think of the positions of leadership (always with a servant

spirit) this man has shared. A distinguished career as the Professor of Historical Theology in the seminary followed, characterized by both effective teaching and extensive writing. Later, elevated to the position of Provost/Dean of Bethel College, he set the tone for both curricular development and faculty acquisition.



Clarence Bass and Virgil Olson

As if this were not enough, he was then elected to the post of Executive Secretary of the BGC Board of World Missions, administering a multi-million dollar budget and the personal superintendence of hundreds of missionaries

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Virgil Olson: Committed to Missions

HERB SKOGLUND, *former Director of World Missions, Baptist General Conference* | I got to know Virgil in 1946 at a banquet at Bethel Baptist Church in Chicago. I was 16 years old and helped to set up the tables. Virgil was the speaker. At the time he was pastor of the Emerald Avenue Baptist Church. The text of his sermon was Luke 9:51, "He steadfastly set his face to go to Jerusalem." (KJV) Virgil Olson urged our church to follow Jesus' example of total commitment to all phases of the task God has called us to accomplish. I still remember it.

From 1951-54 I had the privilege to encounter Dr. Virgil Olson at Bethel Seminary. He taught me church history, ecumenical movement history and the history of preaching. He always had time to talk with students. We knew he would welcome us into his office to answer questions related to our

studies and future ministry issues.

In 1956 I was appointed to Japan as a Baptist General Conference missionary. While at Bethel, Virgil Olson served a term as a member of the World Mission Board and visited several fields in the 1960's. In an article entitled, "Partners in the Gospel," Virgil recognized that "missionaries no longer come to these areas only to plant the gospel as pioneers, but they have come to work as partners with the national church in the proclamation of the gospel." This was especially true for the Japanese association of churches.

Virgil Olson was a partner in ministry. He however, was also a missions strategist. His commitment to missions was seen in 1974 when he came to lead the Baptist General Conference Mis-

sion Board. He served the Board for seven years. He had a very comprehensive view of mission history, theology and strategy. He was concerned that the Baptist General Conference pastors would nurture a missions dimension in their preaching schedule. The pastor, Olson believed, was the key to a congregation's motivation for missions.

There were a number of issues that Virgil helped to resolve. These include the establishment of a relationship with the North American Baptists in the Cameroons. During the difficult time of the Mary Stauffer kidnapping, Virgil made available all of the resources of the World Missions Board to the authorities in St. Paul.

He has always exemplified the attitude of Jesus. Like Jesus he has "steadfastly" maintained his commitment to the will of the Father that all peoples of the earth should hear and believe the Gospel. Happy Birthday, Virgil!



Jean and Herb Skoglund

serving in a global outreach. His term was distinguished not only by growth, both in budget and number of missionaries, but by personal involvement with national church leaders. Time for retirement, but not for Virgil! In a post-retirement career, he assumed the presidency of the William Carey International University, “a global learning community committed to discovering and addressing the roots of human problems around the world, with the chief role of demonstrating

Tribute to My Father, from p. 1

tics. We talked about sports, we talked about our family, and because my dad taught church history, we sometimes even talked about topics like the sixteenth-century Anabaptists, or Count Zinzendorf.

When he talked about church history, it was clear it was more than just an academic and professional pursuit for him. For my dad, knowing about the Anabaptists wasn't important only because it helps one to understand modern Mennonites and Hutterites. The Anabaptists are important because they exemplify what happens when people are willing to courageously follow their faith and their conscience despite persecution from both the state and the dominant churches. Many Anabaptists died as martyrs for their faith. In my dad's eyes they were models of what it might actually look like if Christians were more willing to make sacrifices for God's Kingdom.

During the 17 years that my father was a seminary professor, he often supplemented his income by accepting interim pastorates at various Baptist churches around the Twin Cities area. I always thought it was special when he would invite me along. It would be just the two of us. I enjoyed sitting in the first or second pew of the church all by myself while my dad preached. I heard him preach a lot of different sermons. I heard enough of these sermons to realize that he had some favorites that he liked to repeat when he had a new audience. He had one where he emphasized that Jesus was willing to get his hands dirty with the world and he would hold up his hands like claws and you could visualize the mud dripping off of Jesus' hands.

The sermon I want to recall today was

the character of God.”

3. As the Soul-Force of the BGC/Converge.

During its long history, the Baptist General Conference has produced many national and international leaders. Standing at the top of this list is Virgil Olson.

His life reflects preeminence in both leadership abilities and personal piety. Throughout the years he has modeled a quiet, unassuming spirit; a compassion for the less fortunate; a passion for truth; leadership by example;

based on the book of John, chapter one, verse six, “There came a man sent from God whose name was John.” I heard this sermon many times. It is a perfect example of the point I want to emphasize today. For my father, Church history is more than an interesting academic study, it provides examples of how to live as a Christian in today's world.

The sermon was composed of a number of short vignettes about people named John in the Bible and in church history. Each of them, in different ways, were called by God to do a job, and each of them were faithful in carrying out that job, even if it was sometimes at great personal risk. But more importantly, each of them, because they were faithful to God's calling, made a difference for God's Kingdom.

The sermon began with John the Baptist of course, the person described in John 1:6. Next there was John Chrysostom from the fourth century, someone that almost none of his Baptist listeners knew anything about. I don't remember all the details either, but my dad said Chrysostom was important because when God called him he responded. Wikipedia, that great memory jogger, says Chrysostom was known, among other things for his preaching and public speaking. That is how he got the name Chrysostom which means golden-tongued.

Next the sermon turned to John Hus, a man who was burned at the stake for his faith but whose ideas influenced the Protestant movement that came 100 years later. My dad then discussed the Protestant reformers John Calvin, John Wycliffe, and John Knox. In each of these examples my dad would begin by saying, “There was a man sent from

ferent chronicler of BGC history; and a prayer-related dependence upon the Spirit. He has been the foremost articulator of the pietistic heritage which he has inherited and for which he stands as an example.

Now in the middle of his ninth decade, he is honored as one of the senior statesmen of the BGC/Converge in particular, and of Evangelicalism in general. And I, with a multitude of others, am honored to be among his friends!

God whose name was John.” Each vignette illustrated how these people had the courage to speak up and do what they believed God was calling them to do. And each made a difference for God's Kingdom.

Finally, my dad came to John Danielson, his junior high Sunday school teacher. John Danielson was not a big historical figure. I think he was a tradesman, perhaps he worked in a machine shop. He maybe didn't even finish high school. I don't know. Wikipedia



Dan and Virgil Olson

doesn't say much about John Danielson.

That being the case, why did my father include John Danielson in his pantheon of church history notables? I doubt the junior high boys in my father's Sunday School class nick-named him John the golden-tongued.

The story my father told was this. One Sunday after church dad was chasing the other boys around the church building. As my father rounded a corner in hot pursuit of another laughing boy, John Danielson grabbed my father by the shoulders and looked him in

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the eyes and said, “Virgil. What are you going to do with your life?” My dad recalls that at the time he was rather annoyed at having his play interrupted. But John Danielson made a difference in my dad’s life. As my dad tells it, John Danielson’s question, along with many other events, was important in my dad’s later decision to train for ministry. John Danielson made a difference because when God called, John Danielson answered by committing himself to teaching the junior high boys in his church. It may not seem like a big thing, but John Danielson’s life and efforts helped build the Kingdom of God.

Of course, as a sermon technique, using John Danielson as the last vignette was perfect. Here was a man not that different from the people listening to the sermon. If John Danielson could be called by God and John Danielson could participate in the building of God’s Kingdom even in some small way, then so could you. You could become part of the train of church history that includes the likes of John the Baptist, John Huss, John Knox and yes, John Danielson. Even you could contribute to God’s Kingdom.

This, I think, is why church history was and still is so important to my father. It teaches you how to live a meaningful life because it shows you examples of how you can be part of something bigger. You too can contribute to God’s Kingdom.

I will end by telling one more story. It is a story of how my father internalized the message of his own sermon. It was the early 1970s, maybe the spring of 1973. Bethel College had just recently moved from its Snelling Ave. location in St. Paul to what was then called the “new campus” in Arden Hills. My father was the academic dean of the college. One evening at dinner he explained to my mother and me that he had spent the afternoon in a meeting with other campus leaders talking about the school’s financial situation. Although it wasn’t yet disastrous, things were getting pretty shaky. According to my dad, Burt Wessman had said that if more money didn’t come in soon, the bank might come in and repossess all the new library and office furniture. I pressed my father on the point. “What’s the worst that could happen?”

“Well,” he said, “I suppose that the worst thing would be that the school could go bank-

“My Thoughts at Dr. Virgil Olson’s 94th Birthday Party”

RON SAARI, *Pastor Central Baptist Church, St. Paul, Minnesota* | When I was in college and considering ministry, I attended a Bethel sponsored conference on the ministry. I was open to Bethel and pastoral ministry. It is important to remember the climate of those days. The Vietnam war was ramping up. Student protests were beginning to take place. My generation was beginning to question our government and authorities in general. The reaction of the establishment to the protest was to criticize my generation as radical and unruly.

The speaker at this conference was Dr. Virgil Olson. Dr. Olson was an unknown to me. We met on the lakeside of the Arden Hills campus. The seminary had just moved into the new campus. The grass was not in. As beautiful as the setting was even without perfect landscaping, my focus was on what Dr. Olson had to say. His text, “let no one despise our youth.” It was refreshing word. While others were degrading the youth, he was affirming them. He used the example of Martin Luther and drew the analogy of Luther’s youthfulness and his significance for Kingdom ministry. My first impression went a long way to seal my choice of Bethel as a place for training.

My second encounter with Dr. Olson came in 1980 as I assumed the pastorate of Salem Baptist Church of Chicago. It was formerly known as Emerald Avenue Baptist Church and Virgil Olson was the pastor from 1945-1951. In 1951 he accepted a church history position at Bethel Seminary.

I credit the late Dr. Harold Christianson for counseling me to always honor my predecessors. It was easy to honor Dr.

Olson. He was well loved and remembered by the church. I invited Virgil to speak when the occasion warranted. When my wife and I considered whom we would like to ask for the dedication of our first child in 1981, I asked Dr. Olson if he would honor us by dedicating our son. It was a pleasure to call him, “pastor,” as he led the church in prayer for our son.

As I came to Central Baptist Church I have had the opportunity to rub shoulders with Dr. Olson and appreciate his wit and creativity. During the “open theism” theological debate in the Baptist General Conference, Virgil’s assistance was invaluable. His essay entitled “A Brief History of Theological Struggles within the Baptist General Conference,” which was published in the March 2009 issue of the *Baptist Pietist Clarion*, was a tremendous support to our effort. I owe much to the witness and testimony of Dr. Olson. I especially rejoice at his heart for missions and desire to be a strong advocate for the Baptist, pietist heritage.



Olson dedicates Saari’s son in 1981.

rupt and we would have to close it down.”

I was surprised. “Doesn’t that bother you?”

“Well sure it bothers me. I’ve worked hard and committed many years of my life to Bethel.” But then he went on with words that I will probably never forget. “You have to remember that Bethel isn’t going to last forever. It’s just a human organization. Someday it will end. But ultimately I don’t work for Bethel. I do what I do because I want to contribute to God’s Kingdom. Bethel is my way of doing that. Bethel may fail, but God’s

Kingdom is forever.”

No, my dad isn’t perfect. Like me and like you, and like the people named John in the sermon, my dad has his flaws. But even with these flaws, I think it fair to say that my father learned from the people and situations that he studied in church history and he tried to internalize these lessons in his own life.

Speaking for myself and for my sisters, we are very proud to call Virgil Olson our father.

Thanks Dad!

Reflections on the Life and Witness of Dr. Roy “Doc” Dalton (1926-2011)

G. WILLIAM CARLSON, *Professor of History and Political Science, Bethel University* | Several years ago I received a phone call from “Doc” Dalton. He asked if I would like to have his academic robe. Since both of us received our PhD from the University of Minnesota, it was a cherished request. I had been wearing a 1968 Bethel choir robe which had not yet been returned. I knew I had about eight years before I would retire and to wear Doc’s robe would be an honor and privilege. He had played such an influential role in my academic and spiritual journey.

VALUING THE PIETIST TRADITION

In the spring of 1965 I walked into Dr. Dalton’s office, grabbing a cup of coffee and a cookie from the History House “coffee shop.” Doc wanted all his students to feel free to interact with him on issues beyond the classroom. I was struggling to legitimize a Christian faith tradition that was dependent on creeds and propositional, rational discourse.

Doc quietly and with conviction requested that I not give up on the Christian faith but recognize that there were a diverse set of Christian traditions often based on different emphases. He suggested that I read the biography of Wesley, seek out the insights of the Anabaptists and search the witness of the Swedish Baptist pietists. He encouraged me to value a view of Christianity that emphasized a “heart Christianity.”

VALUING A CHRISTIAN WORLDVIEW THAT EMPHASIZES THE NEEDS OF THOSE WHO HURT

If one had a serious conversation with Dr. Dalton about his own autobiography a reference would always return to his West Virginia life during the Great Depression. When he came to understand that many Bethel students were unable to relate to those who struggle in contemporary America, he decided to do something about it. He started the “intentional depression house” experience during which Bethel students would spend three and a half weeks during the month of January in an old farmhouse living the Great Depression.

Why was this important to Doc? Because

he believed that the gospel of Jesus Christ was “good news to the poor.” He believed Christians ought to advocate on behalf of the working class, the marginalized, the struggling immigrant because if one looks at Jesus’ life it is to those people that he most comfortably spoke and outlined the essence of his message. The church, Doc would say, must locate where the poor live, seek equal opportunity in public policy and ensure workers receive decent pay and working conditions.

VALUING THE PEACE CHURCH TRADITION

In 1970 a young man walked into my office in the History House. He had a Christian friend who had filed for conscientious objector status and had been denounced by his “Baptist” pastor. I went to Doc for assistance.

Doc reminded me that in his course on the Reformation he had intentionally gone beyond the writings and ministries of the big three: John Calvin, Martin Luther and Ulrich Zwingli. Students were to understand and appreciate the radical reformation heritage as expressed in the Anabaptists. They emphasized a “heart Christianity,” communitarian values and a commitment to nonviolence. The people of the church were to pattern their lives on the life of Christ and learn from the early church prior to the compromises of Constantine.

Doc helped students who were desirous to take a conscientious objection status to the Vietnam war, created such classes as Pacifism: The Forgotten Option and developed faith-based teach-ins on the war. The teach-ins encouraged “civil” dialogue, reflected an “irenic” spirit and valued diverse points of view.

I was thankful for this witness, and al-

though I am no longer a total pacifist and call myself a “just peacemaker,” I value those who are and try to make my contribution to the discussion by continuing the dialogue through a course entitled Christian Nonvio-

lence. For I too, like Doc, believe that Christian peace-making is a Biblical norm and should be constantly advanced by people who are Christ followers.

VALUING THE INTENTIONAL CHRISTIAN JOURNEY

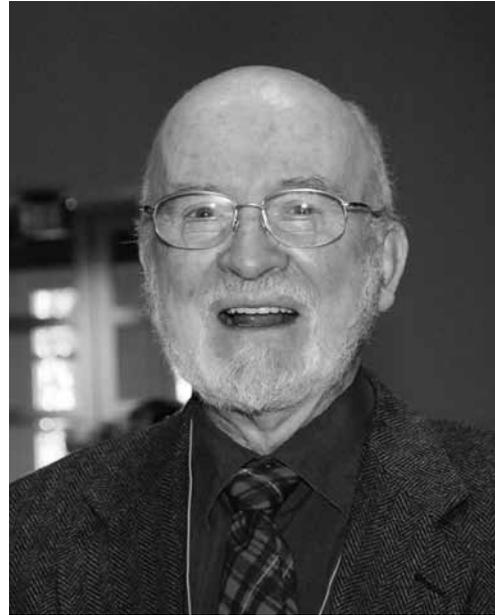
When one walked into Dr. Dalton’s office, one often found him

reading one of the classics of Christian spirituality. These included the writings of Tozer, Bunyan, Woolman, Francis Assisi and Thomas a Kempis. He wanted all students to intentionally seek ways to “grow in Christ.”

I remember Doc playing the old pump organ and asking students to sing the songs of Fanny Crosby and Charles Wesley. One of his favorite song writers was Lina Sandell and her hymn “Day by Day.” One of the verses challenged me to begin an intentional spiritual journey that called on Christ to be a vibrant part of my daily life. In the last stanza of “Day by Day” Sandell wrote the following:

“Every day the Lord Himself is near me,
With a special mercy for each hour;
All my cares He fain would hear and cheer me,
He whose name is Counselor and Pow’r.”
The protection of His child and treasure
Is a charge that on Himself He laid,
‘As thy days, thy strength shall be in measure,
This the pledge to me He made.”

These four values were a meaningful part of my Christian journey and remain a significant part of the values I hope to pass on to the students with whom I interact.



“Recovering a Pietist Understanding of Christian Higher Education: Carl H. Lundquist and Karl A. Olsson”

Christian Scholar's Review Vol. XL, No. 2, 2011, pp



CHRISTOPHER GEHRZ, associate professor of history at Bethel University, explores how North Park and Bethel, under the leadership of Carl H.

Lundquist and Karl A. Olsson, were designed at the start to educate the new Swedish immigrants and became liberal arts universities influenced by their pietistic traditions. Gehrz wrote:

“Though little known today outside of their traditions, Lundquist and Olsson were thoughtful, articulate leaders who drew on recurring themes in the pietist tradition to help define the purpose and nature of Christian higher education in an era of profound changes for their denominations, their colleges, and the larger church and academy. Most fundamentally, each defined the purpose of higher education in what can only be called salvific terms, believing that God worked through education to transform the whole person - heart and soul, not just head - as part of the process of conversion...”

The Covenant and Swedish Baptist pietist traditions, Gehrz suggested, emphasized the idea that education was linked “not only to the training of the intellect but to the salvation of the whole man.” These colleges and seminaries were “part of the koinonia. The converted man seeks fellowship.” This means that the educational institutions were an extension of the mission of the churches. Faculty needed to be concerned about relating to students as

fellow members of the Christian community; to Olsson their role was to “see his/her student as a person and will be a steady, firm, but gentle midwife of the soul.”

Therefore, the pietist tradition encouraged a strong commitment to “heart religion” aligned with personal holiness and the virtue of truthfulness.

“...Lundquist believed it possible to contain subjectivism with the ‘objective authority’ of Scripture. Save for maintaining this ‘norming norm’ of ‘classical Biblical faith,’ the two presidents hesitated to limit the freedom of inquiry of their faculty and students. Like most Pietists, they preferred irenic dialogue to heresy-hunting, valuing

voluntary, heartfelt devotion over intellectual assent. Though Lundquist vaguely reported to the denomination that ‘all of our teaching is carried on within the framework’ of the BGC Affirmation of Faith, he (like Olsson) defended the academic liberty of his faculty against fundamentalist criticism. And when he identified individual freedom as one of two key features distinguishing Bethel from other evangelical colleges, Lundquist could also draw on the Baptist doctrine of soul liberty, insisting ‘that every believer be allowed the privilege of freely interpreting for his own life the guidance of the Holy Spirit in the light of the Scriptures.’”



Virgil Olson as Bethel's Academic Dean 1968

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