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The Little Seminary That Could: Trinity School for Ministry

Michael King, Bob Jamison and Bruce Barron

Upon entering the Trinity School for Ministry library in Ambridge, Pennsylvania, USA, one sees an open area to the right, designated as the Stanway Africa Alcove in honour of the school's founding dean. Against the back wall of the alcove, as is common at organizations interested in world mission, a map of the world is posted. But this is not a typical map—relative to most representations of our planet, it is upside down. Africa and South America dominate the viewer's attention in this arrangement, with Europe and North America dangling nondescriptly at the bottom.

The map focuses viewers' eyes on parts of the world where this young, modest-sized school has made an incredible impact. It is also an apt image for Trinity, which has specialized in turning things topsy-turvy. In 40 years it has grown from a tiny, unpromising outpost to a globally prominent seminary, overturning the pecking order in theological education while also playing a significant role in the reshaping of Anglican relationships worldwide as well as in world mission. Trinity's history embodies what God can do when a few gifted, determined people respond sacrificially to a widely perceived need.

I. Overcoming Functional Deism

Stephen Noll was a young Episcopalian with a bright ministry future. Converted to Christ as a Cornell University undergrad, he had earned his master of divinity degree from an Episcopal seminary in California and was active in his first ministry at Truro Church, a vibrant northern Virginia parish impacted by charismatic renewal.

Wanting to provide biblically sound teaching to the Episcopal renewal movement, Noll had been accepted to enter a Ph.D. program at Manchester, England in 1976 and study under the esteemed New Testament scholar F. F. Bruce. But he wondered how he would support his family, with a third child on the way.

Noll shared his concerns with John Rodgers, an evangelical professor at Virginia Seminary, who calmly told him, 'If God is calling you, you just

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have to trust the Lord.'

It was good advice—but little did Noll know that Rodgers was simultaneously on the other side of another very similar conversation, struggling to apply that advice to himself. Alfred Stanway, an Australian native who had been an Anglican bishop in Tanzania for 20 years, was asking Rodgers to leave his post at the Episcopal Church's largest seminary and become one of the original professors at a fledgling school near Pittsburgh.

The idea of starting a new seminary had emerged from the highly charged, ambitious atmosphere of the Pittsburgh Offensive, a citywide Christian strategic planning group. Episcopal seminaries in the United States had been strongly affected by modern and liberalizing approaches, and the vibrantly evangelical Episcopal preacher John Guest was tired of telling promising ministry candidates that they needed to travel across the pond to his native Britain to obtain sound biblical education.

In 1974, fellow Offensive participant R. C. Sproul urged Guest to consider founding a school in the United States. Guest pitched the idea to one of his wealthy parishioners at St. Stephen's Church in Sewickley, Nanky Chalfant, who responded enthusiastically and jump-started the project with a $250,000 gift.

As recounted in Janet Leighton's excellent history of Trinity School for Ministry, Guest approached the presiding bishop of the Episcopal Church, who expressed scepticism about the need for another seminary but offered backhanded encouragement: 'If you have the sense that God is calling you to do this, then even though it doesn't seem wise to me, I know that you have to go and pursue that call.'[1]

At the recommendation of John Stott, perhaps Anglicanism's most respected evangelical theologian, Guest recruited Alf Stanway out of retirement in Australia and persuaded him to become the founding dean of a non-existent dream. Stanway arrived in 1975, intending to spend his first year hiring faculty, finding facilities, and attracting students so that the school could commence operations in fall 1976.

Thus, by late 1975, Stanway was challenging Rodgers to take a leap of faith and lend his credibility to the new, self-consciously evangelical Trinity Episcopal School for Ministry—so named to signal a departure from the heavy academic emphasis and limited preparation for practical pastoral work typical of most seminary programs.

In one sense, Rodgers was ready to take the leap. He had studied under Karl Barth, one of the twentieth century's most towering theological icons and leader of the 'neo-orthodox' reaction to liberal theology, at Basel, Switzerland. As an evangelical at Virginia, he felt frustrated that 'we were not turning out graduates who could withstand the power of secularity. They cared about people but had no supernatural resources, because they didn't believe in the supernatural and were not confident of biblical authority.'

Rodgers even considered leaving the world of Episcopal education for more evangelical pastures but ultimately—'surprising even myself,'

1 Janet Leighton, *Lift High the Cross: The History of Trinity School for Ministry*, updated and expanded edition (Ambridge, PA: Whitchurch, 2014), 10.

he commented—declined a job offer from Fuller Seminary in California.

But in another sense, he was not ready for Stanway's recruiting visit in January 1976. By his own admission, Rodgers was theologically evangelical but, in financial matters, functionally deist; that is, he wasn't certain that God would intervene directly in his financial situation. Leighton records their conversation as follows:

> Rodgers: How can I accept such a call and place my wife and children in such a shakily financed venture?
>
> Stanway: Do you believe God loves your wife and children?
>
> Rodgers: Well, yes.
>
> Stanway: If he's calling you, isn't he committing himself to provide for your wife and children?
>
> Rodgers: Well, that is what Christ teaches, but we've never lived that way.
>
> Stanway: Maybe it's time to start![2]

Rodgers agreed to come. So did Peter Davids, a biblical scholar who had also studied under F. F. Bruce. Les Fairfield, a Purdue University history professor contemplating a career change, came as both church history instructor and student. With them as the main faculty and 17 students enrolled, Trinity opened in September 1976 in rented facilities at Robert Morris University. Rodgers, Davids, and Fairfield's credentials immediately established the school's academic quality.

As for Noll, he took the leap of faith too—more than once. After finishing his Ph.D. at Manchester, he joined Trinity's faculty in 1979. And the money never ran out, although the Trinity community lived quite frugally in its early years.

II. A God-Ordained Location

Trinity's first leaders thought that Sewickley, home to Guest's church, would make the most logical permanent location. Sewickley was (and still is) a quaint, fashionable, well-manicured town along the Ohio River, 13 miles downstream from Pittsburgh. Historically, it had been the community of choice for managers who oversaw the big industrial operations farther downriver—the steel mills of Aliquippa and U.S. Steel's American Bridge factory in Ambridge.

God, however, obviously thought otherwise, because he firmly shut the doors to Sewickley. Some Sewickley residents, perhaps confusing the clientele of an Episcopal divinity school with stereotypical college undergrads, actively opposed permitting Trinity to move in, fearing an onslaught of noisy seminarians.

During Trinity's second year, a church building and a former grocery became available in Ambridge, by then a town in socioeconomic decline. The properties were anything but glamorous, but they were highly affordable. Trinity bought both properties and has made Ambridge its home since 1978. School leaders contemplated relocation to a more attractive site at times during the next seven years, but after Trinity was miraculously spared from substantial damage during two fires at a factory immediately behind the former grocery in early 1985, they concluded that God wanted them to stay.

Downtown Ambridge is not an ideal school location—for decades,

2 Leighton, *Lift High the Cross*, 47.

there was no nearby recreation area—but it offered affordable housing and proved a great fit for Trinity's mission. Students gained practical ministry experience in serving the needy community surrounding them through food and clothing distribution, door-to-door evangelism, and after-school activities for children. The favourable local response to those actions led to the founding of the Church of the Savior in 1985, with Trinity student Joe Vitunic as pastor. (Until then, Trinity was an Episcopal seminary in a town with no Episcopal church.) Vitunic would serve the church for its first 20 years.

Noll found that most of the early faculty fit into their humble setting quite well. 'We felt like pioneers, and we all had a radical side, so we didn't feel out of our element in Ambridge', he said. 'We didn't mind carpooling in someone's broken-down vehicle. After all, the students, most of whom had come to Trinity without an endorsement from their bishop, were making sacrifices too.'

Trinity eventually constructed two additional buildings on land formerly occupied by a used car lot and two stores. During the planning process, school leaders discovered the extent to which locals' initial suspicion of a religious school moving in had turned to appreciation. Trinity asked the borough council to vacate a one-block alley so that the school could develop the property. When the council refused, Trinity representatives suggested that maybe they would have to move. 'Immediately', Noll recalled, 'signs saying "Save Trinity Seminary" started appearing in shop windows, and there was a big meeting at the high school with 200 people saying we were the best thing that had happened to the town in years. After all, students were getting to know their neighbours and serving them in humble ways, and buying things in their stores as well. Council promptly reversed its position.'

III. 'Determination Is Better Than Frustration'

Alf Stanway provided remarkably disciplined, determined leadership as Trinity's first dean. His personal devotional life was fervent and fixed, as captured in one of his favourite phrases: 'No Bible, no breakfast.' From his long association with the Anglican Church Mission Society, he derived the principle of 'start small, even while intending great things.' He made money a secondary issue, believing that if one obeyed God in ministry, the money would follow.

Guided by unshakable reliance on a sovereign God, Stanway refused to become frustrated by apparent setbacks. Leighton tells of one instance when Stanway and Trinity's treasurer made an appointment to visit an available property. When they arrived, praying that God would give them unmistakable direction, they learned that the property had already been sold. Showing no sign of disappointment, Stanway exclaimed, 'A clear indication!'[3]

Stanway retired from Trinity in 1978 due to the onset of Parkinson's disease. D. A. Carson, of Trinity Evangelical Divinity School near Chicago, described visiting Stanway in Australia: By then, his Parkinson's had progressed to the point where he could not talk and had to answer

3 Leighton, *Lift High the Cross*, 73.

questions in barely legible writing. Carson asked Stanway how, after such a powerful and productive life, he was dealing with virtually complete incapacity. Stanway had to write out his response three times before Carson could decipher it: 'There is no future in frustration.'[4]

John Rodgers replaced Stanway as dean and president in November 1978. As a symbol of Trinity's hard-earned acceptance, Episcopal bishop Robert Appleyard hosted and participated personally in the installation ceremony at downtown Pittsburgh's majestic Trinity Cathedral. Three years earlier, Rodgers had shown respect for Appleyard by telling him, 'If you don't want this seminary to start, I won't come.' Appleyard had not stood in the way, but neither had he sent Trinity any ministry candidates while waiting for the school to prove itself. Now he told Rodgers that the Episcopal Diocese of Pittsburgh was open to him and to Trinity.

With that promise of support, and with Trinity's first students ready to graduate in 1979, the school could embark in earnest on its mission of reshaping the Episcopal Church. As historian Jeremy Bonner said of the school's opening, 'For the first time since the nineteenth century, an expressly countercultural seminary had been established under Episcopal auspices.'[5] Typically, when religious organizations drift off their original moorings toward more liberal views, clergy lead the way; when Protestant denominations hold their national assemblies, the clergy display more progressive voting patterns than the laity. Trinity intended to reverse the process by sending pastorally effective, spiritually renewed, theologically evangelical graduates into Episcopal parishes.

The results were impressive. Over the next 30 years, the Episcopal Diocese of Pittsburgh moved in a markedly conservative direction, both at the parish level and at the top. The diocese called theologically charismatic Alden Hathaway—who would have lost the election without the votes of Trinity faculty—as bishop in 1981 and, upon Hathaway's retirement in 1997, chose staunchly orthodox Robert Duncan to replace him. Moreover, from 1984 to 1992 the Episcopal Diocese of Pittsburgh planted nine new churches, six of them led by Trinity graduates.

Trinity benefitted in turn from the change it helped to produce in the diocese, as Pittsburgh provided a path to ordination for Trinity graduates whose home bishops, viewing them as too conservative, had not endorsed them as candidates for ordained ministry.

IV. Surmounting Tensions

From its beginnings, Trinity, though solidly committed to biblical faithfulness, has had to build bridges between competing views. Some of its early leaders had been deeply impacted by charismatic renewal (which put their forms of expression significantly at odds with the more staid British version of evangelical Anglicanism); others had not. One of the founding trustees objected strongly to the char-

4 D. A. Carson: *A Call to Spiritual Reformation: Priorities from Paul and His Prayers* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1992), 141.

5 Jeremy Bonner, *Called Out of Darkness: A History of the Episcopal Diocese of Pittsburgh, 1750–2006* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2009), 267–68.

ismatic practice of seeking baptism in the Spirit subsequent to salvation, arguing that it introduced a false, two-tiered view of Christian piety.

'We had some very aggressive charismatic students who brought frequent 'words from the Lord' to chapel and prayer meetings', Rodgers said. 'We had to write a manual on biblically faithful openness to extraordinary gifts.'

Trinity overcame potential threats to harmony by remaining anchored in classic Reformation doctrine and intentionally practicing charity in non-essential matters.

'John Rodgers set the course', said 'Laurie' Thompson, a charismatic Trinity faculty member since 1997 and now the school's dean and president. 'He developed an ethos early on that made us all feel welcome, making it clear that neither high-church people, charismatics, nor evangelicals would be stigmatized.'

At moments of internal tension, Rodgers would call the Trinity community to refocus. 'We knew something was going on', Thompson recalled, 'when John walked into class singing "Seek ye first the kingdom of God." We learned to pray.'

Trinity's constant effort to keep Bible, tradition, and subjective inspiration in balance is reflected in its carefully worded motto: 'Evangelical in faith, catholic in order, Spirit-led in mission.'

Legitimate differences of opinion are welcome at Trinity; creating disorder is not. Rodgers related one occasion when four female students came to his office and presented him with a list of written demands. Rodgers gave the piece of paper back to them and defused the conflict by stating calmly, 'You are looking at a dean who doesn't respond to demands. If you would like to rewrite this as a discussion piece, the faculty will be happy to talk with you.'

The hot-button issues on campus change over time, but the commitment to collegiality and seeking community-wide consensus has not. Thompson encountered a new area of sensitivity a few years ago after a celebrant at a chapel service told participants where to take their children should they make noise during the liturgy. (Ironically, the gospel reading that day was 'Suffer the little children to come unto me.') The following week, a group of students brought Thompson a four-page discussion paper. 'We discovered that the younger generation is very protective of children', he remarked. 'It became clear that we need to include family-focused spaces in our long-range planning.'

V. Navigating Disagreement on Gender Roles

The issue of women's ordination aroused particularly strong feelings at Trinity. The Episcopal Church had voted to ordain women in 1976. For many conservatives, the decision itself was discomforting but the stated rationale, grounded more in civil rights than in Scripture or tradition, raised deeper concerns that the denomination was placing cultural considerations above theological integrity.

As a widely respected leader who had supported women's ordination while bishop of Tanzania, Stanway established a pattern of openness to Christians on both sides of the issue. Trinity accepted female students into all degree programs from the begin-

ning, taking the position that it was a training institution, not an ordaining body, and would equip all Christians for what they felt called to do. Whatever their personal opinion, all students grew by interacting with deeply committed fellow believers who held a different view.

But keeping the peace wasn't easy. When Mary Hays arrived as Trinity's first female professor in 1989, teaching pastoral theology, some students opposed to women's ordination declined to take communion from her or to attend chapel when she was preaching. 'They would hold their own morning prayer in the chapel basement', Hays said, 'so I had to walk right past them to hang up my vestments.'

Hays endured that difficult experience because she understood that the dissenters from women's ordination were seeking to follow their conscience. She believed in Trinity's mission and was convinced that to function effectively, Trinity needed to be open to multiple points of view.

'The Scriptures are not univocal on women's roles', Hays stated, 'so someone who is thoughtful and biblically grounded could have a different view from me. I think they are wrong, but that is not the same as saying you can't have a different position.'

Hays stayed at Trinity for nine years before becoming an assistant to Bishop Duncan; Trinity has had at least one woman on its faculty at all times since then. Interestingly, Trinity got a two-for-one deal when Hays came. At Rodgers's encouragement, her husband, Whis, created a youth ministry training organization, Rock the World, and spent two years developing what became the first Anglican master's degree program in youth ministry anywhere in the world. He directed the program as a Trinity faculty member from 1991 to 2006, modelling his curriculum on the work of Gordon-Conwell Seminary professor Dean Borgman. Whis Hays estimates that more than a thousand teens found Christ through the retreats that he and Trinity students coordinated during those 15 years.

VI. Gracious amidst Division

Trinity and its faculty played prominent roles in the intense debates that would ultimately divide the Episcopal Church. Noll was Trinity's academic dean in 1987 when the Episcopal Church sent proposed new liturgies written in inclusive language (i.e., avoiding the use of male pronouns when referring to God) to its 11 seminaries for comment. 'If we don't express our objections, no one else will', he told the faculty. Noll received approval to write a paper representing Trinity's views on language for God. Trinity students also reviewed the liturgies and submitted their responses, although the denomination declined to count them officially since Trinity decided not to actually use the texts for worship.

In the early 1990s, Noll entered the fray again, drafting a document on the Anglican doctrine of Scripture at the request of a Trinity board member who was on the Episcopal House of Bishops' theology commission.[6] Then in 1996, John Howe, Bishop of Central Florida and previously on staff with

6 This and other papers are collected in Stephen Noll, *The Global Anglican Communion: Contending for Anglicanism 1993–2018* (Newport Beach, CA: Anglican House, 2018).

John Guest at St. Stephen's, asked Noll to write briefs for the church trial of Bishop Walter Righter, who had been charged with knowingly ordaining a homosexual for ministry. Many conservatives in the Episcopal Church believed that the trial was their last chance to reverse the liberalizing tide in their denomination.

Noll prepared two briefs, on church doctrine and church discipline, for the Righter trial. He also coordinated Trinity's response in 1997 when the Episcopal Church asked seminaries for their opinion on 'same-sex blessings' of homosexual couples.

After Righter was acquitted, conservatives in the Episcopal Church began to consider creating alternative affiliations. They had formed the American Anglican Council in 1996 to advocate for classical biblical doctrines, but up to this point they had still sought to work within the Episcopal denomination. Now, increasingly viewing that course as fruitless, they turned overseas, where their positions were still overwhelmingly supported within worldwide Anglicanism. In fact, the Lambeth Conference (the international convening of Anglican bishops, held every 10 years) of 1998 had declared homosexual practice incompatible with Scripture by 526 votes to 70.

In January 2000, some Anglican conservatives took a bold step by consecrating two Americans, including John Rodgers, as missionary bishops under the authority of archbishops from Rwanda and Singapore, respectively. The purpose was to offer alternative ecclesiastical oversight to Episcopalians in the United States. This action was controversial even within conservative circles, as it directly challenged the Episcopal Church's structure of diocesan oversight. But the approval of practicing homosexual Gene Robinson as bishop of New Hampshire in 2003 solidified evangelicals' desire to pursue new affiliations.

In this context, Trinity and its alumni took on an increasingly strategic role. According to Duncan, then Pittsburgh's bishop, 'the national leadership exercised by Trinity alumni was such that two-thirds of those who were on stage at A Place to Stand [a fall 2003 conference organized in response to Robinson's ordination] were Trinity grads, giving encouragement to the more than two thousand orthodox attendees gathered from all across the United States.'

In 2008, Duncan indicated his intention to remove the diocese from the Episcopal Church and align it with the Anglican Province of the Southern Cone, which comprised six South American countries. (Tito Zavala, a Trinity graduate, was Bishop of Chile within this province and would serve as presiding bishop of the province, now known as the Anglican Church of South America, from 2010 to 2016.) Before the diocese could act, the Episcopal bishops called a special meeting and removed Duncan from his position.

Within two weeks, the Pittsburgh Diocese voted 240–102 to withdraw from the Episcopal Church and align with the Southern Cone; another month later, it elected Duncan as its bishop. Remarkably, the margin in favor of withdrawal was greater among clergy (79 percent) than among lay participants (63 percent). Trinity School for Ministry—which removed the word *Episcopal* from its name in 2007—played a major role in this result.

Also in 2008, more than a thousand conservative Anglicans met in Jerusalem for the first Global Anglican Future Conference (GAFCON), with Duncan representing North America and Noll serving on the conference's statement drafting committee. GAFCON's website reflects how heated the rhetoric had become, explaining that the conference occurred because 'moral compromise, doctrinal error and the collapse of biblical witness in parts of the Anglican communion had reached such a level that the leaders of the majority of the world's Anglicans felt it was necessary to take a united stand for truth.'

While holding firmly to evangelical convictions about Scripture, Trinity has always sought to serve all concerned parties with grace. In 1992, it invited proponents of a liberal, social justice–oriented Episcopal magazine, *The Witness*, to celebrate their publication's seventy-fifth anniversary at Trinity, where they engaged in honest but respectful dialogue with their hosts. It remains an approved Episcopal seminary and continues to receive Episcopal students, although members of the Anglican Church in North America (ACNA), founded in 2009, outnumber them.

Duncan, who served as the ACNA's first archbishop through 2014, has been a Trinity trustee since 1996 and has taught the school's Introduction to Anglican Worship course since 2017.

VII. An Expanded Global Profile

The tensions within the worldwide Anglican communion had an upside for Trinity that no one could have planned: they made the school famous in Africa.

With Stanway at its helm, Trinity had African connections—and a few African students—by its second year. Its very early establishment of a two-year master of arts in religion program, alongside the three-year M.Div. degree required of American seminarians seeking ordination, helped to attract overseas students too. But the global connections mushroomed as ecclesiastical conflicts in America burnished Trinity's image as the best option for African Anglicans wishing to study in the United States.

In 1996, the Archbishop of Uganda, Livingstone Nkoyoyo, visited Trinity and expressed his desire to expand an existing theological college in his homeland into a full-blown Christian university. In 1997, he asked Noll, Trinity's academic dean, to become its vice chancellor. Noll said he would pray about the possibility, but he and his wife didn't get around to visiting Uganda until two years later.

By the end of that trip, they sensed that God was calling them. 'I wrote to the archbishop', Noll explained, 'saying that I will come under the condition that this will be a Christian university not just in name but in substance.' By fall 2000, he was the vice chancellor of Uganda Christian University (UCU). He would stay for 10 years as the school grew to over 10,000 students on four campuses.

Even though they felt called to Uganda, the Nolls wondered why; after all, Steve Noll knew how to manage a theological school, but not departments of engineering, law, or business. But he knew one crucial thing very well: how to obtain accreditation, which he had overseen at Trinity. In 2001, the Ugandan government passed legislation giving private

universities a path to accreditation; three years later, UCU became the first institution to meet the requirements.

At UCU, Noll replicated much of what he and his colleagues had done at Trinity. Departing from the Ugandan academic system, which followed the British emphasis on college as a place for professional specialization, he introduced four foundation courses in Bible and Christian thought, drawing directly from Trinity's syllabus for two of them. 'The Old Testament course I constructed in 1990 has been taken by hundreds of Americans and thousands of Ugandans', Noll pointed out.

He also developed an 'Instrument of Identity' document that went beyond a simple statement of faith, encompassing morals and spirituality along with essential Christian doctrine. He met with each faculty member, just as he had seen John Rodgers do at Trinity, to discuss their faith commitment and secure their affirmation of the identity statement. Noll believes that UCU was only the second university in all Africa to take such steps.

Actions that made Trinity an epicentre of global mission included the creation of the Stanway Institute for World Mission and Evangelism in 1989 and the relocation of two mission organizations to Ambridge: the South American Missionary Society (now the Society of Anglican Missionaries and Senders, with a broader global reach) in 1988 and the New Wineskins Missionary Network in 1990. John Macdonald, a 1986 Trinity graduate, further invigorated this emphasis when, after twelve years as a missionary to Honduras, he joined the faculty in 2002.

Macdonald was profoundly shaped by two of Pittsburgh's most prominent Christian leaders. He grew up at St. Stephen's in Sewickley and committed himself to Christ under John Guest's youth ministry. During his college years, he frequently drove 65 miles to the Ligonier Valley Study Center on summer evenings to learn from R. C. Sproul.

Macdonald enjoyed a highly mission-oriented environment when studying at Trinity in the 1980s, but when he returned as a professor in 2002, the Stanway Institute's initial energy had waned. Not until several months later, when he inquired about taking a group of students to Uganda for short-term mission, did Macdonald learn that he had a travel budget. But after the watershed moment of Gene Robinson's ordination, forming a network of recognizably orthodox mission agencies that Global South archbishops could trust became a high priority. Macdonald became Trinity's 'secretary of state', representing the school about six times a year in international contexts and building a huge set of contacts.

The crisis in the Episcopal Church actually helped Macdonald overcome the sense of paternalism that often pervades First World mission efforts in Africa. When preaching in Uganda shortly after Robinson's election, Macdonald said, 'For decades, white Europeans and North Americans have told you that they are the experts and that you need to learn from them. But now I come to you with hat in hand, because you are the guardians of the historic, biblical Christian faith. We need your prayers and support.'

Macdonald sees relationships between American and Global South Christians as mutually beneficial. On

one hand, areas of the Global South where Christianity is growing rapidly have demonstrated expertise in evangelism; on the other hand, Americans offer a higher level of theological training, which Macdonald considers especially important today as theological liberalism and shallow versions of the prosperity gospel compete for adherents.

Another influential ambassador for Trinity in Africa was Grant LeMarquand, who served as a missionary in Kenya before joining the Trinity faculty in 1998. From 2012 to 2017, LeMarquand was Bishop of the Horn of Africa (which includes Ethiopia, Somalia, and Eritrea). Stationed near Ethiopia's border with Sudan, he and his wife Wendy, a medical doctor, responded to the spiritual and physical needs of thousands of refugees from the Sudanese civil war and established a theological college there. LeMarquand has since resumed teaching at Trinity.

Trinity now requires all M.Div. students to participate in at least one overseas mission trip, typically two to three weeks long, which can include preaching, leading Bible studies for adults or children, or mentoring local ministry candidates. Recent destinations have included Kenya, Tanzania, and Indonesia. In addition, Trinity funds scholarships for about eight international 'Stanway Scholars' each year.

In 2008, Qampicha Daniel Wario, a Stanway Scholar from northern Kenya, told a classmate that the best way to bring the gospel to his home community would be a Christian school. Two years later, they started sharing the idea with others at Trinity, and interest grew rapidly. Macdonald travelled to Kenya to confirm that community leaders would back the project, discovering that coincidentally, an Anglican priest with a similar vision had been raising animals on a small plot for 20 years to protect it from Kenya's land expropriation policy. With initial support coming entirely from Trinity students and alumni, the school opened on that property in 2011 and now enrols 450 students in grades K-8, about 80 percent of them from Muslim families who value the high-quality education regardless of its Christian component.

In 2016, Qampicha became Anglican Bishop of Marsabit. His territory, ironically, bordered that of one of his Trinity instructors, Bishop LeMarquand.

Trinity is also delivering both online and on-site instruction to Nigerian theological students in partnership with the Christian Institute of Jos, Nigeria, led by Bishop Benjamin Kwashi, a Trinity doctoral degree holder and board member. Kwashi has said that Africans used to aspire to go to Oxford or Cambridge, England for theological training, but now they all want to drop the C and go to Ambridge.

In September 2018, Macdonald (newly retired from Trinity and intending to devote himself more fully to international theological training) and Noll met with the archbishop of Rwanda to discuss revitalizing a seminary there. It was *déjà vu* for Noll when the archbishop said, 'I want one of you to be my vice chancellor.'

VIII. Ambassadors for Anglicanism Too

Trinity's motto as 'an evangelical seminary in the Anglican tradition' hints at its dual identity. It promotes evangelical conviction among Angli-

cans, but it also promotes the treasures of historic Anglicanism to evangelicals, many of whom tend not to appreciate liturgical worship and find little value in church history between the first and sixteenth centuries.

Trinity upped its game on this front in 2012 by attracting the Robert E. Webber Center for an Ancient Evangelical Future, named for the late evangelical Anglican theologian and long-time Wheaton College professor, to Ambridge.

Centre director Joel Scandrett, who also teaches historical theology at Trinity, was a perfect fit. He had been ordained by the American Anglican Council and placed under Robert Duncan's oversight, making him 'canonically resident' in Pittsburgh even before he moved there. But beyond that, his presence and that of the Webber Center have helped Trinity to strengthen its liturgical formation of students, balance the evangelical and catholic elements of Anglicanism, and attract young evangelicals interested in reclaiming the tradition of the early church so as to renew today's church.

The Webber Center holds an annual Ancient Evangelical Future Conference and is also developing resources to improve catechesis—that is, sound training, firmly rooted in church tradition, in Christian doctrine and practice. Its longer-term plans include training courses in catechesis and a lecture series in early Christian studies.

Scandrett sees Trinity as capitalizing on evangelicals' recovery of the church fathers, an emphasis that Webber prefigured in his book *Evangelicals on the Canterbury Trail.* His writings have helped to raise Trinity's visibility in the U.S. evangelical community, along with those of faculty colleagues like Wesley Hill, a first-rate New Testament scholar who has also written about his gay sexual orientation and his commitment to celibacy.

Scandrett's efforts to promote traditional Anglicanism and Trinity in a broader ecumenical context are bolstered by two interesting partnerships. The North American Lutheran Church, a breakaway from the mainline Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, has its own seminary administrative centre collocated with Trinity; its students are overseen by two Lutheran professors on the Trinity faculty, one of whom is the North American Lutheran Seminary's president. In addition, the Evangelical Presbyterian Church's Presbytery of the Alleghenies has partnered with Trinity as an approved seminary; faculty member and EPC pastor Rich Herbster serves as director of Presbyterian studies.

'The Lutherans are happy because we are more sacramental than other evangelical schools', Thompson stated. 'And the Presbyterians—with whom our polity is very much in line except for who has the authority to appoint pastors—know they are free to express their leadership in their own style as well.'

Herbster indicated that the EPC benefits from having a theologically compatible, geographically convenient educational partner that values the planting of new churches and the intentional training and formation of Christian leaders. 'They're not on the Canterbury trail', he said of the approximately ten Presbyterian students at Trinity, 'but they take a greater appreciation of liturgical worship into their ministry and their personal devotions.'

IX. Perspectives from Recent Students

Austin Gohn graduated from Northgate High School just outside Pittsburgh; his father pastored the nondenominational Bellevue Christian Church, and Austin joined that church's staff after his undergraduate study. When he began considering seminary and a friend told him about Trinity, he visited Wikipedia to find out what Anglicans are.

Gohn wanted a school that was theologically conservative but not too insular; Trinity met his desires perfectly, even though his background was so low-church that when Robert Duncan, then ACNA presiding bishop, came to campus to visit with students, Gohn asked him, 'What's a bishop and why do we need them?'

By his third year, Gohn knew the Anglican *Book of Common Prayer* well enough to step in and assist with leading evening prayers on short notice. He hopes that one day the curriculum might include a nondenominational track without the current handful of required courses on Anglican history and theology. (Presbyterian and Lutheran students avoid that inconvenience because Trinity offers alternative courses rooted in their traditions.) But he has gained an appreciation of the liturgical year that he said will permanently impact his preaching, especially at Lent and Advent.

'One of my closest friends in Bellevue is an Anglican priest', Gohn stated. 'My personal network now goes far beyond my nondenominational circles, and I can relate to other Christian traditions easily because of my Trinity experience.'

Robert Osborne, a cradle Episcopalian raised in Connecticut, worked internationally on human rights and relief issues and kept running into people connected to Trinity—Stephen Noll in Uganda, a professor at Oxford, Anglican priests in Nigeria. When he decided that his human rights discourse needed stronger theological underpinnings, Trinity was the logical choice.

As an Episcopal Church ministry candidate, Osborne represented Trinity at various events hosted by other Episcopal seminaries, where his experiences led him to a surprising conclusion: 'At Trinity, you have the freedom to think differently.' Some might have assumed exactly the reverse—namely, that freedom of thought would be more restricted at the most evangelical seminaries. But Osborne observed that whereas the more progressive schools tend to develop their own orthodoxies to which everyone is expected to adhere, at Trinity, within the boundaries of classical theological orthodoxy, all economic, political, and social views are welcome.

Osborne treasured Trinity's 'beautiful community' of students who lived in low-budget houses all over town, with their doors open to each other and to their Ambridge neighbours. Some of his classmates took people battling addiction into their homes; Osborne volunteered on the borough's beautification committee and assisted refugees in Pittsburgh. 'I heard a lot of sermons at other schools about caring for refugees,' he said, 'but Trinity actually does it.'

Rosie (last name omitted for security reasons), a New Zealand native, found the healing experience she needed at Trinity after doing relief and development work in the Middle East during the Arab Spring up-

heavals of 2011 and thereafter. She also appreciated studying at a school where instructors 'get emotional in class when talking about the nature of God. It is not just heavy theology—it touches their heart.'

Because of its focus on training Christian mission leaders, Trinity faculty embraced Rosie's penchant for writing essays as if speaking directly to the Muslims who had asked her about Christ amidst the Arab Spring turmoil. Trinity challenged her to 'let the [biblical] text create your world' rather than the reverse, she said. As of September 2018, Rosie was returning to New Zealand to be ordained a deacon. In the Anglican tradition, she noted, 'Deacons take the presence of Christ outside the church. Trinity has prepared me to do that.'

X. Amazing Growth

As these student profiles illustrate, Trinity's student body is incredibly diverse geographically, socioeconomically, and denominationally. Its growth has also been impressive. Official 2016–2017 statistics indicated a total enrolment of 199, ranking Trinity second behind only Virginia among Episcopal seminaries. This figure counts only those enrolled in degree programs; hundreds more participate in online coursework or come for special courses during brief sessions in January and June.

The 'Jan and June terms' have become effective feeders into the residential programs, as students who spend three weeks experiencing the Trinity community usually want to come back for more. Short-term visitors help to sustain a new hotel constructed immediately adjacent to the seminary—an economic boost to Ambridge.

Generous scholarship assistance makes Trinity more accessible. The average Trinity student pays less than one-third of the total tuition cost; Justyn Terry, the dean and president before Thompson, energetically raised funds to provide full-tuition scholarships to five new domestic students each year, in addition to the overseas students supported by endowment monies. 'It is immoral to send students into ministry with huge debt', Rodgers stated flatly. Thanks in large part to this financial aid, the average age of Trinity students, now 34 and dropping, is much lower than at most seminaries.

XI. Learning from a Great Ride

Trinity School for Ministry happened because gifted people with big visions exercised faith in a big God. But it didn't come easily. Even John Rodgers, of whom the middle-aged Scandrett said that 'I want to be like him when I grow up', could trust God theologically but not financially until Alf Stanway jerked him out of his comfort zone.

Stanway lived by the dictum that 'money follows ministry'—in other words, serve people well and the funds will come in. But Trinity has also reduced its dependence on money by not spending lavishly. The school purchased two buildings in a humble location and deployed considerable sweat equity to renovate a former grocery. Today, Trinity's three buildings plus a chapel across the street actually look like a small campus, but for the first 20 years Trinity was a brave outpost amidst urban blight.

Unintentionally, the school's appearance may have strengthened its

spiritual intensity by causing those less firmly devoted to their call to look elsewhere. To paraphrase from Samuel's anointing of David (1 Sam 16:7), some prospective students may look at outward appearance, but the Lord looks for committed hearts.

Trinity's story shows that there is no contradiction or conflict between spiritual fervor and academic excellence. The quality of scholars it has consistently attracted to its faculty dispels any suspicion that Trinity maintains an outmoded or anti-intellectual worldview. 'We are not fighting contemporary knowledge', Rodgers explained. 'We use critical scholarly tools, but we do not marry them to anti-supernaturalist principles.' In fact, Rodgers turns the anti-intellectual arguments against sceptics, claiming that 'there is nothing more ridiculous than a reductionist worldview.'

However, Trinity has looked beyond academic credentials and theological orthodoxy, selecting instructors who also have a deep pastoral concern for enabling students to apply Christian truth to their own lives, their ministries, and the society around them. That combination of priorities has enabled Trinity to enjoy a close-knit learning community from its beginning (Rodgers described the initial faculty as 'a crazy, happy group, starting a new thing and believing that the money would come in') to today. 'We had our regular faculty prayer meeting yesterday', Thompson said when we interviewed him, 'and nobody left for ten minutes after it ended. We are a family who care for each other.'

Mary Hays similarly described Trinity as a 'place of prayer', recalling the occasion when the whole school suspended classes and went to the chapel to pray for a student's seriously ill wife (who recovered). Her interactions with faculty at other seminaries reinforced her sense that Trinity's intense emphasis on prayer and spiritual formation is both invaluable and distinctive.

Many American and European Christians struggle to make meaningful investments in economically needy areas of the world without appearing to be patronizing. This problem is particularly acute in theological education. In this regard, Trinity has found a silver lining in the unfortunate division within Anglicanism, as it has enabled Americans who value Global South Christians' upholding of biblical orthodoxy to build true partnerships based on mutual appreciation.

Finally, Trinity's history illustrates powerfully that God's vision is always bigger than ours. John Guest, when seeking to launch Trinity in 1974, envisioned a school that would be a credible exponent of evangelical theology within the Episcopal Church and would function as a school for ministry rather than a seminary. That sounded ambitious enough. But he never imagined three other things that Trinity has become: a globally significant, ecumenical institution reinvigorating a struggling community.

To John Macdonald, this pattern of God doing more than we could ask or think once we take the first step of obedience should be the norm. 'What Trinity is now was in God's mind from the beginning', he stated, invoking Old Testament interpretation to prove his point. 'Psalm 119:105 says, "Your word is a lamp for my feet, a light on my path." Back then, people used oil lamps that only illuminated their

next step forward; they didn't have a spotlight showing the whole path. We need to keep that visual image in mind, because that is how the Lord works.'

Actually, Trinity's first 43 years read more like a roller-coaster ride through battle zones—both theological and literal—than a smooth path. But its people have never lost faith. They've had quite a trip, but God has unmistakably led them at every step.