



Installation of Ted Ward, G.W. Aldeen Chair of International Studies¹

[President Ken Meyer] Under our Dean's leadership of the staff and faculty, we have had a renewed interest in the whole matter of missions and evangelism. This has become, in a sense, a signal to us as a community and, we hope, to our constituency and to the world that we are serious about the mission of the church and the evangelization of the world. It is not in any way inconsequential that this first of the chairs has this mission's emphasis. I think, Dean, you mentioned some time ago that about a third of our entire student body is considering overseas missions. When you think of the numbers, the hundreds of those students that are on that track, this is a radical departure from what seminaries thought of just a few years ago. And yet, we recognize that the importance of this endowed chair and the importance of missions are staggering as we face the next few years.

Dr. Ward has been working with the Southern Baptist Convention in relation to the mission of evangelizing world-class cities. The overwhelming world population that we must reach must be seen in relation to the fact that about 30% of our mission personnel will be retiring in the next 3 to 5 years. (After that great influx of missionary personnel after the Second World War.) Now they have come to 65 to 70 years of age, and so we feel a keen interest in the mission task to which God would have us respond. And so, as President of this institution, and on behalf of our board, Norris and Margaret, Paul and June, we want to thank you and the foundation that you have honored your father in this way, on this his centennial year, because though I never met him, I've heard many stories and I know this—he must have been a Swede with a big heart and big hands. I picture him that way, and I have heard stories that would convince me that he had a mind that was cooking all the time. I'll never forget, Norris, you telling me that on a flight home from Europe he recalled seeing a water clock in Europe when he was with Harold. A water clock—and on the way home on the plane he designed it, and that water clock is in Norris and Margaret's backyard today. (Apparently, you can't get it to run now.) And probably G.W.'s laughing over the rampart.

But we thank God for what the Aldeen name has meant to the school. Reuben has been a great help. As I said, the classroom named after him was a gift from Reuben at a crucial time for us. G.W. was instrumental in work on the school, and now with this chair in his memory we thank God for what he has meant in past days and what you mean to us now and what it will mean in the future until our Lord comes. Thank you.

Now, I'm going to ask June for any remarks she would have, and then after that, Norris.

[June] I think at a time like this we do a great deal of reminiscing and I've been thinking over my life as a child, my dad as my father, and I think that if there was one word that I would use to characterize him it would be consistency. He was not one that moved about, that was very changeable, but he was one that was consistent and one that was able to follow through. He was consistent in every area. He was consistent in his sense of humor. He had a tremendous sense of humor. He knew how to tell a joke and tell a punch line at the right time and he left a good laugh. In fact, when I was a little girl it was popular to have toastmasters at banquets—I suppose we call them M.C.s today—but the difference was that the toastmaster was supposed to fill the evening with jokes

¹ Remarks at the installation of Ted Ward for the G.W. Aldeen Chair of International Studies, Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, April 18, 1985. Multiple speakers in text.

that everyone was supposed to laugh at. Dad was often called upon to be a toastmaster and he took it very seriously. So much so, that he had a card file of jokes. I often wonder what happened to that.

I remember when I was in the sixth grade my teacher gave an assignment that the next morning each of us had to come to school prepared to tell a joke. So, of course, I went to my dad and he gave me a story. He had me rehearse it and then he gave me some very good advice. He said, "Be sure you don't tell that joke to anybody before class." And, of course, all the other members of the class were trying their stories out on everybody else and when they told it in class it fell perfectly flat and my joke was the hit of the day.

But at a far more important and serious level, I think my dad was very consistent in his Christian life. We had a room just off the front hall in our house—a little room that we used to call dad's den. It had a desk and a chair and some bookcases, and it had one of these half-French doors, you know, with windows in the door. And we had what we used to call glass curtains—I guess they call them sheers today—that you could see through. Every morning after breakfast dad would disappear into that room, close the door, and he would read his Bible at this desk and he would kneel by the chair. I think the very earliest recollection that I have, the very earliest memory, is that every morning after breakfast I'd run to that door and put my nose against the window to make sure that he was on his knees praying. In my very little mind I used to think that if he ever failed to be on his knees some terrible tragedy would happen. To my recollection, he never failed. He was a spiritual giant in my life and he taught me values, that more than anything else I wanted to pass on to my children.

He was also very consistent in his love of missions and he was one of the early travelers across the world. I think he showed his pictures in every church in Rockford, and shared his love and concern for missions. He also had a keen interest over the years in Trinity and, therefore, I think that it's a very appropriate thing that this chair be given in his honor. And if he were here tonight, I'm sure that he would be very pleased and very thankful.

[President Meyer] Your dad went through some of the tough days at Trinity and I was just a young pastor in the Free Church. He was on the scene in those tough experiences. And I'd like to believe that somehow those that have preceded us and are in heaven know some of the good things that happen here. I think the Lord has shared with him the good things that are happening at Trinity in these past years, and I thank God for that. Before Norris speaks, there are three folks that are not here that I want to mention: G.W.'s widow was to have been with us this evening, Eleanor Aldeen, but she is hospitalized and I know tonight that her thoughts are with us. When you do see her, Norris and June, would you please extend to her our greetings? And then, Norris and Margaret's two daughters are not here this evening: Karen, is in Germany, and Susan is in San Diego, and I'm sure these two are missed this evening.

[Norris] It's a real privilege for me to follow my sister. Usually I precede her, by 7 years, and so it's very nice to be able to follow you after your remarks about our dad. She calls him dad. Now he's my dad, too, but in my office there was a cartoon that was enlarged that had been in some magazine and I had an artist enlarge it. It showed an old grizzled, wise employment manager/counselor who was saying, "Your best employment opportunities, Norris, lie in a factory where your father holds an influential position." Because of that picture, I didn't want to go around calling him dad. I called him GW. That's what everybody called him. We had R.A. and we had G.W. And so I'm talking about dad, but I'm still talking about GW. Seeing all of our relatives here and thinking about our dad, and our heritage, and going back in the generations, that verse in Isaiah keeps coming to mind, "Consider the quarry from which you were mined, the rock from which you were cut," and that's what we're doing when we think back about our dad and about the spiritual giant that he was.

I was going to mention that incident in the den also. That is one thing that I will always carry through my life from the darkest days of the Depression when we didn't know we had a house to live in. It was owned by the bank, and I guess they didn't foreclose because they couldn't sell the crazy big place. Those were real dark days and G.W. went in there morning after morning and read the Bible—and that's where we got the strength in order to get through those days.

The Aldeen brothers were given many, many gifts. We all have certain types of gifts and G.W. had his gifts—tremendous in the area of invention and creativeness. He was putting robotics into machines in our plant before the term was ever coined. But both of the brothers, and it was true of our dad, had a gift for planning ahead. Dad had a vision. He wanted things to be done orderly and so, near the final days of his life, he called me up and said, "I want to go see the attorney." I liked to go to see the attorney because it was at the attorney's office that I met my wife, Margaret. And so I was all set up to go down to see her. Dad and I went down there and worked out all of the arrangements for his estate. And when we began talking about this charitable trust, G.W. got a sparkle in his eye and his lips sort of got a smile—a silly grin. He didn't want to show how happy he was that there was going to be this charitable trust. He talked about it time and again—how this was going to provide contributions to those things he had an interest in now, and on and on and on.

And so June and I have taken that responsibility very seriously in the distribution of funds for the trust that our dad set up; and so we, in thinking about this year (because next Tuesday would be the 100th anniversary of our dad's birth) we wanted to do something special. We tried to look back in our dad's life to discern what would be an appropriate place to do something special. We thought of all the things that he had an interest in and we kept coming back to higher education. Here was a guy, who had nothing but a lower education, who was always involved in higher education. I don't think he went past the sixth or seventh grade. I think Reuben went one year longer than my dad and felt he was superior to my dad because of it. I think it was a sixth or seventh grade education, but here he was—a trustee of Wheaton College—and he was involved with the forerunner of Trinity, the Free Church. As the Swedes used to say, "The sputz."

I don't know if you know, June, but the Mayor asked dad to be the President of the Rockford School Board. It was during that term that you would graduate from high school and he thought, gee, it'd be nice to give June a diploma—assuming she graduated, of course. But he passed that up when Dr. Emerson came to him and asked him to be the founding trustee of Westmont College. So here he was, the fellow that didn't have much education serving on the policy-making boards of these institutions, and colleges, and seminaries. And so it was very appropriate that something be done to recognize him at a seminary. And when you look at seminaries, what is there? You have brick and mortar, and windows. (Dad designed window hardware. I think it was 60 years ago that he developed hardware for the first Anderson Window. No, 50 years ago—that'd be in the early thirties.) Or you have a chair—and it's a very expensive chair.

We decided that a chair was very appropriate at this particular institution. And what should that chair be called because you have to have a name for a chair. And we went again with the interests that our dad had. He was an inventor and, well, you couldn't have a chair of invention. He also loved to cook. When we'd go fishing together he'd cook up a storm. But, there couldn't be a chair of cooking.

He loved to teach. Now we're getting closer because our dad taught Sunday school all the adult years of his life. Then we came to missions and that was what rang the bell. June mentioned how our dad had travelled all around the world, visiting missions. What she didn't say was that during the mid-1920's, before he went broke, he and my mother supported a missionary themselves: Art Schublen, in the Belgian Congo. So, he had an interest in missions that goes back to the early

1920's. So it was most appropriate that we have a chair here for our dad in memory of, and in terms of, missions.

We met Dr. Ward only recently. It was our first opportunity to meet him, but we certainly knew of his reputation; and we think that Dr. Ward is something special. I think this chair is special. Putting the two together is bound to make a marvelous combination to this institution.

So, June and I, as trustees of the G.W. Aldeen Charitable Foundation, in memory of our father and in honor of the 100th anniversary of his birth, present to you, Dr. Meyer as President of Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, this G.W. Aldeen Chair of International Studies and Missions.

To God be the glory.