
The Baptist Pietist CLARION

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Contents

- 1 Bethel Seminary: Education of the Heart and Mind | *Glen Scorgie*
Dietrich Bonhoeffer and the Quest for the Present Jesus: Some Reflections for the Church Today | *Joel Lawrence*
- 2 Inside this Issue | *G. William Carlson*
Tribute to Jim Spickelmier | *G. William Carlson*
- 3 Whole and Holy Persons: Pietism and Bethel University | *Christopher Gehrz*
- 4 "What I Know for Sure: Our Mission is Growing Leaders" | *David Clark*
- 4 When Theology Matters Supremely | *David Clark*
- 5 James Spickelmier: Committed to God's Grace | *Leland Eliason*
- 7 Review of Jim and Carole Spickelmier's book *Give First Priority to Jesus Christ: Key Values for Christian Living Taken from the Life and Ministry of Carl H. Lundquist* | *Terri Hansen*
- 8 Five Visitations | *Ted Lewis*
- 9 Walter Rauschenbusch—Pietist or Social Activist | *Vic Winquist*
- 10 Walter Rauschenbusch "Why I am a Baptist" | *G. William Carlson*
- 11 Nathaniel Schmidt: Swedish Baptist Colleague of Walter Rauschenbusch | *G. William Carlson*
- 16 Brokenness: Mirrors | *Mike Widen*
- 17 Why am I a Baptist? | *Christian Collins Winn*
- 18 Walfred "Wally" Peterson: Champion of Religious Liberty and Professor of Political Science at Bethel University | *G. William Carlson*

Bethel Seminary: Education of the Heart and Mind

(A review of *A Time of Transformation: Bethel Seminary, 1982-2012* edited by James and Carole Spickelmier St. Paul, Minnesota: The History Center, 2013)



GLEN SCORGIE *Professor of Theology at Bethel Seminary* | Jim Spickelmier's last days, prior to his death this past September, were characterized by a remark-

able surge of literary productivity. Feeling an urgency to leave an accessible witness to a Christian community and heritage he had grown to love, Jim, along with his wife Carole, produced in the space of just a few

years a number of historical volumes on Carl Lundquist, the Baptist General Conference and Bethel University.

This particular volume covers the recent history of Bethel Seminary. Jim wrote about half the book himself. For the balance, he got help from some like-minded, well-informed friends: James Mason, Diana L. Magnuson, James D. Smith III, and Cheryl Gregg.

As most readers will know, the Seminary began in 1871, just thirteen years after Minnesota attained statehood and while Scandinavian immigrants were still flooding

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Dietrich Bonhoeffer and the Quest for the Present Jesus: Some Reflections for the Church Today



DR. JOEL LAWRENCE *Senior Pastor, Central Baptist Church, St. Paul, Minnesota, former Assistant Professor of Systematic Theology, Bethel Seminary*

BONHOEFFER AND POPULAR CULTURE

Dietrich Bonhoeffer continues to fascinate and intrigue people at both the scholarly and popular levels. It would be difficult to name another theologian whose life story has garnered the kind of attention as Bonhoeffer's. His context in Nazi Germany, his travels throughout Europe and America, his engagement with Gandhi and desire to

study non-violence in India, his role in the plot to kill Hitler and, of course, his death at the hands of the Nazi regime, all make Bonhoeffer an engaging figure.

Most recently, two works have thrust Bonhoeffer into the popular culture in a whole new way: First, Martin Doblmeier's 2004 documentary, *Bonhoeffer*, had a long run in theaters and has been rebroadcast on PBS. Second, and perhaps more significant, is the 2011 biography by Eric Metaxas, *Bonhoeffer: Pastor, Martyr, Prophet, Spy*, a New York Times bestseller. As a Bonhoeffer scholar, I've been amazed at how many people, when they hear of my work in Bonhoeffer's theology, *Bonhoeffer: A Guide for the Perplexed*, want to discuss what they've learned about Bonhoeffer-

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Inside this Issue of the *Baptist Pietist Clarion*



G. WILLIAM CARLSON, *Professor Emeritus of History and Political Science, Bethel University* | This is the thirteenth issue of the *Baptist Pietist Clarion*. Pastor Ron

Saari and I began publication in March 2002 to articulate the essence of the Baptist Pietist heritage for today's church and share some of the presentations at the Friends of the History Center events. The *Baptist Pietist Clarion* could not be published without the assistance of the Baptist General Conference History Center, the outstanding layout work

of Darin Jones and the archival assistance of Dr. Diana Magnuson. Past issues can be found at the following website: http://cas.bethel.edu/dept/history/Baptist_Pietist_Clarion

The focus of this issue will include tributes to two individuals who have significantly influenced the Baptist pietist heritage: Jim Spickelmier and Walfred Peterson both of whom have left us during the past year.

I am also pleased to introduce Joel Lawrence to this issue of the *Clarion*. He

was assistant Professor of Systematic Theology at Bethel Seminary from 2005 – 2013 and has now become the Senior Pastor at Central Baptist Church in St. Paul, Minnesota. He is a noted Bonhoeffer scholar and will share some insights about Bonhoeffer for today's church. I have invited Glen Scorgie, Chris Gehrz and David Clark to reflect on significant issues facing Bethel's educational institutions. Clark gave this address to a session of the Friends of History Center in November 2013. Essays by Vic Winquist and Christian Collins Winn explore aspects of our Baptist heritage.



Tribute to Jim Spickelmier: Chronicler of Baptist General Conference History

G. WILLIAM CARLSON, *Professor Emeritus of History and Political Science, Bethel University* | Jim and I were friends for many years. During graduate school we roomed together in a home on Lake Johanna Boulevard, our families shared church experiences, and we cherished the mutuality of our intellectual and professional journeys especially as they were rooted in the Baptist pietist tradition.

A DESIRE TO ARTICULATE THE VALUE OF THE BAPTIST PIETIST HERITAGE OF THE BAPTIST GENERAL CONFERENCE

On the Thursday before Jim went to be with the Lord, Carole called and asked if I would stay with Jim while she was taking care of her mother. We spent two hours conversing about many topics and memories.

He was most concerned about the continued work of the Baptist General Conference History Center. He was excited about the next meeting which would feature an address by David Clark and play selections of a DVD in which Virgil Olson shared stories of the past Deans of Bethel Seminary.

As I thought back on Jim's battles with cancer I remembered that they developed at the same time that Jim took over the leadership of the History Center Committee. He took on both of these challenges and did them well.

In 2007 Jim took over chairing the History Center Committee and worked with Diana Magnuson to create some exciting History Center programs. They included the celebration of the lives of Carl Lundquist, Gordon Johnson, and Virgil Olson; exploring the role of international ministries in the United States; and understanding the role of the Bible in our Baptist, pietist heritage.

What inspires me is that Jim was the driving force for the expansion of publications about BGC history. They included short books on Bethel Deans (2006) and BGC Leaders (2007). More significant was the work Carole and Jim did in editing three books: *5 Decades of Growth and Change: The Baptist General Conference and Bethel College and Seminary 1952-2002*; *New Century Directions: The Baptist General Conference/Converge Worldwide, 2001-2010*; and *A Time of Transformation: Bethel Seminary, 1982-2012*. Just recently they finished a new book on Carl Lundquist. After taking Jim to the hospital on that Thursday afternoon, Carole was planning to submit the pictures for the new book.

These efforts had three basic commitments: to advocate for the value of denominational historical memory; to encourage an effective intergenerational conversation of historical

memory and explore its meaning for the contemporary Christian movement; and to effectively articulate a commitment to be Christ's witnesses and live as Christ's disciples in today's world. This would include encouraging evangelism, developing a sense of Christian community, supporting intentional spiritual development, and seeking economic and social justice.

A CONCERN FOR SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC JUSTICE

In 1986 Jim called me and asked if John Lawyer and I would be willing to teach a course at Bethel Seminary that would be entitled "The Church and Social Justice Issues in American Christianity." The social justice course was to "analyze and evaluate the reasons for diversity of church responses to social justice issues, explore ways in which historical perspective might be helpful and develop ways of linking historical insights, Biblical social ethics and church ministry."

Jim was committed to these issues as a result of his experiences in the Peace Corps. He always had a heart for those who were hurting and sought ways in which the church could respond to people in need. He believed this was an expression of Christian discipleship. Above all we needed to have a global understanding of the Christian community.

continued on p. 6

Whole and Holy Persons: Pietism and Bethel University



CHRISTOPHER GEHRZ,
Professor of History,
Bethel University

PIETISM: A LEGACY FOR GOOD

2013 was the most difficult of my eleven years on the faculty of Bethel University, as a significant budget deficit forced cuts and restructuring that affected numerous programs, faculty, and staff. It's been a time of lament and anger, regret and recrimination. But such a crisis does have at least one benefit: it forces an institution coming up on its 150th year of existence to reexamine its reason for being, and to differentiate itself from the legion of colleges and universities competing for the same scarce tuition dollars.

Such a reappraisal is a complex undertaking, but I'm convinced that, at its heart, it requires us to embrace "The Best of the Past as a Gift to the Future" — as this periodical titled the following excerpt from Carl Lundquist in the June 2007 issue:

"Pietism had its own excesses, of course, but it is its legacy for good that I hope can be perpetuated at Bethel. On many campuses with a strong Reformed doctrinal emphasis there is a built-in suspicion of Pietism which tends to downplay personal spiritual development in favor of a rigorous intellectual program. Thus there is an uniqueness about Bethel when compared to many schools with almost identical confessions of faith."

Administrators and faculty in Lundquist's time and after have often appealed to Bethel's roots in Pietism as a source of differentiation, but as fewer and fewer administrators, staff, faculty, and students come to Bethel with a shared experience of the Baptist General Conference or an understanding of its origins in Swedish Pietism, it has been harder and harder to know just what we mean when we say that "Bethel is Pietist."

RECOVERING THE PIETIST TRADITION AT BETHEL UNIVERSITY

As a member of a cousin denomination (the Evangelical Covenant Church) with its own deep and enduring commitment to Pietism, I've been privileged to play a role in helping Bethel recover that tradition and explore its implications for Christian higher education in the 21st century. Last June, with the support of a grant from the Lilly Fellows Program, I organized a workshop at which fifteen current and former colleagues discussed the history of Pietism, the Baptist General Conference, and Bethel. Coming out of that workshop, most participants committed to write a chapter for a book that I'll be editing, tentatively titled *Whole and Holy Persons: A Pietist Approach to Christian Higher Education*.

I'm happy to announce that that project has been accepted by InterVarsity Press and will likely appear later this year. It features chapters by a wide range of current Bethel

faculty, plus contributions from former professors Roger Olson, Jenell Paris, and David Williams and a preface by Gordon College provost Janel Curry (one of G.W. Carlson's former students). Recent retirees Dick Peterson (physics) and Nancy Larson Olen (nursing) will add responses from the perspectives of the natural sciences and professional

programs, respectively, to help round out a roster heavy on philosophers, theologians, social scientists, and historians. As I write this piece, I'm in the middle of reviewing first drafts of the chapters. While each contributor offers a distinctive perspective, certain themes are clearly recurring: they seem to form the pillars of a Pietist approach to Christian higher education.

Some clearly evoke the continuing influence of prototypical Bethel Pietists. Carl Lundquist will be among the most-quoted thinkers in the volume. Most notably, journalism professor Phyllis Alsdurf brings her expertise in the history of *Christianity Today*

to a chapter comparing longtime CT editor Carl Henry's dream of an "evangelical Harvard" with Lundquist's vision for Bethel — one in which the person of Jesus Christ, and not Christological propositions, stands at the center of an academic community sharing a warmhearted devotional life.

Likewise, John Alexis Edgren's foundational emphasis on spiritual, not just intellectual development (echoed by Lundquist) runs through the book's appeal for a more holistic understanding of Christian education — as in Williams' and Olson's chapters, both of which place the experience of conversion at the center of teaching and scholarship. Likewise, Edgren's ideal of the friendly, helpful relationship between teacher and student is central to psychologist Kathy Nevin's essay, on the implications of Philipp Spener's "pious wishes" for the community of the Bethel classroom.

The legacy of Virgil Olson also looms large over this project. One of the "Baptist Pietist marks" that he identified in the life of the BGC and Bethel (see again the June 2007 issue of the *Baptist Pietist Clarion*) is the irenic spirit, "the Pietist's response to brutality of the religious wars, persecution of religious belief by political institutions and incivility of theological wars. It was expressed in the phrase 'in essentials unity, in non-essentials liberty, in all things charity.'"

Almost as much as "Pietist," the word "irenic" has been used to differentiate Bethel from other evangelical and Baptist schools, and it will echo throughout *Whole and Holy Persons*. In particular, it infuses a three-chapter sequence from professors on the third floor of the AC building: theologian Christian Collins Winn asks how Pietism prepares students to engage in civil discourse; philosopher Sara Shady and English professor Marion Larson draw on German Pietists like Johanna Eleonora Petersen, August Hermann Francke, and Spener to argue that engaging neighbors of a different religion can be integral to what we do at Bethel; and philosopher Ray VanArragon considers the value — and limits — of humility and open-mindedness as intellectual virtues. (Meanwhile, Jenell Paris proposes



continued on p. 6

“What I Know for Sure: Our Mission is Growing Leaders



DAVID CLARK *Vice-President and Dean of Bethel Seminary* Remarks at the Friends of the History Center Gathering—Bethel Seminary Chapel, November 11, 2013

I begin with a deep “Thank You” to the organizers of the History Center gathering this fall and to those of you who invest your time in the History Center. It goes without saying we will miss our dear friend, Jim Spickelmeier, who did most of the work to organize this event. It floors me that he was emailing me about this event even as he was going into hospice.

I want to talk about “What I Know for Sure.” That’s the title of Oprah Winfrey’s column at the back of each issue of *O*, Oprah’s signature magazine. I don’t agree with Oprah much of the time. And I don’t read *O* very often. But on a recent trip, I noticed the title

of this column, and I thought to myself that she is following a good, biblical tradition of remembering. Remembering, and reflecting in light of remembering, is something history rightly encourages us to do. So let me talk about “What I Know For Sure” at this point in the history of Bethel Seminary.

PREPARING WHOLE AND HOLY LEADERS TO SERVE AND LEAD IN JESUS’ NAME

There are many reasons why I am passionate about taking on this leadership role at the seminary. Chief among them is the urgent need for Bethel Seminary to do its part in fulfilling Bethel’s mission: preparing whole and holy leaders to serve and lead in Jesus’ name. Bethel, the church, and the world need Bethel Seminary to be at its best. With strong support from the Board of Trustees and strong alliances with partner churches, ministry agencies, and Converge Worldwide, we have the opportunity to create a new trajectory for Bethel Seminary.

Clearly, our world is hurting and suffer-

ing. I won’t go into detail here. I’ll count on you agreeing with me. What this says to me is straightforward: the world needs every leader Bethel Seminary can prepare.

OUR MISSION IS SENDING LEADERS INTO THAT WORLD

Our calling is growing leaders. When I say this, people sometimes say, “Well, of course. All seminaries do that.” But I suspect they miss my point. I’m not using the term ‘leadership’ to mean that in some general way that we’re preparing graduates who will take the pastoral titles or leadership roles in churches and other kinds of organizations. I’m using ‘leadership’ in a more specific sense. I mean we’re preparing graduates who will execute the habits and practices of leadership.

Leadership is about influence. Leaders influence individuals and groups to pursue important personal and organizational goals. Leadership is about action and movement. Leaders don’t allow things to stagnate; they move things forward.

continued on p. 12

When Theology Matters Supremely

by DAVID CLARK “Both/And” <http://blogs.bethel.edu/theology-matters/> September 9, 2013

Thomas Aquinas, the 14th century Catholic theologian, is credited with exploring the question: “How many angels can dance on the head of a pin?”

Many people think this question typifies the idea that theology doesn’t matter. The word ‘theology’ can be like the word ‘academic.’ As in the sentence, “That’s an academic issue.” In this negative sense, the word ‘academic’ means “a theoretical issue that makes no real difference.”

I’ve been thinking that theology might actually matter less than some people think. Some people live for theological debate. Bad idea. Theology says we should live for God ... a very different thing...

THEOLOGY IS OUR BEST ATTEMPT TO DESCRIBE, TO EXPLAIN, TO INTERPRET, WHAT IS REAL (AND WHO IS REAL!)

All of that matters supremely. In exercising our freedom, we will flourish *only* as we make choices that fit in with what’s truly and ultimately real.

An example: gravity describes the real physical world. If I choose to attempt unaided human flight by launching myself off a skyscraper, gravity will ground me ... because my choice will not line up with the truth about how physical reality actually is. That’s a silly example that makes an important point. *I have to choose to live my life according to what’s actually true about reality.*

Theology is simply the truth about what’s real—it’s truth about our world and more fundamentally, it’s truth about its Creator.

Biblical theology teaches: “I came into existence through God’s creative will, and God created me to find my purpose in loving my Creator.” If my life choices fit with this biblical theology, I will thrive.

An alternative teaching says: “I came into existence by a series of unguided, physical events, and I will flourish if I choose loving myself as my ultimate purpose.” If my choices live out this philosophy of life, that’s like having a go at unaided human flight.

THINKING THEOLOGICALLY SHAPES A LIFE OF INTENTIONALITY AND MEANING

Theology isn’t an end in itself. No arena of knowledge is. Knowledge claims, including knowledge claims about God, matter when they shape life choices. There are the “angels-on-the-heads-of-pins” questions out there. They might have answers. I don’t actually know. But they’re largely irrelevant.

But this doesn’t show all theology is irrelevant. Theology forms the parameters of meaning which shape the lives of persons and families, communities and cultures, for good. That sort of theology isn’t to be despised. It really matters.

James Spickelmier: Committed to God's Grace

January 14, 1941 – September 25, 2013



LELAND ELIASON, *former Dean of Bethel Seminary* Excerpts from memorial message given September 30, 2013 | It is a privilege to reflect on the life and ministry of

Jim Spickelmier. He has been a friend for over 55 years and his life has been committed to serving Jesus Christ as pastor, Baptist General Conference historian and husband, father and grandfather.

JIM HAD A GREAT SENSE OF HUMOR

There was a flurry of email exchanges on the day Jim passed away. Jim Smith, the church history professor at Bethel San Diego, upon learning of Jim's passing, wrote: Two days ago I spoke with Jim on the phone. He explained that they discussed the fact that right after Jim and Carole finished the book manuscript on her father, Jim's health sank. He said I have become "short of breath." Jim chuckled and then commented: "I should have taken longer with the book."

Jim's sense of humor characterized his whole life. He looked on the positives of life. He believed at his core that God is good and therefore life is worth living. When Jim and Carole were pastor and wife at the church in Sioux Falls, Carol and I were at Whittier in California. We would do a dinner together at each of the annual meetings. The deep conversations were good and enriching, but what I remember appreciating even more were the times of raucous laughter—so therapeutic!

JIM BELIEVED STRONGLY IN GOD'S GRACE

Jim's Bible was not marked up like some of our Bibles are—there were very few markings. But next to 2 Corinthians 12:9 were the words, "My life verse." It read: "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." During a pastoral visit to his family Jim prayed to receive Christ into his life as his Savior. That prayer saves us because God extends his favor to us – that's what grace is. When Jim prayed for the Lord's forgiveness, God's grace covered all his sin. The Bible says that we are saved by grace

through faith. We often think of God's grace as being sufficient for salvation. And it is.

When Jim was a boy in third grade he attended a summer Bible camp. The children were given Bibles and told to read a passage and then pray. Jim found a big rock that was surrounded by bushes on an uphill side. He squeezed through the bushes and sat on the rock overlooking the whole mountain valley. Jim writes: "I have strong memories of sitting on that rock with the warm morning sun beaming down with a sense that I was alone with God. It was in that setting that I first felt that God was personal and that he wanted me to be a minister."

JIM BELIEVED THAT GOD EMPOWERS US

God's grace enables us to be as effective as God wants us to be and needs us to be in spite of whatever stake has been driven into our lives. When Jim learned of his diagnosis with cancer six years ago, he said, "I don't like it but I will take it"—meaning take what God had allowed and not only endure it but live with it.

Former President of Bethel, Dr. George Brushaber recognized Jim's commitment to using the time given to him by God:

"Having been a Bethel colleague and friend of Jim since 1975, I find it hard to pick out a single virtue or accomplishment to mention. His deep roots in the history of Bethel and the heritage of the Baptist General Conference was matched by the strength and breadth of his vision for the future of the Seminary, the University, and churches at home and across the globe. Each of the roles and projects he took up were carried out in the dynamic of dual commitments: he helped us appreciate our heritage and challenged us to find new ways to fulfill our mission."

JIM WAS COMMITTED TO THE VALUE OF EDUCATION AND SERVICE

Jim's parents were not well off. They had

no money set aside to send him to college. But Jim had become the president of CYF, the youth fellowship of the conference churches in Denver, and that made him eligible to receive a full scholarship to attend Bethel College. That's a provision of God's grace.

Jim and Carole were pastor and wife in three different churches. Ann Tschetter wrote the following about Jim's ministry at Central Baptist Church in Sioux Falls, South Dakota:

"Followers of Jesus grew deeper in their love for God; seekers put their trust in Christ; and the Churches of Sioux Falls

experienced greater unity through the annual city wide 'Concert of Prayer' that Jim initiated. For his ministry during his years at Central Baptist Church, along with the other stages and facets of Jim's life, I know that in heaven, Jim is still hearing, 'Well Done, Good and Faithful Servant!'"

For as long as I have known him, Jim has been asking hard questions. I

pulled from my files a letter that he wrote to me from Tanzania during his years in the Peace Corps dated January 1, 1964. He was wrestling with the nature of the church. After describing some discouraging traits, he asked, "Why does this have to be God's church?" He was learning to love the world that God loves and wanting the church to be strong. That's a gracious way to look at the world.

JIM BELIEVED IN THE VALUE OF FAMILY

With his own family, Jim passed on the grace of God that he had received. Saturday night I was privileged to spend an hour and a half with Carole and the immediate family. At the end of the evening I said, the theme of tonight is the way Jim empowered each of you—he saw potential and opportunity in the circumstances of your lives. When Grant and Jennifer had an opportunity to move to Oregon, Jim enthusiastically said,



continued on p. 6

“Go!” When Eric and Anna had the chance to move to Madison, Minnesota he was there to celebrate their installation. No doubt there was part of him that would rather that they all stay nearby like Mark and Jessica – but that would have been selfish – not gracious.

Eighteen months ago, Jim faced the most serious of surgeries. The risk of death was high, as surgeries go. He cared deeply for his two grandchildren. (Miah had not yet been born.) When I learned of what Jim did, I asked Matthew and Katie if I could share what he wrote to them with all of you. They gave me permission to do that.

To Katie, he wrote,

“Katie, Grandpa has to have a very serious operation. I could die.

I know that if that happens you will be very sad and I wanted to write this to say, “Goodbye” and to tell you I love you.

If I die, I will go to heaven which is a wonderful place. So don't be sad for me.

Whole and Holy Persons, from p. 3

that love is the guiding virtue for Pietists in fields like her cultural anthropology.)

Familiar and appealing as many of us find this model of Christian higher education, sociologist Samuel Zalanga warns that any college or university that is guided by the Pietist desire for individual — and social — transformation is nonetheless constrained by economic structures. In this country, we find that we are subject to the market pressures that are reshaping all of higher education.

CHRISTIANITY IS A HEARTFELT WAY OF LIFE

In my own conclusion, I plan to wrestle with at least two resulting challenges: First, I contend that the liberal arts are at the core of a school like Bethel. Pietism insists that

Tribute to Jim Spickelmier, from p. 2

AN OPTIMISTIC COMMITMENT TO THE ROLE OF THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH IN THE FUTURE

At the close of the book *5 Decades of Growth and Change* Jim asks the very important questions for those who are advocates of the Christian tradition, especially one that has been enhanced by the Baptist pietist heritage. We are always to be defined as disciples of Jesus Christ. Spickelmier writes:



The Spickelmier family

I'm so proud of you. You are very pretty. You love others and care for them. You have many talents and I hope you will use what God has given you to help many. Follow Jesus. Be kind to others. And remember that Grandpa loves you!
Grandpa.

To Matthew he wrote:

I'm writing this before I go to the hospital. I'm having serious surgery and there is a chance I may die and not get well again.

I know you will be sad if that happens and

Christianity is a heartfelt way of life that can't be inherited or imitated, assumed or coerced; it must be freely chosen. The Christian liberal arts are liberating arts that free us to respond to God's grace and follow Jesus. Can that model of education survive in a time when students increasingly major in professional programs and STEM fields and seek to complete as much of the general education program as possible via AP exams, community college courses, and the like?

Second, we need to consider whether a Pietist university can be an online university. On the one hand, its advocates argue that the online model makes higher education less costly and more accessible to a broader

“What will the future hold for the Conference and for Bethel? Will our affluence be challenged so that we will need to live in a different way with our resources? Will we do a better job of teaching the Scriptures to new believers so that they will develop deeper theological understandings? Will there be another change of worship style in the future that will shift the ground for this generation as they shifted the ground for those who

I wanted to write to you to say “Goodbye.” I want you to know how much I love you and how proud I am of you. I think you are growing into an exceptional young man, smart, likeable, a friend to many. Remember God gave you those talents. Follow him and use your gifts to bless others.

I believe I will go to Heaven if I die to be with God, so I will be OK and I'll ask God to watch over you carefully for the rest of your life.

Love, Grandpa.

If Jim were able to speak to us this morning, I think we'd hear him say, with his infectious smile, “Don't grieve for me – you have no idea what a fabulous place heaven is.” Jim allowed God's grace to not only save his soul but to empower his life – no matter what came. The thorn in the flesh called cancer – this stake that was meant to shut him down, to debilitate him, did neither. He lived out his favorite verse: “My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.”

swath of the population — goals that seem to resonate with A.H. Francke's pioneering educational activities in Halle. And German and Swedish Pietists made nimble use of then-new media to spread the message of the Gospel around the world. On the other hand, while innovation should hardly be alien to a Christian tradition that seeks new birth and new life, Pietists should ask if an education that transforms the whole person can take place absent any experience of an embodied community, where — in Carl Lundquist's words — the “impact of one life upon another” matters more than “academic paraphernalia.”

came before them? Will there be a merging of evangelical denominations as they let go of their historical theological distinctives? Of course, only God knows these things, but He continues to call us to be busy in his Kingdom's work today, even as we ponder tomorrow.”

May we take up the challenge of continuing to ask and answer good questions on behalf of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Give First Priority to Jesus Christ: Key Values for Christian Living Taken from the Life and Ministry of Carl H. Lundquist—by James and Carole Spickelmier



A Review – by TERRI L. HANSEN | Never before have I read a biographical piece that had significant personal implications or direct tie into my own history. Never

before have I felt so blindsided by my lack of awareness of the direct impact and influence of an individual on me personally. Though I have long admired the life and ministry of Carl H. Lundquist, his faithful commitment to his Lord Jesus, and his exemplary life, I may not have picked this book up had it not been handed to me along with the assignment to “read and review”. And that would have been a shame.

This book, entitled *Give First Priority to Jesus Christ*, is lovingly compiled by son-in-law and daughter, James and Carole Spickelmier. Though this book is only part biography and mostly history, who Carl Lundquist was and what he did are inseparable. Who better than the daughter he raised, and the son-in-law who worked alongside him, could tell the story of the remarkable life and times of this man?

The biographical pages describe Carl’s upbringing by Swedish immigrant parents in Sioux Falls, South Dakota. At age 11 he committed his life to Jesus, and as a teen, took on leadership of the young people in his church and town. He was a “standout” student, participating in speech and debate. He graduated from Sioux Falls College. However, he also spent a year at then Bethel Junior College in Saint Paul. He met his future wife Nancy and made the decision to go on to Bethel Seminary in St. Paul to pursue the ministry. His strong speaking abilities landed him many opportunities to preach.

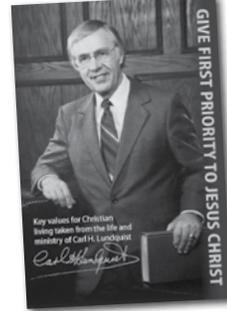
Upon graduation from Bethel Seminary, Carl and Nancy were married and relocated to Philadelphia where Carl could pursue further graduate studies at Eastern Baptist Seminary. Here he pastored a small Swedish Baptist church. He then accepted a call to Elim Baptist Church in Chicago. There he was able to complete a Doctor of Theology degree at

Northern Baptist Theological Seminary.

From Elim Baptist, Carl was called in 1953 to become first acting dean, and then in 1954, president of Bethel College and Seminary. The Seminary had by then moved to St. Paul and Bethel was now a full four-year liberal arts college. Carl served as president of Bethel College and Seminary until his retirement in 1982. He passed away in 1991 at the age of 74 after a long battle with cancer.

The historical pages of this book describe the legacy of faith and leadership that Carl demonstrated throughout his life, particularly in his work at Bethel. During those years Bethel relocated from a 10-acre landlocked campus to a 250-acre wooded campus in Arden Hills. Enrollment climbed from 500 to over 2,500 by 1982. Both the college and seminary became accredited. He helped to establish the Christian College Consortium and the Fellowship of Evangelical Seminary Presidents, as well as serve on boards and gave leadership to over a dozen other Christian organizations. He faced impossible challenges with great faith, prayerful diligence, relentless energy, and a warm and gracious smile. A button with “SURE ENUF Let’s do it!” was his optimistic motto.

In his later years, Carl, along with Nancy, embarked on a sabbatical leave with the goal to visit and experience as many retreats centers as they could in the United States and abroad. Carl was drawn by the Christian renewal movement and its roots in the Keswick Convention. Carl’s passion for leading a life of devotion to Christ and pursuing the holy life became the heartbeat of his ministry. Carl and Nancy began leading Life of Devotion retreats at the Seminary and at churches and educational institutions all over the country. He established the Evangelical Order of the Burning Heart and donated his vast devotional book



collection to the Bethel Seminary library. His years of active leadership and dedicated preaching of the Word of God came full circle as he was able to guide others into the joyful intimacy of a personal relationship with the Jesus he loved with all his heart.

Lundquist asked Bethel artist Dale Johnson to design a logo for the new ministry. It was to represent the essence of Jesus’ encounter with two men on the road to Emmaus after the resurrection. After their encounter with Jesus they said to each other “did not our hearts burn within us when He talked

continued on p. 8

Pietism: The Roots of a Heart and Mind Commitment

from DR. CARL LUNDQUIST “Commitment to Devotion”

Bethel Theological Seminary :100th Anniversary Lectures November 17-20, 1981.

Christ and the Bible are separate focal points. Neither contradicts the other. But each points to the other. We may begin our Christian experience in one direction but it always points us to the other...

If you begin with Jesus and experience, you shortly hear Him say, “If you love me, keep my commandments.” Love leads back to the Word! If you begin with the Bible and obedience, you don’t read very far until you read, “these are written that you might believe that the Christ is the Son of the living God and that believing you might have power through His name.” The Bible points back to Christ.

In those centers of a pietistic orbit—Christ and the way of the heart to God, and the Bible and the way of the mind to God—each points to the other. Each also is essential to the other. If you have only correct intellectualization of God without a vital experience with Him you have a dead orthodoxy, perhaps as sterile as the one from which our forefathers revolted in Sweden. Or if you have only joyous experience with Christ, unbounded by the dimensions of the Word of God, you can easily be led into mysticism or heresy.

with us on the way and when He opened the Scriptures to us?" (Luke 24:32) Robert Nelson, another art faculty member at Bethel, wrote a meaningful poetic expression of identification with Lundquist's spiritual journey. He penned:

"Did not our hearts within us burn, our souls for Living Water yearn

When Jesus opened Scriptures wide – when truth he fully magnified?

Did not we feel the inner flame, when Jesus in our journey came

And talked with us along the way and strangely warmed our hearts to pray?

Oh burn, burn Refiner's Fire! Consume all inward dross and mire;

And we will full consistent be and know a pure congruity

Empow'r us fire creating Dove; and melt us with Your flames of love

That we might be more bendable and choose to be expendable.

Burn, Holy Flame, within my heart! I long, Beloved, to never part

From this impassioned, hallowed ground where your realities abound!

Most of this I probably knew firsthand or had heard before reading this book. My life intersected with Carl's in 1973 when I came as a 17-year-old freshman to Bethel College. Dr. Lundquist (or Uncle Lunc, as he was affectionately referred to by the students) was the president of this fine institution. What I did not know before reading this book was just how much of his heart and soul went in to making Bethel what it was. The things that I took for granted, like chapel without rules, or prayer before class, or unorthodox chapel speakers, were a direct result of his leadership, conviction, and influence.

His legacy to Bethel and to the Christian world was a strong philosophical and theological framework that valued pietism, evangelism, and the irenic spirit. Democrats on the faculty of an evangelical Christian college—unheard of! Martin Luther King Jr. invited to speak at the height of the Civil Rights movement—heretical! Students encouraged to attend chapel and live an upright lifestyle via trust verses legalism—foolish! *Christ the Tiger* as required reading for Freshmen Colloquy class—questionable at best! All this and more was being poured into my life in

my most formative years.

I only remember his warmth, his smile, his interesting hairstyle, and the sense that he was exactly the same person on the inside that he portrayed on the outside. But little did I know that Carl's heart was to make a way for Bethel to be "a community of Christian scholars and students who would seek to follow Christ in their daily life, their pursuit of Christian knowledge and devotion, and the interpenetration of all they pursued with Christian insight and perspective." (p. 91) Little did I know that a foundation was being laid in me that would carry me into my own adulthood, to being called into ministry, to pursuing seminary education for myself.

I am inspired by the integrity with which Carl Lundquist sought God's best for Bethel, for the world at large. I am humbled and convicted by his idealism and faith in Christian education - that he thought me, and those like me, worthy to be trusted with figuring out that if we had a choice, we might actually choose to do right out of some inner seed that was being planted. I find of value Lundquist's listing of the three essentials to Christian spirituality:

- Christian spirituality is a living relationship with Jesus Christ.
- Christian spirituality is a living relationship with Jesus Christ nurtured by spiritual disciplines.
- Christian spirituality is a living relationship with Jesus Christ nurtured by spiritual disciplines shared with a soul friend.

If I were to give a critique of this very personal volume, it would be that it lacks a good index, was a little heavy on the whole "voluntary self-discipline" theme and occasionally bogs down with extended quotes. For example, I might have placed segments of the Stanley D. Anderson section entitled "Carl Lundquist's Pietistic Approach to Faith and Learning" in the back as a valuable ap-

Five Visitations

by Ted Lewis— Christmastime 2013

With Zachariah (I too was once dumb)
My mouth can now pronounce why angels come –
They announce good news too good to be true
To strengthen faith anew.

With the young Mary (I too was amazed)
My heart wonders how low things can be raised;
And if an angel's life-seed be in me,
A servant I will be.

With Joseph (I too went through some grieving)
My will has found deep peace through believing;
Angel-dreams have made everything so clear,
Releasing me from fear.

With the shepherds (I too have been afraid)
My senses have seen sky-glory displayed;
While people of power sleep unaware,
I praise the open air.

With the Magi (I too need to be led)
My mind with angel-aid can move ahead,
And while my thinking is prone to wander,
I have much to ponder.

Ted Lewis (Bethel Univ. grad in 1983) is a mediator, trainer, writer and consultant in the fields of restorative justice and conflict transformation. His primary church affiliation is Mennonite USA, and he lives in Duluth, MN, with his wife Nancy. A life-long interest for Ted is the gospel connection between spiritual formation and challenging relationships.

pendix.

I am very grateful, however, that so much of Carl's own writings were included, such as sermons, annual reports, personal letters and notes. He was truly a gifted communicator and articulated so well the deep convictions, rationale, and insights that were so important to his life, his ministry, his effective leadership. I was glad for a chance to know Carl as perhaps his colleagues knew him and to hear all that was behind that gentle smile and the twinkle in his eye. My fear is that only those who knew Carl will be interested in his story. That would be a shame. So much of his thoughts and ideas have value to the rest of the world. I hope that others will take time to read this special book.

Walter Rauschenbusch—Pietist or Social Activist



VIC WINQUIST, *Retired Baptist General Conference Pastor, Former member of the Governing Board of the Baptist Joint Committee*

WALTER RAUSCHENBUSCH AND F. O. NILSSON: NINETEENTH CENTURY BAPTISTS

In 1848 F.O. Nilsson started the first Baptist Church in Sweden, the forerunner of the Baptist General Conference in America, in the midst of a pietistic renewal in Sweden. The Baptist movement in Sweden and the United States thus was rooted in the pietistic tradition which stressed personal faith or heart religion and holy living.

At the beginning of the twentieth century a different facet of the Christian Faith, what was called The Social Gospel, reached its height in the United States. The Social Gospel stressed the social and economic implications of the faith and the undisputed leader of the Social Gospel movement was Walter Rauschenbusch, another Baptist pastor/ professor.



Rauschenbusch was the seventh in line of a family of German pastors. His father, Karl August Rauschenbusch was a pietistic Lutheran missionary to America who in the U.S. converted to Baptist views, was baptized and subsequently taught at Rochester Seminary, a Baptist School.

Walter was raised in this pietistic Baptist family. After graduating from seminary he became the pastor of the Second Baptist Church in New York City, in an area of the city called Hells' Kitchen, a poverty stricken area.

This eleven year pastoral experience changed his understanding of life and the Christian message. His heart ached over the cruelty and deprivation he saw daily all around him and wanted to be involved in alleviating the conditions leading to this deprivation. He became the foremost spokesperson for the movement called the Social Gospel.

So, we have two Baptist preachers, one a Swedish pietist, and the other an advocate of the Social Gospel. Many felt and some still feel that these two visions of the faith were incompatible. Many were (and are) opposed to the Social Gospel and questioned the faith of the Social Gospel leaders, including Rauschenbusch. They felt he had abandoned his pietistic heritage for a humanistic social movement. Is this true? Had Rauschenbusch abandoned his pietistic heritage?

RAUSCHENBUSCH: LEGACY OF A LOVING PROPHET

Perhaps this is best answered by Max L Stackhouse in his article "Rauschenbusch Today- The Legacy of a Loving Prophet" when he states "...Rauschenbusch brought 19th century pietism into the 20th century world of cities, factories, immigrants, clashing classes and subcultures and problems of housing, transportation and employment."

Rauschenbusch certainly retained much of his pietistic understanding of life and the gospel. At the age of seventeen he experienced what he called his conversion experience. He claimed that, "it was of everlasting value to me... it influenced me down to its depths." He later went on to explain that this personal experience while valuable was in itself inadequate to explain the totality of the gospel message of Jesus.

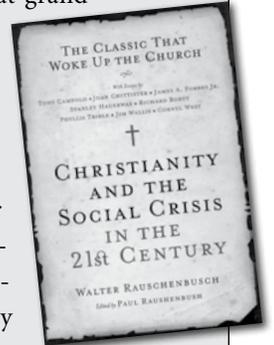
He did feel that "spiritual regeneration is the most important fact in any life history" but that this regeneration depended on the recognition of sin, both personal and societal and the need for repentance of both types of sins.

He believed in personal evangelism. James Yerkes in an article "Toward Understanding Rauschenbusch Fifty Years After" (*Bethel Seminary Journal* Winter 1969) quotes a letter written by Rauschenbusch in 1918 in which he states, "I have always regarded my public work as a form of evangelism which

Rauschenbusch for Today

A recent edition of Walter Rauschenbusch's essay *Christianity and the Social Crisis* has been edited by Paul Rauschenbusch, Walter's great grandson. He invited scholars and activists such as Tony Campolo, Jim Wallis, James A. Forbes Jr., Joan Chittisker and Stanley Hauerwas to write contemporary commentary on the core chapters.

For those who wish to engage Rauschenbusch's ideas this would be a good start.



called for a deeper repentance and new experience of God's salvation." He cooperated with Ira Sankey, the partner of Dwight L. Moody in translating gospel hymns into German for evangelistic purposes. In a letter from his hospital bed just prior to his death he stated, "My life would be an empty shell, if my personal religion were left out of it. It has been my deepest satisfaction to get evidence now and then that I have been able to help men to a new spiritual birth."

He believed in fervent prayer. In 1910 he published a book of prayer entitled "Prayers of the Social Awakening" and called upon other proponents of the Social Gospel to write prayers and hymns that reflected both personal faith and social consciousness.

Rauschenbusch stressed the holiness of life. He opposed gambling calling it "the vice of the savage." He strongly affirmed the importance of the family, which he defined as the union of a man, a woman and children. In *Christianity and the Social Crisis* he called the family, "the structural cell of the social organism." It was for him "the foundation of morality, the chief educational institution and the source of nearly all the real contentment among men." He himself was happily married to his wife Pauline and was the father of five children.

So, Rauschenbusch clearly never abandoned his pietistic heritage of personal faith and ho-

— continued on p. 10

liness of living. He did, however, expand his understanding of the gospel to include not only personal faith, salvation and godly morality but also to include societal morality and the need for collective reformation.

RAUSCHENBUSCH: PASTOR OF IMMIGRANT CHURCH RESPONDS TO ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL INJUSTICES OF NEW YORK CITY

As has been previously stated this understanding of the gospel did not come from a study of the creeds, but from his experiences as a pastor in New York City. He said that his heart was broken by the daily suffering and death of the children in Hells' Kitchen.

At first he struggled with what he perceived to be a conflict between his role as pastor of the church with a stress on personal salvation and pastoral care and his growing concern for the larger issues of what he saw as a society in need of reformation. The answer emerged from the integrating theme of The Kingdom of God. The Kingdom for him was, "humanity organized according to the will of God." He was driven by the Lord's prayer, "Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven." He claimed, "Christianity, the Social Gospel and the message of the Kingdom of God – These three are names for the same religious reality." He felt that the Kingdom of God was Christ's main concern and that once a person has seen this he can never unsee it again.

Rauschenbusch saw three important truths as foundation for the Kingdom: the sacredness of human personality, the solidarity of the human race and the obligation of the strong to stand up for the weak. This meant that society should practice compassion, solidarity and justice.

He saw many problems in the urban, industrialized society of his day including child labor, unsafe working conditions and the growing income disparity between the rich and poor with the concentration of power and wealth in the hands of a few. It was essential for government intervention to address these and other problems and where necessary societal control of or even collective ownership of industry.

As a pastor in New York City he, with a group of friends, published a newspaper, "For the Right" which was dedicated to the

"interests of the working people of New York City". He joined with two other Baptist pastors, including, Nathaniel Schmidt, pastor of the First Swedish Baptist Church of New York City to form the Brotherhood of the Kingdom, a group dedicated to social justice.

After his pastorate he became professor of church history at Rochester Seminary and a prolific author of books explaining and defending the Social Gospel including, *A Theology for the Social Gospel*, *The Social Principles of Jesus*, *Christianity and the Social Crisis*.

Contrary to many who feel that he was overly optimistic and had a low view of sin, Rauschenbusch understood that the establishment of the ethics of the kingdom in society would be a difficult task because the power of sin was deeply imbedded in the structures of society. He said that we shall estimate the power of sin too lightly if we forecast a smooth road. He understood that, "we shall never have a perfect social life, yet we must seek it in faith." He said that "the

Kingdom of God is always but coming." He spent the last thirty years of his life pursuing this goal of the kingdom on earth.

WAS RAUSCHENBUSCH THEN A PIETIST OR A SOCIAL ACTIVIST?

I feel that he was both, integrating both facets of the gospel. It must always be understood that his message of the Social Gospel was solidly rooted in Biblical truth – sin which penetrates both the individual and society and redemption and biblical ethics which apply to both.

Perhaps he explains it best himself when he states, "Most people look only to the renewal of the individual. Most social reformers look only to the renewal of society. We believe that two factors make up the man, the inward and the outward, and so we work for the Christianization of the individual and society."

While some of the issues we face in our society are different, these still are good words for us today.

Walter Rauschenbusch "Why I am a Baptist"

by G. WILLIAM CARLSON

In 1905 and 1906 Rauschenbusch developed a series of essays defining why he was proud to be a Baptist. He recognized the influence of his father's leaving his ministry as a Lutheran pastor to become a Baptist and thereby leaving the traditions of an "Established Church" replacing it with a faith that valued religious liberty and encouraged the principles of democracy and equality. These essays suggested that Baptists emphasize the primacy of personal Christian experience; Baptists practice democracy in our organized church life; Baptists insist that a Christ-like life, not ritual, characterizes true worship and pure religion; and Baptists tolerate no creed, the Bible alone is sufficient authority for our faith and practice.

According to Rauschenbusch when Baptists insist on personal "experience as the only essential thing in religion, we are hewing our way back to original Christianity." He concluded, "faith in Christ was a spiritual experience. Those who believed in him, felt a new spirit, the Holy Spirit, living in their hearts, inspiring their prayers and testimonies, melting away their selfishness, emboldening them to heroism."

As Rauschenbusch explored the nature of Baptist church polity he advocated for the following ideas: to create an organization of really Christian people; our churches are Christian democracies; our churches have no priestly class; there is no hierarchy within our ministry; our churches have home-rule; and our Baptist churches decline all alliances with the State.

Finally, Rauschenbusch argues that the only thing God desires is a "Christ-like" life. We are to "live all the time in the consciousness of the love and nearness of God, to merge all our desires and purposes in His will to walk humbly before Him and justly and lovingly with all men..." In our common worship "we shall come closest to the spirit of true Christianity if every act is full of joy in God and fellowship; love for one another, hatred for all evil, and an honest desire to live a right life..."

Nathaniel Schmidt: Swedish Baptist Colleague of Walter Rauschenbusch

G. WILLIAM CARLSON, *Emeritus Professor of History and Political Science, Bethel University*

Several years ago I was doing research on Baptists in late nineteenth century United States for a paper at the Baptist History Celebration 2007 in Charleston, South Carolina. In a discussion of Walter Rauschenbusch the materials suggested that he was a good friend of Nathaniel Schmidt of the First Swedish Baptist Church of New York. In 1867 thirty-four Swedish Baptists united to form the First Swedish Baptist Church of New York. The American Baptist Home Mission Society provided some support for the church. However, it struggled until the arrival of Pastor Olof Lundh in 1880. Over the next seven years the church grew to over 200 members.

In 1887 Nathaniel Schmidt was invited to be the new pastor. He was born in Hdisvall, Sweden in 1862 and received formal education at the University of Stockholm and Colgate University. In 1887 Schmidt received his M. A. from the Hamilton Theological Seminary.

In 1888 he was invited to become professor of Semitic languages and literature at Colgate University and Hamilton Theological Seminary. A. P. Ekman pastored the church until 1905. The membership grew to almost four hundred. One of the future pastors of the church was Arvid Gordh would leave New York to become dean of Bethel Theological Seminary in 1922. During this time it was the mother church to a number of churches along the Atlantic seaboard.

Nathaniel Schmidt in the 1880's was a friend of John Alexis Edgren. They both graduated from Colgate University and were interested in the Semitic languages. There is evidence that Nathaniel Schmidt joined Edgren in 1886 in California attempting to arrange for worship services for the new Swedish immigrant population. A church was started in the Los Angeles area in 1887.

Schmidt's leadership at the First Swedish Baptist church recognized that the working

class immigrant population was a needy one. The New York Charities Directory acknowledged the church for their contributions to the "relief of worthy countrymen." Immigrant families frequently experienced difficult working and living conditions. Many worked at an average of sixty hours a week,



lived in tenement residences that were health and fire hazards, received low wages and often found themselves in abusive settings. There was little social mobility and a growing inequality that was intrusive on life in the New York community.

Walter Rauschenbusch was called to pastor the Second German Baptist Church in 1886. He joined with Leighton Williams, pastor of Amity Baptist Church and Nathaniel Schmidt to explore ways in which their churches could respond to the issues facing their working class immigrant populations. They met on Sunday afternoons, discussed classics of Christian devotions (Augustine's *Confessions*, Thomas a Kempis's *The Imitation of Christ*, Richard Baxter's *The Saint's Everlasting Rest* and John Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress*), shared communion and prayer, and engaged several radical critiques of American industrial capitalism such as Richard Ely's *The Social Aspects of Christianity* and the ideas of Henry George.

These three pastors wrestled with two significant issues: the spiritual well being of the members of their congregations and the economic inequalities of the larger society and its impact on the life of the congregation. While attending a rally for Henry George, Rauschenbusch heard a Catholic priest, Father Edwin McGlynn, speak about the relationship of faith and economic reform. When he read the Lord's Prayer Rauschenbusch heard him pronounce the phrase "Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven" he captured a principle that would dominate his thinking for the remainder of his life.

The three pastors would eventually form an organization entitled Brotherhood of the

Kingdom. The first four components of their mission statement read as follows:

1. Every member shall by personal life exemplify obedience to the ethics of Jesus.
2. Each member shall propagate the thoughts of Jesus to the limits of his or her ability, in private conversation, by correspondence, and through the pulpit, platform and press.
3. Each member shall lay special stress on the social aims of Christianity, and shall endeavor to make Christ's teachings concerning wealth operative in the church.
4. On the other hand, members shall take pains to keep in contact with the common people, and to infuse the religious spirit into the efforts for social amelioration.

Eventually though the members of the Brotherhood were scattered, for about twenty years they would often meet at Williams' summer home. It was difficult to maintain the vibrancy and intensity of the early years. However, the ideas of the Brotherhood spread to a broader Christian audience and often came under the title "Social Gospel." They were expressed at various Baptist Congresses, explored through books and pamphlets that members would write, and articulated in guest invitations to numerous academic institutions.

Nathaniel Schmidt, tragically, left the Swedish Baptist pietist fold and began to articulate ideas that were significantly informed by the liberal hermeneutics coming from Germany. In 1896 he was dismissed from his position at Hamilton Seminary for advocating a "Unitarian" set of ideas and confusing the core beliefs of students. Of particular concern were his new positions on the authority of Scripture and the divinity of Christ. Most controversial would be found in his book *The Prophet of Nazareth* (1905) that asserted that Jesus did not claim to be the Messiah.

President Jacob Gould Schurmann offered Schmidt a professorship at Cornell University, where he taught from 1896 until 1932. He was instrumental in building the Near East collection at Cornell University expanding the

continued on p. 12

teaching of Near Eastern languages. He was a prominent member of the Society of Biblical Literature and American Oriental Society. He authored more than 1,500 articles and books such as *The Coming Religion* (1930).

It is clear that John Alexis Edgren and other Bethel Seminary leaders challenged the legitimacy of Schmidt's departure from orthodoxy. At Edgren's last commencement address at the Seminary in Chicago (1884) he argued that Bethel needed to "preserve

soundness in living and doctrine, be wise in your labors, and through all life's trials endure unto the end."

Edgren began his career in America as a naval commander challenging the institutions of slavery and ended his career believing the gospel is not just for the wealthy. All congregations needed to be given spiritual leadership within the Baptist, pietist tradition.

The questions that Rauschenbusch and the early Schmidt asked remain on the table.

How do we respond to the realities of the new immigrants? Does the church have anything to say about the growing inequality in our society? Are we a community that believes in the essential principle that all life is sacred and that each person should have an equal opportunity to develop their gifts? Do we believe that all should be full-participants in our democracy and not allow wealth and power to shape the priorities and political power structures?

Growing Leaders, from p. 4

Like any organization, a church cannot rise above the quality of its leadership. If the persons who carry leadership titles in an organization don't practice leadership habits, the organization declines. Churches and ministry agencies need those who are appointed as leaders to follow the self-sacrificing practices that help individuals and organizations experience human flourishing.

ranked these and other roles. And they ranked preparing leaders first.

Men and women who live out the habits of leadership inspire those around them to fulfill their divine callings. So preparing Biblically-grounded, Gospel-centered, whole and holy, transformational leaders allows churches to make an impact in our culture and to respond to the hurt and suffering that plague our world.

BETHEL'S GRADUATES WILL GO INTO AN INCREASINGLY POST-CHRISTENDOM CULTURE

I just received a report from InterVarsity. It told the story of Timothy White, Cal State University System Chancellor, who is trying to enforce a policy that prohibits using religious doctrine as a selection criterion for leadership in Christian groups on campus. This policy would mean that InterVarsity could not bar an atheist from being the leader of a campus chapter.

A high level IV staff member did just what I hope Bethel Seminary grads will do. He both engaged Dr. White relationally, and also he made the case for religious freedom. He engaged relationally: he did not stand back at a distance and lob rockets of criticism at Dr. White. And he made his case: he did not just cave in, close up shop, and go home. He courageously interacted with someone who represented a very different perspective, and he articulately clarified a Christian way.

This is what we want Bethel graduates to do. We want them to engage constructively with those who are not followers of Christ. A post-Christendom world demands of us and of our graduates that they engage dif-

ference, and keep firm in biblical conviction. How can we flood the world with women and men like that?

(To finish the Cal State story, Chancellor White gave a one year reprieve for further dialogue.)

THE ONLY WAY WE CAN ACCOMPLISH THIS MISSION IS BY PARTNERING WITH YOU

And this is why I'm so thankful for your interest in being here today. I know you care not only about Bethel Seminary's history, but also about its mission and future.

I want to share some personal news. Sandy and I are about to become grandparents—twice! This makes us wonder: who will lead the churches our grandchildren will join? Who will help Bethel develop pastors to lead churches and other agencies to make a difference in the post-Christendom world of the future?

I only wish we could afford to have even more future leaders join Bethel Seminary. Not long ago, a friend told me about a young Hispanic church planter. He told my friend, "I would so love to go to Seminary. I need to grow my biblical grounding and leadership capacities."

On behalf of all of us who work each day in the leadership development ministry called Bethel Seminary, I appreciate your passion for the mission we share. Thank you, thank you! I'm grateful that you care about the history of Bethel Seminary and that you believe in its future.

For the sake of our communities, for the sake of our churches, for the sake of our students and future leaders, for the sake of my grandchildren and yours, I boldly ask you to continue your faithful partnership with us in Bethel's great mission.



Bethel Seminary's St. Paul campus

The kind of Christian leaders who will thrive today are Three Centered leaders. The foundation of a Bethel education is wisdom rooted in Scripture and theology. The heart of a Bethel education is character rooted in personal, relational health and spiritual vitality. And the outcome of a Bethel education is skill. We hope for graduates to develop an emerging set of skills rooted in proven leadership practice.

A year ago, two trustees asked our faculty to rank the roles for which we prepare students. This was tough! What's the purpose of a Bethel education, first and foremost? Would it be about educating pastoral counselors, Bible teachers, lead pastors, youth workers, or future seminary faculty members? The faculty

into the upper Midwestern United States. Thirty years ago Norris Magnuson, onetime librarian and professor of church history at the Seminary, published a history of the school that surveyed its first century plus. Entitled (in a salute to its Swedish roots) *Missionsskolan: The History of an Immigrant Theological School* (1982), it told the institutional story up to that point.

Jim and Carole Spickelmier have now written the sequel, covering the next three decades, from 1982 to 2012. The period surveyed in this second volume is considerably shorter than what Norris Magnuson covered, but the task remained considerable since Bethel Seminary in these more recent decades has grown considerably and become more complex.

The first five chapters tell the seminary story in chronological sequence. Each chapter narrates developments under a successive dean: Gordon Johnson (his concluding years, 1982-1984), Millard Erickson (1984-1992), Fred Prinzing (1992-1994), Leland Eliason (1994-2009), and, finally, David Ritter and (acting dean) Jeannine Brown (2009-2012). Two additional chapters focus on developments on the Seminary's two visionary extensions: Bethel San Diego, established in California (1977), and Seminary of the East, along the East Coast of the United States (1985). In a final and pivotal chapter, Spickelmier offers his own insightful reflections on the whole. The book offers a synopsis of archival information about the school in its three most recent decades of operation. From now on the book will be the most convenient place to start a more detailed investigation of any aspect of its institutional history.

Institutional histories seldom make for riveting reading, especially when the writers intentionally skirt controversy and seek not to criticize or offend anyone mentioned. The gloves do come off in cognate works like *Reforming Fundamentalism* (1987), George Marsden's intellectual history of Fuller Seminary, which he depicts as a struggle between liberalism and fundamentalism. This book is not like that. For better or for worse, Bethel's historic irenic spirit prevailed in its composition.

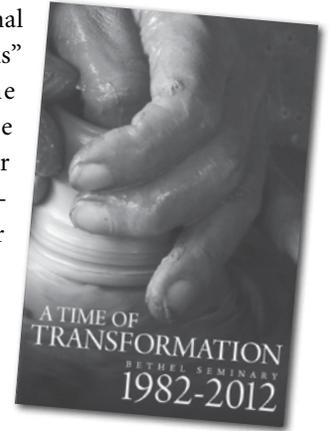
In his concluding chapter, Spickelmier

identifies some key institutional developments across these three decades. (pp. 203-215) Reflecting general trends in evangelicalism, the Seminary attracted unprecedented numbers of female students and persons of color. The student body roughly doubled in size, and currently displays a remarkable denominational diversity as well. In fact, by 2012 only 13.3 percent of the students came from a BGC background, and only 27 percent were Baptist of any stripe. It's somewhat striking to realize that the student body of Bethel Seminary is now three-quarters non-Baptist. Some of the school's most generous donors are not from the BGC either. This raises some important questions for a school still under BGC authority and still requiring BGC church membership of its faculty.

In matters of creative academic programming, Bethel has been an innovative leader among seminaries. New degree programs developed during this period attracted hundreds of additional students to the school. Perhaps the most significant departure from tradition was a decision to expand the seminary's mission to encompass the preparation of marriage and family therapists for careers in church and society. During this time Bethel also acquired multiple campuses on both coasts, making it truly national in its geographic reach. It also embraced inno-

vative educational "delivery systems" that exploit the potential of the internet and offer greater scheduling flexibility for working students and those living some distance from a Bethel campus.

It is striking how much has already changed at the Seminary since the end of 2012, when this book's survey ends. In February of 2013 David Clark became the new seminary dean and vice-president. In late 2013 John Lillis resigned as the dean of Bethel Seminary San Diego. The bold experiment of the innovative, church-based Seminary of the East will come to an end in the Spring of 2014; most of its employees have already been terminated. By the summer of 2014 seven of the twenty-four other faculty members employed at Bethel St. Paul and San Diego in 2012 will have retired, left voluntarily or been terminated. Student enrolment, which peaked in 2008 at 1,151 students, is now trending downward. Much of this downsizing has been prompted by financial challenges at Bethel University,



continued on p. 14

"Faithfulness to the Mission of Bethel Seminary"

BY JAMES SPICKELMIER

One of the most important of the major themes of the last 30 years at Bethel Seminary is that the seminary has remained faithful to its historic mission and ethos. Norris Magnuson, in his concluding comments in *Missionsskolan: The History of an Immigrant Theological School: Bethel Theological Seminary 1871-1981*, raises the issue of Bethel's faithfulness to its tradition and mission. He writes: "Conversion, the centrality of the Bible and spirituality within the context of general learning and holistic growth, and the development of a caring community of students, all within Edgren's deep concern for the evangelistic and pastoral mission of the church have been the themes, as we have seen, that have been central to the history of Bethel Seminary. Will those themes and values continue to motivate and to accurately describe Bethel in the decades to come?"

Now, from a viewpoint 30 years later, we can say that so far those themes and values have continued at Bethel. This was documented in a central finding of the research in the Vision AD2018 document. It states that "Bethel Seminary's 'brand,' its reputation and credibility, centered around its responsiveness to the contemporary culture while remaining faithful to historic orthodox positions, the centrality and authority of Scripture, an irenic and welcoming position that encouraged a diverse, evangelical student body." (*A Time of Transformation* pp. 214-215)

but also by shifting constituency loyalties and expectations. This is clearly a moment in time for serious reflection and discernment of the mission of the seminary in the twenty-first century.

Bethel Seminary, as this book makes clear (see esp. pp. 212-214), has always lived “hand to mouth.” It has never been able to coast along on endowments or an accumulated reserve. Every year is a fresh financial adventure. Historically the income gap between what students were able to pay and what it cost to keep the lights on was closed by a transfer payment from the Baptist General Conference. That income stream began to dry up after 1986, and ensuing Seminary budget shortfalls were covered by intensified fundraising efforts and an unofficial subsidy from the Bethel College operation. Facing its own challenges, Bethel University is no longer able or willing to do this.

In more recent years the financial burden has fallen largely upon the students themselves, who are obliged to take out enormous student loans to cover the ever-increasing costs of their tuition. The magnitude of the typical student debt load has now become an obstacle to both initial recruitment and subsequent survival in ministry. The future of the seminary may depend upon whether it can come back full circle to cultivating a supportive and generous community that believes in the vital importance of excellent ministerial formation for the health and maturity of the church.

Perhaps the most surprising feature of this book is the virtual omission of any analysis of the alumni of the seminary. They are indeed



New Bethel Seminary San Diego Chapel

“Challenge and Promise: 2009-2012”

BY DIANA MAGNUSON

A particular strength of Bethel Seminary is its clear mission statement: “The passion of Bethel Seminary is to advance the gospel of Jesus Christ in culturally sensitive ways among all people. As a Spirit-empowered, biblically grounded community of learning, Bethel strives to develop and equip whole and holy persons to serve and lead so that churches and ministry agencies can become all they are called to be and do all they are called to do in the world for the glory of God.” This mission statement has guided the seminary in its curricular and organizational decisions, the innovative three center’s philosophy, investment in the creative distributed learning InMinistry model, and embarking on the entrepreneurial trans-regional model. The concerted effort by administration, faculty and staff to carry out these initiatives with an optimistic spirit organizational, technological, and financial challenges is a hallmark of Bethel’s deep commitment to seminary education. (*A Time of Transformation* p. 138)

the true product of the school; compared to them everything else is mere scaffolding. The true measure of the Boeing Corporation, by analogy, is not their factory in Seattle but the fleets of their reliable planes flown all around the world. It would be helpful and indeed important to analyze the geographic and vocational distribution of Bethel alumni through the years, their “staying power” in various ministries and the strengths they exude. In the words of the apostle Paul, they are our joy and crown. And, we might add, Bethel Seminary’s *raison d’être*.

Readers of the *Baptist Pietist Clarion* may be especially interested in the formational spiritual ethos cultivated by Bethel Seminary, and the extent to which it affirms the best of our Pietist heritage of “heart and mind.” In 1995, Dean Leland Eliason proposed a new plan to organize the seminary curriculum around three centers that would focus, respectively, on biblical and theological foundations, spiritual and personal formation, and transformational leadership. It is not difficult to articulate this threefold vision in more popular terms as a holistic commitment to head, heart and hands.

Most seminaries were already committed to the first and third of these centers, but very few were yet so intentional about the formation of whole and holy persons (see pp. 58-60, 211-212). Reflecting its Pietist sensibilities, not to mention the intensified demand for personally and spiritually mature leaders today, Bethel has not been content to rely on extracurricular programs alone to ensure that personal and spiritual

formation will occur. It has been permanently embedded now in the curriculum, with required courses, and in the ongoing assessment reviews conducted by the faculty and administration.

In a brand new book entitled *Called to the Saints: In Invitation to Christian Maturity* (IVP, 2013), spiritual theologian and seminary president Gordon T. Smith eloquently observes that the genius of Christian higher education has never rested ultimately in the transfer of important knowledge or training in practical skills and competencies, important though both of these remain. It lies, rather, in its passionate nurturing of wisdom and spiritual formation. Smith writes: “This vision assumes a stress on the value of and commitment to academic excellence, the academic process and the classic academic disciplines. But with this commitment, the bottom line is ultimately and finally not academics but transformation.” We should pursue academic excellence, in other words, “because it is good for the soul” (219). It is precisely such recipients of transformational learning who will have “the capacity for good works in response to God’s calling and equipping” (221). If those of us still at Bethel can be faithful to this vision, we dare to believe that God’s work done *this* way will not lack God’s supply.

This book was the last of Jim’s many gifts to us through the years. He has now passed the baton, inviting us to identify, treasure and promote elements of our spiritual heritage that will continue to honor God and bless others.

fer through reading the Metaxas biography and how much they enjoyed his story.

While there has been a growing interest in Bonhoeffer's story, many who have seen the documentary or read the biography struggle to penetrate his theology. Many have read the more popular Bonhoeffer texts, *Life Together* and *Cost of Discipleship*, but haven't moved on to engage with his more academic works. My purpose in this essay is to explore one important conviction of Bonhoeffer's theology that can help us move beyond a biographical interest in his intriguing story to a deeper engagement with Bonhoeffer's theology, and to ask how Bonhoeffer's theology can be of service to the church today.

BONHOEFFER AS A CHRISTOCENTRIC THEOLOGIAN

Bonhoeffer cannot be properly understood apart from his core commitment that Jesus Christ is present and active among us today. While that may sound simple, even obvious, methodologically, it sets Bonhoeffer apart as a Christocentric theologian whose theology is dynamically attuned to the living Word of God. To affirm the resurrection of Christ as a doctrine is one thing; to allow the affirmation of the presence of Jesus to thoroughly infuse one's theology is another. As we will see, Bonhoeffer makes this move, and this commitment to the presence of Christ is instructive for the church today.

Bonhoeffer's commitment to the methodological significance of the Christ who is present is on display in his 1933 lectures on Christology. These lectures, given at the University of Berlin in the first months of Hitler's regime, reveal the place of the presence of Christ in Bonhoeffer's theology. The table of contents of the work demonstrates something unique: after a brief introduction, Bonhoeffer structures his lectures as follows: Part One: "The Present Christ – The *Pro Me*"; Part Two: "The Historical Christ"; Part

Three: "The Eternal Christ." What is noticeable here is that Bonhoeffer begins with the present Christ. Bonhoeffer is rare among theologians as one who has structured his Christology in this way, beginning, not with historical foundations, but with the One who is present through his resurrection.

Bonhoeffer's Christology is a critique of the theologians of his day (and ours) who fail to take seriously the resurrection as a structural element for Christology. Bonhoeffer is an equal opportunity critic: in his view, both conservative and liberal theologians find themselves in the same place: denying the presence of Christ. Liberal theologians do so by actually denying the resurrection, while conservative theologians do so by effectively denying the resurrection through their failure to give the resurrection its proper place as foundational Christology.

By placing the present Christ first in his Christology, Bonhoeffer makes a bold methodological move. In doing this, Bonhoeffer is clear: theology is not history. Yes, there is a historical Christ who really existed in history, but the question is: how do we, here and now, at a remove of 2,000 years from the earthly life of Jesus, know the historical Christ? Most Christologies approach the historical Christ through the methods of history. Hence, the (largely liberal) quest(s) for the historical Jesus and the (largely conservative) defenders against such quests both share a fundamentally historical methodology for approaching Christology. As such, theology and Biblical studies easily become morphed into history, thereby losing their uniqueness as disciplines of the believing church.

For Bonhoeffer, however, the only way we gain access to the historical Christ is by listening to the testifying voice of the present Christ. In other words: How do

I know "the historical Jesus"? It is only through the testifying voice of the present Jesus through the Word and Spirit that He can be known. Bonhoeffer's theology, in contrast to quests for the historical Jesus, is rather a quest for the present Jesus. I believe and trust in Jesus of Nazareth because He has encountered me here and now as the resurrected Lord who confronts me in my sin, pointing me to his historical life as the basis of my justification.

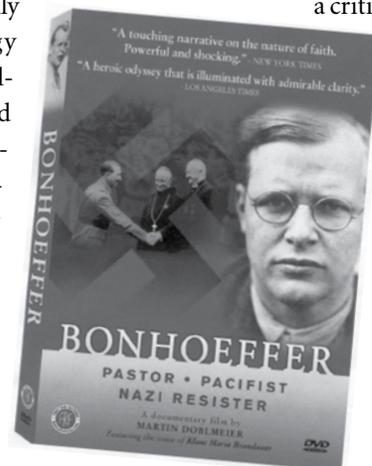
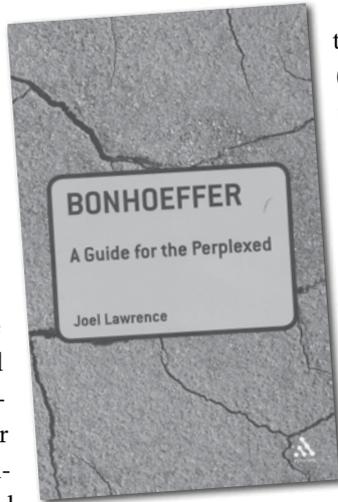
The present Christ is the starting point of faith, the One who testifies to Himself through the proclamation of the Word in the church. Searches for the historical Jesus, whether of the "liberal" Jesus Seminar variety or the "conservative" Josh McDowell variety, fail to properly grasp the place of the Christ who is present among us testifying to Himself.

CHRISTIAN PREACHING SHOULD BE "INVITATIONAL"

So what are the implications of Bonhoeffer's quest for the present Jesus? How might Bonhoeffer's methodological move instruct us today? What follows are two suggestions. There are, of course, many more, and I would encourage the reader to think for herself what further insights can be gleaned from Bonhoeffer's Christological commitments.

First, this move can help Christianity move past our over-reliance on "Principles for the Christian Life" approaches to faith. "Principles for the Christian Life" theologies are, unknowingly, built on the assumption that Jesus is not present. Later, as Bonhoeffer's ethical thinking developed, he became a critic of "principles." The problem

with principles is that they divorce us from the present Christ. Rather than listening to Christ's voice calling us to follow, guiding us in our living out the Gospel day by day, we instead become people devoted to principles. (Even "Biblical principles", such as peace, justice, or love, can become ideologies that separate us from Christ. A commitment to justice can take over a commitment to Jesus). For Bonhoeffer



Martin Doblmeier's 2004 Bonhoeffer documentary

fer, the great failure of the Church in Nazi Germany was not a lack of principles, but an over-reliance on principles; her principles were the barrier that kept her from following Jesus. I suggest that what we need today is a less-principled approach to discipleship, which can free us to walk in the presence of the One who is speaking to us today.

A second implication, one that I draw as a preacher, and that follows from what I've just said, is that our preaching needs to be less "applicational" and more "invitational." The pregnant expectation of preaching in our day is that it will be application oriented. By this, I mean that our sermons are expected to engage people in their daily lives and give them ready-made steps for living out their faith. However, this style of preaching is based on

"Brokenness: Mirrors"

MIKE WIDEN, a 2002 studio arts graduate of Bethel University | How do we understand our human brokenness? How does the Biblical story help to explain God's efforts to bring about restoration?

In general terms my theological statement surrounds four distinct events: Creation, The Fall, Resurrection, Completion. How can this be expressed in an art piece that allows people to reflect on their own journey? One Sunday, at Central Baptist Church in St.

the same methodology as those Christologies Bonhoeffer critiqued: the assumption is that the Word of God is a historical document that we must mine for principles to be "applied" to our life here and now. Preaching, then, is tasked with the work of studying the text, extracting the principles in Scripture, and supplying applications for the hearers.

If we were to follow Bonhoeffer's approach, however, preaching would resist the "applicational" bent we see currently in the church, and would be more "invitational." By invitational, I mean that preaching would invite the congregation into a deep and personal engagement with the present Christ. Rather than short-circuiting the church's engagement with the resurrected Jesus by offering pre-packaged and ready-

made applications (how do I know how the Spirit is at work in the individual hearts of the 250 people I'm preaching to? How do I know what they need to do to "apply" from the passage?), sermons would call the community of faith to engage deeply in prayer and wrestling with the Christ who encounters them in the midst of their daily life as employees, parents, friends, and neighbors. Rather than the preacher making the Bible "relevant," our preaching would call the Church to wrestle with Christ and follow Him as His voice leads us through Word and Spirit, whether we judge His guidance to be "relevant" to our circumstances or not.

Paul, I began to sketch out some ideas on this piece in the area reserved for sermon notes. Unknown to me my sketch was going to correlate directly to Pastor Joel Lawrence's depiction of a Missional timeline for the Christian church: Creation, Fall, Resurrection and Completion.

It may have been possible to show my ideas with a painted image or a sculpted figure. However, I decided to create an art piece with the use of mirrors. The mirrors allow

the audience, as individuals, to enter into the work of art and meditate on their own story; to see themselves in this progression no matter where they are in the story.

The first mirror representing Creation is whole and without flaw. The viewer is reflected in the piece as the embodiment of the image of God.

Human brokenness is encapsulated in the second mirror. It is a mirror that is shattered, broken, missing pieces, and left with a void.

The viewer is still reflected in the piece, but now distorted. Broken but still in the image of God.

A Cross is over-layed on the third mirror — a mirror that is still broken but is complete. The viewer is still reflected in this mirror, however, the Cross veils their reflection. The Cross holds the mirror together. While the cracks remain, the mirror is complete.

The fourth and final mirror is again whole and without flaw. The viewer is reflected in the piece as what is to come.



Central Baptist Church

photo by Gary Gustafson

Why am I a Baptist?



CHRISTIAN COLLINS WINN, *Associate Professor of Historical and Systematic Theology, Bethel University* | I suppose this question could be taken in many different ways. What elements in my own life-history or in the history of my family have led me to identify myself with the Baptist tradition? What events or encounters have so shaped me that I now chose to describe myself as a Baptist? What Christian practices or commitments have convinced me of the Baptist vision? What theological reasons, or what passages of Scripture have compelled me to identify myself with Baptists? These are all valid, and important, ways of understanding the question “Why am I a Baptist?” However, the way I will construe the question in this short essay is as follows: why does being a Baptist matter today?

This way of construing the question is important given that we are living in an age in which fewer people are choosing to identify with institutions or traditions, particularly in the United States. Though it remains to be seen if we are going through a cyclical adjustment which will eventually correct itself, it is hard to deny that more and more people are choosing the “none of the above” option when asked about which religious tradition or denomination they identify with.

Baptists in particular are hard pressed regarding this in part because in recent years Baptist identity has been almost exclusively filtered through the political and theological categories emanating from the fights and splits in the Southern Baptist Convention, the largest Baptist denomination in the world. These fights have been anything but constructive, and have wittingly and unwittingly projected an image of Baptists to the larger culture as angry, intolerant, and belligerent religious people.

BAPTIST IDENTITY’S CONTESTED NATURE

Though there is far more to being a Baptist than the fights in the Southern Baptist Convention would lead one to believe, those

conflicts do highlight one important aspect of Baptist identity: it’s essentially contested nature. There is no Baptist magisterium that gets to choose who is and who is not a Baptist. Pick up any number of works on Baptist history and you will find a diverse array of expressions of the Baptist vision, which might even lead one to question whether there is such a thing as a “Baptist vision” at all. Rather—though there are certainly family resemblances that allow one to see not only the historical, but also the theological similarities—it is probably more appropriate to talk about there being “Baptist visions”, with an emphasis on the plural.

And this leads me to one of the first reasons why I find being a Baptist relevant today: the freedom to discover what that might mean in the here and now. That is, Baptist identity is always being negotiated and contested, allowing for a tremendous amount of freedom to work out what it might look like to be a Baptist. In other words, though there is a substance to Baptist life, there is also a tremendous amount of flexibility and adaptability. It seems to me that this is very much an asset in the current environment, wherein the very notion of “fixed traditions” or institutions is questioned as to their trustworthiness and ongoing relevance.

THREE BAPTIST EMPHASES

With the contested nature of Baptist identity in mind, I can think of three emphases that I find especially relevant in our world. The first is what I term the non-conformist impulse. To my mind, the deepest theological insight which animates most Baptist practices (including believer’s baptism) is the non-conformist impulse. That is, it is the belief in the deep “otherness” of the gospel, the knowledge that when grace encounters nature, it doesn’t just complete it—as the Catholic and magisterial Reformation traditions would argue—rather, grace fundamentally recreates nature. It resurrects it. Thus, a common life shaped by the gospel will be a common life which is “other”; which does not conform to the practices generally found in the “world.” Not so as to withdraw from the world, but precisely to be a light for and in the midst of the world. In the period of the

Reformation this meant a common Christian life that was not-coercive, instead of one that was punishable by the laws of the state; it meant the practice of Believer’s baptism, instead of state-imposed infant baptism; and it often meant a refusal to take up arms.

The second element that I would highlight is the commitment to a conception of the church as “gathered community.” Without ignoring the importance of the connection between individual communities, either synchronically or diachronically, the Baptist emphasis on the concrete existing church, gathered in a specific locale in both genuine freedom and covenantal love, offers a vision of the community sorely lacking in today’s world. Community and church are and must be more than a concept—they must actually happen, and Baptists have long emphasized that the church is not to be identified primarily with bureaucratic structures or symbolic practices, but rather with the face-to-face encounters which happen when people actually come together. The concept of the “gathered community” also helps to balance the Baptist emphasis on free, uncoerced, initiative, and the constitutive role that community plays in enacting real and genuine freedom: true freedom is freedom *for* community.

Finally, I want to highlight the political-theological impulse of Baptist identity. I am referring here to the long-standing Baptist commitment to the separation of Church and state, or the belief in freedom of religion. I name this a political-theological impulse primarily because I view this as the Baptist refusal to allow the “powers and principalities” to have an ultimate claim not only on the soul or conscience of the individual, but also on the body. Faith commitments are embodied commitments, and therefore it makes no sense to argue that one submits one’s heart to God, and one’s body to the state.

The Baptist conception of separation of Church and state argues, rather, that though the state may make a claim on my body (and even some aspect of my conscience), its claim is and can only be partial and limited. As such, no one can be forced to worship against their conscience. But to go further,

continued on p. 20

Walfred “Wally” Peterson: Champion of Religious Liberty and Professor of Political Science Bethel University

G. WILLIAM CARLSON, *Emeritus Professor of History and Political Science, Bethel University* | One of the most eloquent “embracers” of the First Amendment from a Baptist perspective was Walfred “Wally” Peterson. He died in Pullman, Washington in August 2013. His whole life was devoted to protecting religious liberty while he was professor of political science at Bethel University (1950-1965); director of research services at the Baptist Joint Committee (1965-1968) and professor of political science at Washington State University (1968-1992).

Dr. Walfred Peterson was born in Moline, Illinois in 1924. He was a member of a Swedish immigrant family that was greatly influenced by World War II and the Great Depression. He lost his left arm to gangrene when he was a child. It kept him out of the army during World War II, a reality that he significantly regretted. However, it did not keep him from being an excellent athlete.

PETERSON A STUDENT AT BETHEL JUNIOR COLLEGE (1944-1945)

From 1931-1947 Bethel was a two-year Junior College. During his years at Bethel Junior College, Peterson was an extremely engaged student. He was the leading scorer on Bethel’s basketball team and an excellent ping-pong player. Peterson was feature editor of the *Clarion* and an “honor roll” student. He was supportive to the numerous veterans who were using the GI Bill to attend Bethel Junior College.

PETERSON AS PROFESSOR OF POLITICAL SCIENCE AT BETHEL UNIVERSITY (1950-1965)

Walfred Peterson completed his B.A. at the University of Minnesota (*magna cum laude*) in 1945. He went on to get M.A. (1949) and Ph.D. (1957) from the University of Minnesota. During Peterson’s era at Bethel a political science major became a reality in 1956.

Peterson provoked civil political discourse. Although Walfred Peterson was the adviser to the Young Democrats on campus his major area of concern was to provoke political discussions across party lines and encourage students to get involved. He moderated many debates between political

candidates and hosted afternoon discussions on such issues as the Civil Rights Bill in the spring of 1964. He was also the faculty advisor of the student council.

One of the most cherished aspects of Dr. Peterson’s experience at Bethel was his giftedness as a teacher and his ability to cultivate the academic and spiritual development of his students. He was always challenging but kind in the classroom. As a contentious politically conservative sophomore I posed an objection to the removal of prayer from the public school and why, as a Christian, he would be willing to engage that issue as a religious liberty and church-state issue (*Engel v. Vitale* 1962)

Dr. Peterson quietly asked me a question about the sacredness of prayer. He quietly

asked me, “tell me a prayer that everyone can pray (i.e. a state written prayer), to a God that everyone can pray to, led by anybody and tell me that’s a prayer.” Prayer, he suggested, was too sacred. It was between yourself and God. For the Christian, it was based on a relationship established on the reality of conversion. Thinking about it that way encouraged me to explore the other religious liberty issues.

Peterson endorsed John Kennedy for President. Many evangelicals were vehemently opposed to the election of a Catholic as President. I can remember anti-Kennedy tracts in the back of my church. Major evangelical figures such as W. A. Criswell, Billy Graham, Harold Ockenga and Norman Vincent Peale feared that a Roman Catholic president would face “extreme pressure from

continued on p. 19

In 1944 Walfred Peterson wrote an essay in the Bethel Clarion which expressed his commitment to American military personnel in World War II. His essay reflected on his experiences at the St. Paul railroad station.

“Burlington Arriving”

All were there. Richman, poorman, beggarman, thief. All from different walks of life, all with a different background. All distinct individuals, and yet they were there for one reason – the soldier was coming home.

Fathers sat in the waiting room eyeing the clock, occasionally walking to and fro. Mothers sat with a tense look which revealed that a son was a few minutes away. Sweethearts and young brides walked nervously in an aimless direction making an irritating sound with their high heels. Younger brothers and sisters waited in an acme of excitement.

The droll voice announced thru the loud system, “Burlington from Chicago now arriving on track four.” The persons arose as one and began threading their way toward the entrance. Each moment heightened the suspense.

“There he is! There he is! A young girl screamed as she ran to the open arms of a soldier. “Bob, Bob, here we are.”

Hugs, kisses, handshakes, tears are all mingled, the crowd at the train door begins to filter away talking happily.

Talking happily – talking of home, experiences, weddings. All sorrow of war forgotten for one sweet hour. A moment that words cannot begin to describe. All are happy now.

All – all but the others at track eight. The train is ready. Brides and sweethearts reach for the last kiss. Mothers cry and bid farewell. Fathers choke back tears, but it takes a supreme effort. Soldiers hid heart breaking emotion.

Ten days more those that arrived change roles with the departing. Ten days more different soldiers arrive. Ten days more glad hearts are sad, and sad hearts are gladdened by new arrivals.

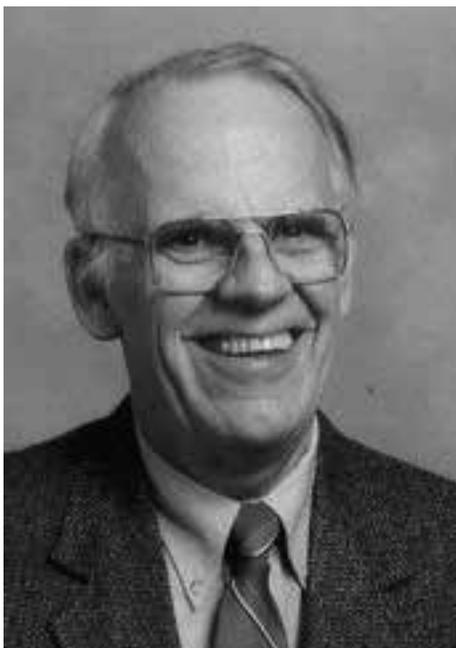
How strange that the voice that says, “Train arriving,” or “Train departing,” can cause so much emotion. Just one voice. I would not like to be that voice.

(*The Bethel Clarion* January 19, 1944, p. 3)

the hierarchy of the church” to advance the interests of the church.

Kennedy responded with his famous Houston, Texas speech in which Kennedy declared that “I am not the Catholic candidate for president. I am the Democratic Party’s candidate for president, who happens also to be a Catholic.” Kennedy stated that he believed in an America which was committed to the separation of church and state. When Peterson endorsed Kennedy he found himself having to defend that position on Bethel’s campus and within the Baptist General Conference constituency. In a March 1960 article in the *Clarion* Peterson argued that he supported Kennedy because of Kennedy’s political perspectives on issues such as foreign policy and civil rights, most Catholics had made their peace with the realities of American democratic pluralism and the constitution suggests that there should be no religious tests for public office. For those who still feared the election of a Catholic president there was also the checks and balances found within the American constitution.

In the Columbia Baptist Conference Peterson was invited out to a retreat where he was forced to address the pastor’s inquiries on his support for a Catholic candidate for President. Not satisfied with his answers a number of CBC pastors signed a letter to President Lundquist requesting Peterson’s termination as professor at Bethel.



President Lundquist supported Peterson. After Kennedy’s tragic assassination Lundquist admired Kennedy because he “brought into the White house many of the basic concerns of higher education; the integration of intellectual theory and practical politics; the humanitarian drive to attempt need social reform; and the cultivation of the fine arts for the enrichment of total life.”

Peterson had great empathy for working class. As a young person growing up in New Jersey, I would frequently journey to Chicago to visit my Swedish immigrant grandparents. They enjoyed their Swedish heritage and worshiped in a Swedish Baptist church. However, one of my most significant memories was going into the living room and seeing two items on the coffee table: a Bible and the union paper. Grandpa Carlson was a blacksmith and thankful to a government in the Great Depression which sought to ease the travails of the laboring classes.

It is clear from Dr. Peterson’s writings that he appreciated the role of the union movement in assisting the American capitalist system to reflect fairer distribution of power and benefits. Union reforms have helped to bring about the five day work week, paid vacations, access to health care, minimum wage, and improved working environments. Peterson suggested that in a democratic society the development of unions is necessary and desirable. If men and women are equal in the political realm, they must and will press for certain types of equality in the economic realm, at least equality of bargaining power. It is important that the Christian message is “relevant to the everyday problems of millions of people and their leaders who through their joint efforts help shape American culture.”

PETERSON A RESEARCHER FOR THE BAPTIST JOINT COMMITTEE (1965-1968)

Members of the Baptist General Conference have been major contributors to the history and mandate of the Baptist Joint Committee. This relationship began in the late 1940’s. Dr. C. Emmanuel Carlson, left his academic post as Dean of Bethel College (1939-1953) to serve as Executive Director of the Baptist Joint Committee (1953-1971).

Carlson encouraged Dr. Walfred Peterson to become the BJC’s Director of Research Services. Peterson was selected because “he is a man of genuine scholarship and competence. He is a man of broad Christian sympathies and general good will. He would add much to the effective work already done by the Baptist Joint Committee.” Specifically referenced was his work on the “School Bus Issue in Minnesota” for the Minnesota Council of Churches.

Peterson had an effective three years at the BJC. He accomplished successfully several major functions: communicated the agenda of BJC to the constituency Baptist denominations, testified before Congress on major church state issues, wrote short articles on major church-state questions, created documents encouraging Baptists to effectively communicate their concerns in the various political arenas and authored a number of major staff reports.

Four major issues seem to dominate this period: diplomatic relations with the Vatican, economic revenue for non-public education, issues of religious and political freedoms in both the workplace and general public discourse, and role of the federal government in protecting religious liberty issues abroad. Peterson opposed the diplomatic recognition of the Vatican. He wrote that “since we are convinced that churches have alternative means of influencing international affairs, that the functions and powers of churches do not properly include normal diplomatic activity and that constitutionally the United States government cannot recognize a church as a religious agency, we are the more persuaded that American diplomatic recognition of the Vatican would be an error.”

Peterson also argued in his pamphlet “A Churchman Talks with His Elected Officials” that the church is most needed in matters that affect religious liberty. The freedom “to witness, to organize, to teach the Christian life, etc., are freedoms Christians and churches should understand best, for these freedoms affect the foundations of the Christian movement. When these freedoms are at stake, no Christian dares to be unconcerned or timid in using his influence or marshalling his church action.”

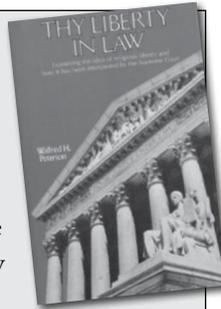
“After Eighteen Years.”

Walfred Peterson reflected positively on his Bethel experience. He was always interested in the development of a Christian Liberal Arts education as it emerged on various evangelical campuses. As he experienced it as both student and faculty member at Bethel University he was appreciative of Bethel’s commitment to our religious heritage and its belief in a broad based understanding of student and faculty freedom. Peterson developed the following conclusions:

The faculty has risen in quality with the strong ability to integrate faith and learning. Administration has been faithful in defending faculty against outside “restrictive pressures” by Bethel’s constituencies.

Students are relatively free to “live and learn as they see fit.” He wrote that “this is as it should be. Certainly, among Christians such freedom should be maximized. If Christ’s transforming power does not make this possible, then we lie about His power to transform.”

All Christian colleges ought to be measured on the “breath of liberty.” Bethel “has been a kind of exception when compared to other evangelical schools.”



During this era Dr. Peterson was optimistic about the Supreme Court’s willingness to be a defender of religious liberty. He believed that in the 1960’s the United States had a broader “freedom of religious expression than at any time in American history.” The Court often had to choose between free religious expression and a community’s peace and quiet and right of privacy and have generally chosen the “freedom of religion the highest value – even when it occasioned various community inconveniences.”

PETERSON AT WASHINGTON STATE UNIVERSITY AT PULLMAN (1968-1992)

During his tenure as professor of political science at Washington State Peterson wrote his most significant monograph entitled *Thy Liberty in Law* (1978) which analyzes how the Supreme Court has interpreted the First Amendment. For Baptists one of the preeminent defenses of religious liberty is the belief in the concern for the “dignity of each person” and the commitment to an understanding of religion as a “voluntary” response to God’s love. He writes:

“Each saint or sinner is a sacred entity,

enormously valuable in God’s sight. The value is reflected in the biblical thrust, repeated from Genesis to Revelation, that each has the power of choice. Each can voluntarily respond to God’s love and call. Even at the level of rejecting God’s purposes, each person may choose for or against his own good. None is to be or can be tricked or bribed or compelled into choosing the good. People simply are not wired that way. Such a determinist wiring does not harmonize with the nature of God or man. Thus: coercion respecting belief is improper.” (p. 31)

Peterson was often invited back to Bethel to speak at convocations largely on church/state issues and was named Bethel University’s Alumnus of the Year in 1983. One of his recommenders stated he has “stubbornly, consistently, and effectively championed the cause of religious liberty and human rights. As an undergraduate he, more than any other person, challenged me to think carefully, critically, and continually about human rights, government and soul liberty.”

John Anderson, one of Peterson’s students at Bethel, had a conversation with Dr. Pe-

terson after his retirement. In an interview Peterson expressed some concern about the rise of the religious right, especially within the Baptist community, and its denial of the major principles of the religious liberty and church state separation. He was most concerned about the rise of a “civil religion” that would exploit the public’s devotion for their own political aims. Peterson found that the new religious right movement clearly wished to sacrifice the traditional Baptist visions of religious liberty and the separation of church and state. This was found in their efforts to delegitimize the Baptist Joint Committee and form alternative lobbying institutions.

PETERSON WAS AN EFFECTIVE ARTICULATOR OF THE VALUE OF BAPTIST COMMITMENT TO RELIGIOUS LIBERTY AND THE SEPARATION OF CHURCH AND STATE

In 2007 I had the opportunity to participate in a celebration of Baptist History in Charleston, South Carolina. American Baptist historian Edwin Gaustad delivered a major address entitled “Baptists and the First Amendment: Celebrating Commitments to Religious Liberty.” With tears in his eyes, he concluded: “So there you have it, my fellow lovely radicals. Radical pietism (i.e. Baptists) together with radical rationalism (i.e. Jefferson and Madison) has given us a magnificent heritage of a full freedom in religion. Do not spurn or abandon this noble heritage. Embrace it – with your whole heart.” Some have said that this was one of Gaustad’s last major public presentations. He died in 2011.

Baptists of the 21st century must take up Gaustad’s and Peterson’s challenge. Don’t sacrifice religious liberty to a desire to impose religious authoritarianism, create a theocratic vision of civil religion or allow “secularity” to inhibit the free expression of a person’s religious conviction.

Why am I a Baptist, from p. 19

neither should the body be forced to act in a way that is contrary to conscience. Of course, this requires some limitations (i.e., perhaps a notion of “common good”, etc.), but it also explains why many Baptists are also pacifists or just-peacemakers, refusing to always fight

on behalf of and in the name of the state. Rather, they choose the way of the prince of peace. In a world torn with violence—especially religious violence—would that we could recover such a vision and practice.

These elements offer compelling reasons

for the relevance of the Baptist vision today. Other Baptists would almost certainly offer a different list, but I find that given the challenges we face today, these elements are especially relevant for our world today.