# FROM THE DESK OF PRESIDENT DAVID L. PARKYN

Spring 2008/Volume 6/Number 3

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### FORMATION & TRANSFORMATION

These two words are part of our history at North Park University. They were used most recently as the tagline for the capital campaign completed just two years ago. These words describe our objective: to *form* student lives in ways that serve the general purposes of an educated citizenry, and then to *transform* student lives through particular commitments.

To think we can *form* students to be good citizens is a bold assumption. This work is not easy, nor is the outcome easy to accomplish.

To think we can *transform* students into individuals of deep commitment is an audacious assumption. To think we can prepare students for "lives of significance and service" is to dream of accomplishing the nearly impossible. Yet this is what we claim to do.

How might we best approach such a bold and audacious task? Together. This is the simple answer. Together. We can be bold and audacious because we work together—student and teacher, administrator and staff member, trustee and donor, alumnus/a and parent. To the extent that we are involved in the lives of students at North Park University, each of us is an educator. We educate together, regardless of what specific tasks and responsibilities are assigned to us, regardless of what role we assume in this great school.

The secret of working together is to know what we ourselves can contribute to the task of education and to rely on each other to fill in the rest. None of us can do it all well, but each of us can do something well. The secret lies in knowing what we do well and honoring what others bring as a complement to our work.

Parker Palmer says it this way in his book Let Your Life Speak (p. 27):

I am less gifted at building on other people's discoveries than at tinkering in my own garage; less gifted at stepping slowing into a subject than at jumping into the deep end to see if I can swim; less gifted at making outlines than at writing myself into a corner and trying to find a way out; less gifted at tracking a tight chain of logic than at leaping from one metaphor to another.

We need both—those who tinker and those who build on what others have started, those who step in cautiously and those who jump in wildly, those who follow outlines and those who look for a way out, those who carefully study a

map and those who discover their own way. Put another way, we need those who learn and those who teach, those who lead and those who serve, those who give and those who pray, those who visit and those who send others our way.

I do hope that as a supporter of the University you consider yourself to be an educator, and as an educator you are part of the team that works together to bring life to the North Park University mission. Welcome to the team!

## CAMPUS SCHOLARSHIP

On most occasions when I write to you I include a few comments on books I've read recently. This time I want to do better—I want to note publications by members of our faculty. In recent months several works have been published by campus writers and I recommend these for your own continued learning.

- Nearly a year ago R.J. Snell's (Philosophy) work titled *Through a Glass Darkly: Bernard Lonergan and Richard Rorty on Knowing Without a God's-eye View* was published by Marquette University Press as part of the Studies in Philosophy Series.
- Early in the fall semester Dennis Bricault (Languages) published his research on *Academic Dishonesty: Developing and Implementing Institutional Policy* (American Association of Collegiate Registrars).
- Late in 2007 Scot McKnight (Biblical and Theological Studies) published two books, including *The Real Mary: Why Evangelical Christians Can Embrace the Mother of Jesus* (Paraclete Press) and *A Community Called Atonement* (Abingdon Press).
- Early in 2008 Klyne R. Snodgrass' (Seminary) long-anticipated work, *Stories with Intent: A Comprehensive Guide to the Parables of Jesus*, was published by Eerdmans.
- Within a few weeks Hendrickson Publishing House will distribute a new commentary by Jim Bruckner (Seminary) on *Exodus*, as part of the New International Biblical Commentary Series.

Each of these books gives witness to the exceptional scholarship and enduring Christian commitment of these faculty members. Our students are studying in the company of some very fine faculty members, and the church (both Covenant and beyond) and the broader academic community are being well-served by the research and writing that takes place on our campus. This is an accomplishment worth celebrating!

#### WE'RE LOOKING FOR GOOD PEOPLE

I often think that the most important thing I do as president of the University is to hire people. We are a people-centered institution, and whether we accomplish our mission is fully dependent on the people who work here.

I especially think about this during the spring because this is the time each year when we interview applicants for positions on our campus. This spring we're interviewing for several faculty and administrative positions.

- Faculty
  - o Biblical and Theological Studies
  - o Biology
  - o Clinical Psychology
  - o Director of Nursing Graduate Program
  - o Nurse Practitioner Faculty (graduate)
  - o World Missions (seminary)
- Administrative
  - o Dean of Diversity and Intercultural Programs
  - o Dean of Academic Life (seminary)
  - o Dean of the School of Education
  - o Dean of the School of Music
  - o Director of Career Planning and Development
  - o Director of Institutional Effectiveness and Research

Each of these searches offers an opportunity to further strengthen teaching and learning at North Park. Wisdom is required for making good hiring choices, so please pray for us!

## STRATEGIC PLANNING

Twenty years ago no one could possibly have envisioned the North Park University of 2008. In 1987 an entrepreneurial new president was appointed to the helm of this institution, and through a series of calculated though often risky decisions he established the groundwork for the next two remarkable decades. Since that time, North Park has been expanded programmatically, numerically, financially, and physically.

- From a small undergraduate college and seminary to a mid-size university encompassing undergraduate and graduate programs in the college of arts and sciences, five professional schools, and the theological seminary.
- From an enrollment of 1,050 to a student body of over 3,250.
- From an endowment of \$6 million to more than \$62 million.
- From a campus of older buildings in considerable disarray to a campus with numerous new facilities, increased green space, and an expanding physical footprint.

Something truly extraordinary has transpired among us. There is a renewed and growing momentum at North Park University.

Do we now flatten the trajectory—our rate of change—and choose to make today's NPU the status quo? Or do we use today's NPU as a base on which to build tomorrow's University? We choose to build.

And it is for this reason that I have engaged the creative and thoughtful energies of the Board of Trustees, my administrative colleagues, and campus leaders in preparing a new strategic plan for the University. Details of the plan will be forthcoming after final approval by the Board. What we can look forward to, however, is a plan that sets the trajectory of the University for the coming decade.

In choosing to build on the present moment, the task of the new strategic plan will be to set our course toward the 125th anniversary of the founding of North Park University. We will celebrate this anniversary in 2016.

The strategic plan will draw on the distinctiveness of the University as perceived by prospective students, long-time supporters, and loyal faculty and staff. What are the roots of the distinctive character of North Park? Among the possible answers are the following:

- A comprehensive curriculum reflecting a long-standing commitment to the liberal arts and applied sciences
- A heritage within and continuing support from the Evangelical Covenant Church
- A growing embrace of our urban setting
- A commitment to educating people from all walks of life
- A spirit of innovation

Our task will be to renew our mission, advance the overall well-being of the University, and engage both continuing and new supporters of North Park ever more effectively in the years to come.

Thank you for joining us in this task!

David L. Parkyn

President, North Park University

