

Out of our hearts shall
flow rivers of living water.

—JOHN 7:38

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The CONGREGATIONALIST

Magazine of the Congregational Way

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THE NOT-SO-EMPTY TOMB

WORK IN PROGRESS—
THE NEW NA

HOT ISSUES
NEED
COOL HEADS

ABOLITION
TOWNS:
OBERLIN

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ON THE COVER:

The Rev. Dr. Leo Christian of Rochester, Mass., preaches in a cranberry bog during the fall harvest. How came this to pass?

“One day after a funeral I stopped by the bogs of a friend to see how the harvest was going. ... He said to me in an anxious voice, ‘I am two men short and I really need some help. If you would throw on a pair of boots and get in, it might go better.’ Well I did, in white shirt and bow tie. One of the workers would every year tell the story to the new guys about the time I wore my shirt and tie into the water.

“This year that man died, so we planned a remembrance for him on the first day of harvest. I once again put on my white shirt and bow tie and climbed into the bogs— this time, to remember the life of a friend. St. Paul tells us that he became all things to all men that he might win some. And Jesus told us to go out into the highways and byways of life.”

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David Reed's Book Calls Christians to Discipleship

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Bon voyage

My father sailed from New York aboard *MS Kungsholm*, the gracious and renowned Swedish luxury liner.

It was January 1942. The *Kungsholm* had been taken over by the U.S. government and renamed *USS John Ericsson*. Dad and thousands of his fellow infantrymen were bound for the Southwest Pacific via the Panama Canal.

With them sailed a swarm of carpenters, welders, and shipfitters, frantically converting the proud *Kungsholm* to an Army troopship of Spartan accommodation, even as she steamed into harm's way.

The NACCC is doing something like that; but our project is, if possible, even more audacious: We're not just re-arranging deck chairs as we steam ahead, we're re-laying the keel and building up from there.

After World War II, the *Kungsholm* returned to civilian service and sailed another 20 years under different names

and varied flags. However, despite all facelifts, she was a worn-out, obsolete vessel and was finally sold for scrap.

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See pp. 20-21 for some of the bracing details.



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The Tomb Wasn't Empty

by Bill Rafuse

“The stone wasn’t rolled away from the tomb so Jesus could get out,” were the words I began my sermon with last Easter Sunday—and the look on the faces of those in the pews was priceless.

But I went on to show them how true that statement was. Jesus didn’t need the stone to be moved. He could have walked through it, like he did in the account of coming to the disciples in the Gospel of John, the 20th chapter, verse 19: “That evening the disciples were meeting behind LOCKED doors ... when Jesus suddenly was standing there among them!” Or again, verse 26: “Eight days later the disciples were together again ... The doors were LOCKED; but suddenly, as before, Jesus was standing among them. ...” [My emphasis. All verses quoted from *The Living Bible*.]

Take the time on Easter Sunday to enter the tomb and receive the gifts He left for us.

Why, then, was the stone rolled away, if not for Jesus to get out? Simple: So WE could get in!

If “priceless” describes the faces after I said, “The stone wasn’t rolled away from the tomb so Jesus could get out,” then “amazed” would describe their faces when I said: “The tomb wasn’t empty”—and I wasn’t talking about the napkin that was left or the grave cloth.

The faces in the pews were all saying, “What was in there?”

There was proof that God was a God of His word. Read Matthew 20:19: “... I will be mocked and crucified, and the third day I will rise to life again.”

There was the power to transform men filled with fear into great men of faith who preached the truth worldwide.

Paul says it held the victory over death: “Death is swallowed up in victory” (1 Corinthians 15:54).

Paul says in 1 Corinthians 15:20, “But the fact is that Christ did actually rise from the dead, and has become the first of millions who will come back to life again some day.” So the tomb contained the promise of eternal life and helped those around to understand Jesus’ words in John 3:16—“For God loved the world so much that he gave his only Son so that anyone who believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.”

Praise God the tomb wasn’t empty and still isn’t empty today.

Amid the shouts of “He is risen!” and the loud Alleluias, take the time on Easter Sunday to enter the tomb and receive the gifts He left there for us. Know that if you believe you will have eternal life, because He is a God of His Words and that is His promise in John 3:16. Know you can have eternal life because “He was the first of millions” to rise. Know you can be changed by the same power that raised Him from the dead, just as fear-filled disciples became brave, strong, and faithful men proclaiming God’s truth; and you will find a power, a faith, and a desire to share the good news.

Praise the Lord He moved the stone so we could get in, and praise the Lord the tomb wasn’t empty.



THE REV. WILLIAM RAFUSE, who has served on the NACCC’s Spiritual Resources Commission, Division for Ministry, Program Committee, Church Services Commission, and Executive Committee, is the senior minister of Rapid River Congregational Church in Rapid River, Mich., where he lives with his wife, Donna.

From My Heart To Yours

A Story of Courage and Faithfulness

On February 5, LeeAnne and I were honored to represent the National Association at the Tabernacle Congregational Church (UCC) in Salem, Mass. If you were in the area or on the NACCC Web site recently, you may have seen the ad about Tabernacle being the site of the 1812 commissioning of the first missionaries from our shores to take the Gospel to foreign lands.

On Feb. 19, 1812, Adoniram and Ann Judson, and Harriett and Samuel Newell, boarded the brig *Caravan*, headed for Burma. It is a spectacular story of courage and faithfulness. The 200th Anniversary day at Salem Church included a room filled with documents, pictures, timelines, journals, logs, and memorabilia; and a historical portrayal of Ann Judson by a church member.

The church historian, Catherine Piermonte, had spent months collecting and arranging documents including those from the 1812 commissioning service. Her co-chair of the event, Barbara Bowman, is a member of the Salem Church whom we knew from the First Congregational Church of Nantucket—so it was a double blessing for us to spend time with her and with the congregation.

The worship service included greetings from several denominational conferences and associations. But the liturgy itself was a combination of old and new hymns, readings, and special music which lifted up the familiar past and our mission for the future. The prayers were for the people of Myanmar (Burma), who still suffer from unbelievable human atrocities; for disciples brave enough to do missionary work in the

neighborhoods of Salem; and for the courageous ministry of God's people in all corners of the world.

The sermon was given by Liz Walker, formerly a news anchor for a Boston TV station and now an ordained minister. She made a powerful witness to the risk of loving our neighbors—as defined by Jesus, not by us. She spoke of her ten-year ministry in Sudan to set up a girls' school, the first ever in that country. It was an inspiring word and brought tears to our eyes.

When I think of "mission Sundays" which I have helped plan or have participated in over the years—this was certainly one of the most inspiring. It was a "Thank you" to God for the witnesses of the past, but also a clarion call to those of us who speak of churches as having a strong sense of mission. Although Christ's commandment to spread the Gospel certainly includes support through monetary contributions, it involves much more.

In a global community, such occasions invite us not only to give money, but to once again realize that when God said "Neighbor," the Almighty was not just talking about the person next door.



REV. DR. THOMAS M. RICHARD
Executive Secretary

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Editor's
Round
Table

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Getting the Most Out of E-mail

We've been told that computers will make our lives easier, and they usually do.

It's the "usually" that gets you. No one would put up with a car that randomly stopped working. No one would send a letter, if every once in a while it just failed to arrive—

Wait a second. Yes, we would.

We used to do that all the time. Sometimes we still do. Why is it OK for the USPS to very rarely lose my mail, but not OK for a computer? Cars used to break down a lot. That was annoying, but I don't remember anyone just staying home. Maybe when computers have been around as long as cars, they will be that reliable. Until then, we have to learn the limits.

E-mail is by far the most common messaging system in use today, so let's start there. E-mail has a few incredible advantages. Most messages arrive instantly, no one gets interrupted, and it doesn't cost a dime. That's useful! And if we only used e-mail for that, the world would be a better place. Until then, here are my suggestions:

- Check your e-mail twice a day, max. If you're tied to your computer, you're missing the whole point.
- Only use e-mail for cheap messages. If you want to say something emotionally meaningful, go buy some stationery, some thank-you notes, and a decent pen! Or take some of your valuable time and call. Or spend some of your valuable gas, and visit. If all that mattered were the content, no one would wrap presents.
- Use e-mail when you need to generate a "paper" trail. Purchase approvals, formal complaints, any time you might be asked to prove exactly what you said and when, ask for an e-mail. If someone refuses, take notes in an e-mail and send it to yourself.
- Do not use e-mail for confidential matters. Once an e-mail exists, it's surprisingly difficult to destroy and amazingly easy to share. Pick up the phone or meet face-to-face.
- Expect rare failures. If you need a reply by a certain date, set a reminder in your calendar. If you need confirmation that the e-mail was received, ask for it. That's not rude. It's common sense.
- Never, seriously never, rely on e-mail for time-sensitive communication. The fastest turnaround you can expect

on an e-mail is one business day. If you need a reply faster, pick up the phone! Instant message chats and mobile text messages are good for this too, but only if the person on the other end uses them.

- Be brief. Practice writing e-mails in five sentences or less. When you can't be brief, you absolutely must be interesting. Writing long, boring e-mails is like driving the speed limit in the passing lane. It's legal, but it taxes Christian charity.



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Hot-Button Issues Require Cool Heads

by Jean Bethke Elshtain



Tea Party adherents rally in St. Paul, Minn., in 2010. The rise of the Tea Party has been accompanied by complaints from opponents and supporters about the decline of civility in public discourse.

Dr. Jean Bethke Elshtain, one of America's foremost public intellectuals, studies the intersection of politics, religion, and the rhetoric by which we express our social and ethical ideals. She addressed the Associated Church Press last April 28 at its annual convention in Chicago. Her topic was so relevant and her message so timely that we asked for and received permission to reprint her remarks here for readers of **THE CONGREGATIONALIST**.

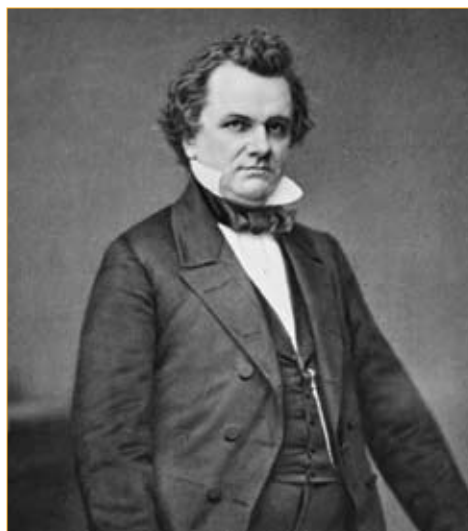
DR. ELSHTAIN: Cool heads—scarcely the stuff of today's headlines. We like it hot. For many in the media, unless someone is shouting or blustering or threatening it just isn't that interesting—or so, at least, it seems. We say we are weary of all this but, at the same time, we eat it up. Ugly disputes sell newspapers; go viral on the Internet; and all the rest. Indeed, there seems to be disappointment in some quarters when protests are respectful and peaceful: where's the news in that? So we face a situation in which cool heads are not only not encouraged but quite the opposite.

Nevertheless, that is what I want to urge upon us today. Let me begin by recalling a day-long conversation I had about a

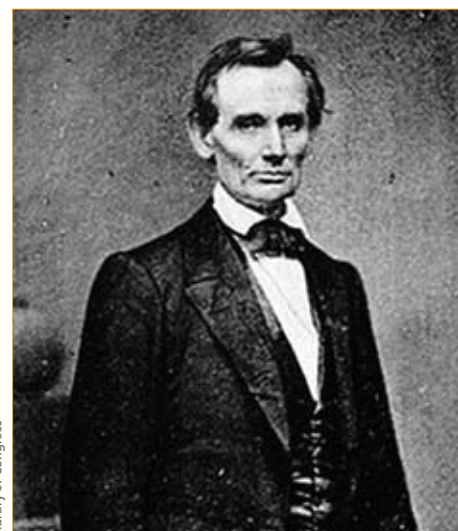
month ago with a group of rabbis from around the United States. The topic was the “just (or justified) war” tradition. As some of you may know, this is a way of thinking about war and reflecting ethically on the use of force that demands cool heads; that insists that we not get carried away by the passion of conflict as we assess whether a particular occasion justifies the use of force and, further, what sort of force it is permissible to deploy. You cannot intentionally target civilians, for example, in your rules of engagement.

At one point in the discussion, one of the rabbis said something along these lines, “But where's the passion? Where's the

Civility doesn't mean an excess of politesse.



Stephen A. Douglas



Abraham Lincoln

strong sentiment? I don't get much of a sense of highly charged feelings at work with this discussion."

And another rabbi answered: "But that is just the point. We are not supposed to allow the actual fact of combat to rile us up so much that our critical acuity, our ability to be level-headed and ethical in our thinking, is quashed."

Rules of Engagement

I added at this juncture that St. Augustine had warned that war stirs up unruly passions and that, therefore, it is all the more important to hold these in check. One doesn't want soldiers to be murderers or to approach their task in a murderous rage. Just war is a way to calm things down—that is why we train soldiers. The whole idea is to forestall overkill. We call this "rules of engagement" for war fighting.

Perhaps we need something analogous for public life—rules of engagement. We hear a lot of talk about "civility." Unfortunately, many deploy this term—civility—as a weapon against others. You don't like the politics of the Tea Party? Accuse them of lacking civility, then. The image of civility that comes into one's mind is of people sitting around politely, holding their cups of tea, and discussing public issues about which they may care deeply in a calm manner.

But civility doesn't mean an excess of politesse. Because civility has become associated with that sort of thing, I propose that we speak, instead, of a "culture of democratic argument." What do I have in mind? Well, those of you familiar with the Lincoln-

Douglas debates of American lore will be familiar with one of the greatest examples in our history of such a culture of argument. If you haven't read those debates recently, perhaps you should. Here were two brilliant men, in their debating prime (if you will). They both knew how to "stick it to the other," as we might say. What is so impressive about the debates is that they used raucous humor; ironic put-downs; biting satire in the course of mounting brilliant legal and historical arguments in behalf of their case and cause.

We seem to think that it is either civility—politeness—or it is a food fight. No, there is another way; and the Lincoln-Douglas debates are a great example of what that can look like. Of course, no one expects Americans any longer to travel for days in order to stand for four hours in the hot Illinois sun to listen to two consummate professional rhetoricians debate brilliantly the salient matters of the day. But surely we can do better than we are doing.

Psyched Out

May I mention one other factor that enters into the sorry state of our public discourse? Let me call it the therapeutic mentality. This mentality suggests that if I feel deeply about an issue I must have a psychological problem of some sort. The most notorious example of this attitude was expressed by the former head of PBS when she indicated that a PBS reporter and commentator who also served on Fox News, Juan Williams, should perhaps see his psychiatrist given some comments he had offered about experiencing a moment of fear if he saw a group of people in traditional Muslim garb about to board the plane he, too, was boarding. Williams, mind you, criticized his own fears. But having uttered

what was on his mind earned him an audition for the psychiatrist's office according to the woman who fired him.

We over-psychologize politics—someone has a personal problem or he or she wouldn't be thinking that way politically—and, at the same time, we criticize both too much political passion and too little. People should not be apathetic, we insist.

The upshot? Well, to state that, as a culture, we are rather confused at the moment about what our public discourse is for, and what its rules of engagement are or should be, is to understate rather dramatically.

The Citizen

What has been lost is the importance of the person in his or her civic capacities, that being we call "the citizen." What do we expect from citizens? What does it mean to be a citizen? These are topics we do not discuss much, do we? At one point civics was a standard, required topic in our public schools. No longer. Why and how civics disappeared from the curriculum is a long story, one that deserves to be told. We do know the upshot: We are civically ignorant. We know much less than we should about how politics and our own government work.

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Part of the reason for the "rage" that people sometimes bring to the public arena flows from ignorance—they simply do not appreciate the process of bargaining and compromise that goes into legislating. They believe everything should be simple, straightforward. But it is not. And because it is not, that becomes an occasion for ramping up the rage further. Hot-button issues—hot heads: Not a good combination.



Juan Williams

Faith and the Civic Square

Because this is a church press convention, what I want to do in my remaining time is to consider several possible modes of public engagement specifically for those who bring faith commitments into civic life. It strikes me that those with such faith commitments have a particular responsibility to approach hot-button issues with cool heads, given the long association—much exaggerated and overstated—for religion to be the occasion for ugly disputes, even violence.

A very famous philosopher some of you may have heard of named John Rawls is associated with a position that goes something like this: People with faith commitments are obliged to keep those commitments hidden from public view, so to speak. If I am a believer, I should bracket these beliefs—keep them at home as I go out into the civic square—where I am required to speak in some strictly civic idiom. It is illegitimate for me to engage the public square in and through concepts and beliefs drawn directly from my religious convictions.

Why on earth would someone come up with such draconian and impossible measures for how religious believers are to be citizens? The answer lies in the stereotyped, exaggerated view that many academics have about what happens when religious convictions enter into public dispute. In their view, that invites nothing but acrimony, even chaos—nothing but hot-heads. They want everything to be cooled down.

But what about Martin Luther King? Did he cool things down? There are particular times when we must heat things up, call them by their real names, and condemn them in the name of basic decency, simple justice, Christian compassion. King did all those things. Is that unacceptable behavior for a citizen? Surely not, we want to say.

The Prophetic Voice

And some of the philosophers who would like nothing better than for Christians to shut up do acknowledge that King may have been an exception. Was he such? No, he was not. He was an example, not an exception. He demonstrated one possible mode of engagement of believers with the public square. Let's call it the Prophetic Voice. This voice calls us to our better selves; condemns a set of unjust and unacceptable conditions; reminds us of who we ought to be as a good nation, a decent people.

The prophet is not a hothead, mind you. He or she doesn't race about in a high dudgeon. Rather, the authentic prophet picks an issue of solemnity and significance, one that so deeply violates all principles of humanity that it cannot stand.

So the prophetic voice is one of our possible modes of engagement of politics. This requires of us, however, that we be on guard against false prophets—those who claim the mantle of

prophecy for narrow partisan advantage; who may, sadly, use the voice of prophecy to condemn their political opponents as somehow not authentically Christians.

One who does that, I would submit, is not an authentic prophet, for an authentic prophet is also humble. He or she wants to call all of the people to recognize a particularly egregious injustice rather than to benefit the few.



Martin Luther King, 1964

The Voice of Separatism

Are there other possible modalities? Certainly. Let's take up a second possibility. I will call it the Voice of Separatism. This is the believer who condemns the entire society as wicked; who sees the country as going to hell in a handcart. Only he and his band of followers, the only authentic Christians in the land, as they would have it, truly see what is going on and are brave enough to confront it directly and tell it like it is and all the rest of that sort of thing.

In a certain way, this Separatist voice needs the world to be wicked and terrible, needs to portray everything hotheadedly, because that alone justifies his singular and total rejection of it. This winds up

being not so much a rule of engagement as one of disengagement, in the view that the world is worthy of my attention only insofar as I condemn it. Separatism of this sort is a refuge for hotheads, one might say, who do not understand what it means to analyze things dispassionately and fairly; who do not appreciate that not all goodness is on one side and all wickedness on the other.

Full-Bore Christian Politics

There is a third possibility and it is one that the mainstream media often focuses on, namely, what I will call Full-bore Christian Politics. In this mode, Christian believers engage the public square fully in and on the terms of their faith. Everything is approached as a faith issue—from war and peace to zoning ordinances. Everything, somehow, becomes a test of the faith.

Now this sort of full-bore Christian politics is the position of a minority of Christians but it is somehow set up as representing the most likely default position of believers by many in the mainstream media who have a stake in representing believers as wanting to “legislate morality”—how many times have we heard that?—and as aiming to control everybody's lives and to turn the country into something like a theocracy.

On the face of it, this claim—and criticism—is laughable but it is not uncommon and there are some believers who do fit the bill, alas.

Contextual Engagement

Well, surely that doesn't exhaust our possibilities. No, it does not, for there is a fourth, and preferred, position that I will call Contextual Engagement. These are rules of the road for all citizens. This mode of engagement assumes that there are certain hot-button issues—and most public issues are not of this nature but some are—that will tap our very deepest commitments, our most vital and sustaining beliefs. We are not prohibited from bringing these into public debate.

For example, in the words of the U.S. Catholic Bishops, we may affirm that “every human being possesses an inalienable dignity that stamps human existence prior to any division into races or nations and prior to human labor and human achievement.” In other words, this dignity is ours, it is our God-given inheritance. And social arrangements and public policies must not assault this dignity but should, instead, affirm it.

We do not hesitate to bring forward such notions as the moral equality of all God's children, God-given dignity, a God-given

Continued on p.34

ABOLITION TOWNS:

From 1800 until the start of the Civil War in 1861, Americans focused on westward migration, religious revivals, social reform, and the Slave Question. Three frontier colonies—one in Ohio, one in Illinois, and one in Iowa—embodied all of these themes. Oberlin, Galesburg, and Grinnell, planted as outposts of idealism by energetic Easterners, pioneered civic and spiritual progress, with Congregationalists playing leading roles. This is the first of three articles examining these “abolition towns.”

PART 1—OBERLIN

by Arlin Larson

Our Congregational forebears believed that the eyes of all the world would be upon their “city on a hill.” This vision did not end in 1630 with the founding of the Massachusetts Bay Colony. Central to the Puritan outlook was the idea that faith must be brought “into familiar and constant practice.”

The colony’s leader, John Winthrop, said in *A Model of Christian Charity*: “[A]s in this duty of love, we must love brotherly without dissimulation, we must love one another with a pure heart fervently. We must bear one another’s burdens. We must not look only on our own things, but also on the things of our brethren.”

A later Puritan divine, Cotton Mather, summed up the Puritan outlook when he spoke of “the glorious work of grace on the soul ... creating us anew, by Jesus Christ, for good works.”

Congregational faith was a practical faith that resulted in dynamic and prosperous New England societies based on such innovations as democracy in church and state, public primary education, higher education, great expansion of the suffrage, and civil marriage.

THE SECOND GREAT AWAKENING

After the Revolution, an expanding population and U.S.

acquisition of vast new territories posed new challenges. A Congregational minister from Vermont, John Jay Shipherd, who would later become the founder of both Oberlin and Olivet colleges, wrote:

As it now seems to me the finger of Providence points westward even to Mississippi’s vast valley, which is fast filling up with bones which are dry; and the Spirit that giveth life is not wont to breathe upon them, till the prophet’s voice be uttered. Who shall utter it? ...

In 1801 Congregationalists and Presbyterians, similar in their Calvinism and evangelistic outlook, formed a “Plan of Union” to work cooperatively in evangelizing the West; local churches could choose which denomination to associate with and could call ministers from either.

Institutions like the American Home Missionary Society, the New England seminaries, and numerous voluntary mission and reform societies—as well as an inspired generation of young clergy—poured enormous energy and resources into the new mission fields.

Key to the missionary fervor was a new theological outlook that emphasized a person’s ability to choose righteousness. “Old School” Calvinists, following Jonathan Edwards and other evangelists of the “Great Awakening” in mid-18th-

century America, held that humankind was totally depraved and incapable even of right choice apart from the gracious intervention of God. A “New School” had arisen, however, most notably represented by the Rev. Charles Grandison Finney (1792-1875), whose revivals were the talk of the nation and whose converts became the core of a religious and social awakening that has come to be known as the “Second Awakening.”

The old guard, Finney complained, asked only that a person *desire* to change; what God required, however, is that one *will*, and therefore actually effect, a change of heart.

The doctrine upon which I insisted, that the command to obey God implied the power to do so, created in some places considerable opposition at first. Deny also, as I did, that moral depravity was physical, or the depravity of nature, and maintaining, as I did, that it was altogether voluntary, and therefore that the Spirit's influences were those of teaching, persuading, convicting, and, of course, a moral influence—these doctrines were to a great extent new to many.

—FINNEY, *Memoirs*, pp. 154-155

Turning one's life over to Christ, Finney said, entailed “a change from selfishness to benevolence, from having a supreme regard to one's own interest to an absorbing and controlling choice of the happiness and glory of God and his kingdom.”

It was the old Puritan outlook but with a greatly enhanced sense of urgency. The Second Great Awakening married revivalism and social reform in an inseparable synthesis.

Many missionaries went out as individuals to serve as pastors in pioneer communities. (*In a subsequent article we will hear about the famous “Iowa Band.”*) But the old idea of colonizing suddenly came back to mind 200 years after Plymouth, now applied not to a new continent but rather to that continent's vast western reaches: Led by an enterprising clergyman, a small group would reconnoiter promising territory, find financial backers, purchase land, and recruit a core of colonists—generally from the same Northeastern town, and often related by blood. (One such group of colonists, 40 of them, went out from the church I now serve in Searsport, Maine.)

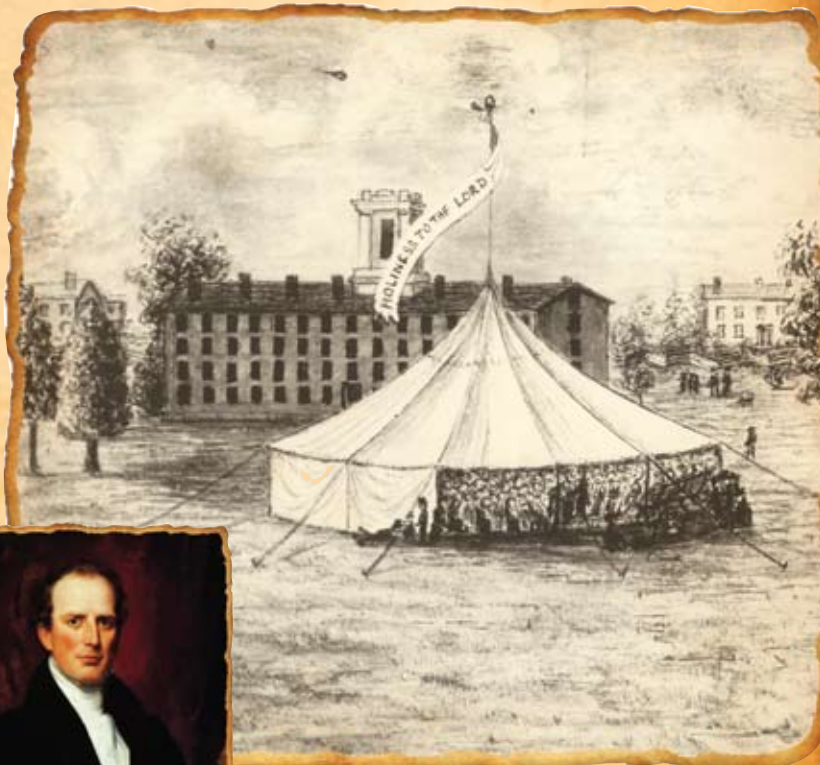
These colonies, like Winthrop's colony before them, were to be “cities on a hill,” beacons of Christian civilization for the untamed West. Evangelical piety merged with moral reform—

temperance in particular, but also healthy “Graham” diets, the planting of churches, and opposition to secret societies (such as Masonry).

SLAVERY CASTS A SHADOW

Casting a shadow over the entire westward movement, however, was the specter of slavery.

Slavery was recognized in the Constitution of 1789 even though the Declaration of Independence 13 years before



Left: Charles Grandison Finney, leading evangelist of the Second Great Awakening. His Oberlin revival tent, above, proclaimed ‘HOLINESS TO THE LORD!’ Oberlin College Archives.

had said, “all men are created equal ... [and] endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights.” Our founding fathers, though aware of the contradiction, left its resolution to future generations.

By 1821, there were 12 free states and 12 slave states. Growing anti-slavery sentiment in the North began colliding with growing defensiveness and increased dependence on slavery in the South. Both sides saw westward expansion as key to tipping the balance.

Three interconnected Congregational/Presbyterian colonies—Oberlin, Ohio; Galesburg, Illinois; and Grinnell, Iowa—put the abolition of slavery at the heart of their agendas. They are the “abolition towns” featured in this series of articles.

Now known as quiet Midwestern towns with small but highly-regarded colleges, they were in their early years famous, or infamous, as the cutting and radical edge of the fight against slavery.

The Southern press would later blame them for inflaming the passions that led to the Civil War; but the resistance these towns faced did not come only from the slave states; they were controversial even within their free state homes.

Opposing slavery was one thing; promoting immediate abolition another entirely. Abolition—the freeing of slaves to become ordinary citizens of the United States—did not become a popular idea until mid-way through the Civil War, when Abraham Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation. Northern anti-slavery sentiment before the war overwhelmingly favored gradual emancipation and “back to Africa” colonization and opposed anything that smacked of racial mixing, equality, or “amalgamation.” Some free states, including Illinois and Iowa, even had laws prohibiting freed slaves from taking up residence. Thus the reform-minded

Lincoln condemned slavery on moral grounds in his debate with Stephen Douglas at Knox College in Galesburg, Illinois (see the second article of this series, in our next issue), but only gradually brought that commitment into the public debate.

Harry S. Stout writes:

It is doubtful that the political issue of “the Union” could have sustained campaigns of such unmitigated violence, slaughter, and civilian suffering. But when transformed from a just war to a Republican-led religious crusade, limitations disappeared, “conduct” was subordinated to victory, and victory apotheosized into one divine right against wrong [sic]. God now depended on a righteous American empire as much as the empire depended on Him.

—*A Moral History of the Civil War*, p. 389

A COMMON MATRIX

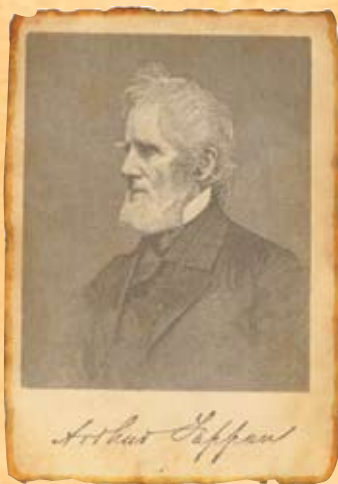
While each of our colonies has its own remarkable story, a complex web of personalities and institutions tied them together.

Some were Congregational; some were Presbyterian; and some wavered between the two polities. Beginning in western New York in the 1820s, Finney quickly became a national and international figure with his mass conversions, controversial methods, and outspoken theological ideas about human “perfection.” He moved his headquarters to the new Oberlin Collegiate Institute—the first of the three colonies we will examine—shortly after it was founded.

Finney’s own conversion, in turn, had been facilitated by the Rev. George Washington Gale (1789-1861), who became his mentor. Later, Gale would pioneer Galesburg and Knox College—our second colony. But before that, Gale started the Oneida Institute in western New York, a training school for ministers and missionaries, whose students were themselves largely products of Finney’s revivals, many following Finney to Oberlin. The Rev. J.B. Grinnell (1821-1891), who founded the Grinnell colony—our third—had been a student at Oneida.

Another common thread was the Tappan brothers, Arthur and Lewis, wealthy New York merchants who provided leadership and financial backing for Finney’s revivals, the Oberlin experiment, the defense and repatriation of the Amistad captives, the American Missionary Association, and other faith-based and anti-slavery causes.

The eyes of the whole world came to be cast upon this great revival, reform, and colonizing effort through a



New York merchants Arthur and Lewis Tappan gave financial backing to a wide range of social reforms during the Second Awakening.
Oberlin College Archives.

leaders of these colonies had to face stiff opposition and opprobrium from their immediate neighbors as well as from slave-owners across the state line.

Ultimately, however, they prevailed in framing slavery as a moral rather than an economic or political issue. Slavery was sin, a violation of God’s law, something no political community had a right to institute ... period!

If that attitude did not actually start the Civil War, it did provide the moral conviction needed to persevere. Abraham



Jean-Frédéric Oberlin

national and international religious press [including *THE CONGREGATIONALIST!*], and the leaders of this movement had great impact on the future course of the Republic.

THE OBERLIN COLONY

The first and most prominent of the frontier “abolition towns” was Oberlin, Ohio. Today it is a town of about 8,000 residents situated 35 miles west of Cleveland in north-central Ohio, far from what we think of as the frontier.

At its founding in 1833, however, it was a wilderness settlement, seen by its founders, the Revs. John Jay Shipherd and Philo P. Stewart, as an ideal location for training home missionaries for the “great Mississippi valley.”

Their inspirations were the Alsatian pastor and philanthropist, Jean-Frédéric Oberlin, who had labored among the rural poor; and Gale’s Oneida Institute, a school built on the “manual labor” model, where students could earn their tuition while providing for the school’s needs, and which pioneered in promoting immediate abolition as the solution to the sin of slavery.

The Oberlin Collegiate Institute aimed to train both ministers and pious schoolteachers. It included Collegiate, Preparatory, Teachers’, Ladies’, and Theological departments that would educate “the whole man”—body, intellect, and heart. It was to be set within a nurturing colony of supportive people who had covenanted to bring the Mississippi Valley and the whole world “under the entire influence of the blessed gospel of peace” (Covenant of the Oberlin Colony, 1833, *see sidebar, right*).

ABOLITION ENTERS THE PICTURE

Shipherd and Stewart’s Oberlin Colony was not, at first, an “abolition town.” That soon changed because of dramatic events at another fledgling Ohio

THE OBERLIN COVENANT

The Oberlin Covenant offers an excellent snapshot of the Second Great Awakening’s reforming ethos. It might seem unduly severe (Puritanical!) in our day, but to its subscribers, turning one’s life over to Christ had serious behavioral consequences:

To have the purpose of “glorifying God and doing good to men.”

To hold property privately but act “as if we held a community of property.”

To hold no more property than could be used profitably for gospel purposes.

To devote disposable assets to “the spread of the gospel.”

To “eat only plain and wholesome, renouncing all bad habits ... [including] everything expensive which is simply calculated to gratify the palate.” (One professor was dismissed for bringing a pepper shaker to the table!)

To “renounce all the world’s expensive and unwholesome fashions of dress. ...”

To “observe plainness and durability in our houses and furniture carriages. ...”

To “provide for the widowed, orphans and sick and all the needy as for ourselves and families.”

To “educate all our children thoroughly. ...”

To “feel that the interests of the Oberlin Institute are identified with ours. ...”

To “make special effort to sustain the institutions of the Gospel. ...”

“To maintain deep and elevated personal piety; to provoke each other to love and good works; to live together in all things as brethren; and to glorify God in our bodies and spirits, which are his.”

institution, Lane Theological Seminary, Presbyterianism's western training center in Cincinnati. As a "New School" institution, it and its president, the Congregationalist Rev. Lyman Beecher, were generally sympathetic to the values of the Second Awakening. But a fissure erupted in 1834 when Theodore Dwight Weld, a radical Finneyite student from the Oneida Institute, quickly convinced the student body (mostly Southerners!) to reject the notion of colonization and take

to do so—as it was also the first to admit women). Finney's backers, the Tappan brothers, were prepared to pay Finney's salary in its entirety and contribute \$10,000—a prodigious sum, equivalent to many millions in today's dollars. And when the Tappans were ruined in the Panic of 1837, English abolitionists stepped in to secure the endowment.

THOROUGHGOING REFORM

Oberlin rapidly became one of America's best-known and most controversial educational institutions. With a thousand students, it was among the largest. Finney, the head of the Theological Department, was one of the most famous men of the time. The president, Asa Mahan, was internationally known as a leading abolitionist and theologian.

Oberlin had staked out both social and theological positions regarded as heretical and dangerous. The curriculum in its Collegiate Department mostly mirrored the standard classical curriculum, but it substituted Greek and Hebrew scriptures for "the most objectionable pagan authors."

A sample of campus activities gives something of the flavor of the school: Three literary societies, men's and women's moral reform societies, a Bible and a Sabbath School association, six different missionary societies, a prominent stop in the Underground Railroad, two peace societies, a temperance society, physiological reform (most adhered to the Graham diet), leadership in the abolitionist Liberty Party, frequent revivals, and innumerable chapel services and prayer meetings.

President Mahan challenged the students to become "universal reformers." Finney called them "God's cadets" in the divine "war against sin and hell—a mighty conflict—a conflict waged in fierce and fiery strife today [the fight against slavery]."

Higher education in our day has become largely practical and vocational. The early Oberlin—a cross between a Bible college, Berkeley in the 1970s, and a world-class academic institution—was a heady blend of religion, science, and protest seldom if ever seen, before or since.

Although Finney was tied to Oberlin as professor of theology and later as the college's president, his evangelistic work continued on a national scale. At Oberlin he built a revival tent that would hold 3,000, its famous banner declaring "Holiness to the Lord!" Oberlin's peculiar calendar, with school out of session during the normal school year so the students could work as teachers, allowed Finney several months of the year to continue leading revivals in the East.

Further, the "Oberlin theology" or "Christian Perfection" movement kept the waters stirred and the religious presses

Continued on p. 32

*The Oberlin Rescuers
At Cayuga Co. Jail, April 1852*



Some of the Oberlin residents who rescued fugitive slave John Price from federal custody pose defiantly after the deed. Oberlin College Archives.

up the cause of immediate abolition—just as the students, influenced by abolitionist William Lloyd Garrison, had done at Oneida.

A series of rallies or debates on the topic caused a sensation. Lane's trustees abolished the Lane anti-slavery society, forbade the students to discuss publicly anything not pertaining to their studies, and dismissed John Morgan, Lane's only outspokenly abolitionist instructor. The students, the "Lane Rebels," withdrew from the school along with one trustee, the Rev. Asa Mahan (whose *Christian Perfection* would become the foremost statement of Second Awakening theology).

Oberlin's "Father" Shipherd saw an opportunity in this crisis at Lane. His Collegiate Institute had many of the same aims as the seminary but was struggling financially. He offered Oberlin as a home to the Lane Rebels and, just as importantly, agreed to their conditions: Asa Mahan must become president, Charles Finney must be hired to head the Theological Department, governance must be left entirely to the faculty, and black students must be admitted on the same basis as whites (making it the first American college

The New NACCC Takes Shape

by Larry Sommers



The new form of the National Association of Congregational Christian Churches is coming into view, to be discussed and voted on at the 2012 Annual Meeting in Bloomington, Minn., after months of steady work by the Transition Team.

An emerging consensus of team members assigns most of the association's work to task teams appointed by three elected five-person ministry councils:

- The Congregational Mission and Outreach Council
- The Congregational Vitality Council
- The Congregational Growth Council.

An 11-member Congregational Leadership Council will set priorities and vision for the NA subject to approval by the churches and will act for the association between Annual Meetings (as the Executive Committee does now). To ensure coordination, the Leadership Council will include two representatives from each of the three ministry councils.

The Transition Team has listed areas of responsibility for each of the councils and is working on "purpose" language for each council.

The moderator of the National Association will chair both the Annual Meeting and the Leadership Council.

There will be a Corporation Board of Directors empowered to act on finance, development and marketing, by-laws, personnel, loans, *THE CONGREGATIONALIST*, the Investment Advisory Committee, and related "business" matters.

Unlike the present set-up, the new Corporation Board is envisioned as separate from the Leadership Council. It would consist of seven individuals—four elected by Annual

Meeting delegates plus an elected secretary and treasurer, and legal counsel.

The point of the Strategic Plan from the start has been to evolve a form that is less rigid, more interactive, and more responsive than the old Divisions-and-Commissions structure bequeathed from the 1950s.

Ministry Team Councils



New NACCC Strategic Model

Holy Spirit

Christ

Leadership Council

NA Office/Admin/CCL

Ministry Councils

Year Round Delegates

Local Churches

God



To envision how the parts of the new structure are expected to interact, the Transition Team has adopted the image of a familiar child's toy, with colored rings stacked on a center pole. The wooden base and the top ring represent God and Christ, respectively, and the center dowel represents the Holy Spirit. The first two rings, on which all others rest, are the local church and its Year Round Delegate; the next rings are ministry councils, NA staff, and Leadership Council.

The image is meant to suggest a unified structure built around the purpose of "proclaiming Christ to the world."

While hammering out the new structure, and a new service delivery model to go with it, in monthly meetings, the Transition Team has also defined the role of Year Round Delegate and has begun recruiting them, one Year Round Delegate per church.

We regret that the Rev. John Carson's name was inadvertently omitted from the Transition Team list published in our December 2011 issue. John has been a key player in the Structure Re-organization deliberations.

So far, 143 churches have named Year Round Delegates. The team has sent newly-named Year Round Delegates a welcoming and familiarization letter. The team also plans in the near future to contact churches that remain without Year Round Delegates; and to begin using Year Round Delegates as a channel to seek feedback from the churches on the new structure endorsed by consensus in its Feb. 9 phone meeting.

The Rev. Beth Faeth, chairperson of the Transition Team, said she was pleased with progress to date and thanked team members for their sustained and persistent work on the implementation process.

The team aims to present to delegates in Minnesota a full picture of the new structure and service delivery model, one that will have already been introduced to the churches through the new Year Round Delegates.



There's More to Minnesota than the Mall of America!

by the 2012 Host Committee

The Host Committee and the members of our Minnesota churches invite you to make your trip to our fair state a vacation for the whole family. There is so much to see and do!

Take a drive up to Minnesota's "Scandinavian Riviera" and experience all that beautiful Duluth has to offer: Breathtaking Lake Superior, harbor cruises, drives on the North Shore, great shopping, delightful inns, and so much more.

Or how about a trip out to historic Stillwater and the St. Croix River? You'll find wineries, antiques, river cruises, and great restaurants. River cruises are also available on the Mississippi River from the Twin Cities, including tours of the lock and dam system and longer excursions to the south.

Bringing the family? There are plenty of places to have adventures with your kids. Stay close to the Twin Cities and enjoy—





- The Minnesota Zoo (one of the great ones!).
- Museums.
- Water parks, including the fabulous Water Park of America (not far from the Hilton).
- Valley Fair, the state's biggest amusement park.

All just a short drive from our conference hotel!

The Twin Cities of St. Paul and Minneapolis boast a terrific night life and outstanding arts scene, with numerous theatres (including the renowned Guthrie, which will be staging Cole Porter's *Roman Holiday* during the period of our Annual Meeting and Conference), museums, and music venues. You can take the light rail line into downtown Minneapolis and enjoy all that this urban center has to offer; or check out the many of attractions of our capital city, St. Paul, just a short car ride away.

If you are a sports or outdoors enthusiast, take in a Twins game in their new stadium or head over to see the St. Paul Saints American Association baseball club, where they make every game exciting and entertaining for all. Try fishing on one of our many lakes or rivers, or bike our many regional bike paths. We've also got some of the best golf courses you'll find anywhere. Your outdoor adventure can start right across the street from the Hilton, where the Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge awaits.

And for the shopping enthusiast, there is the Mall of America. Boasting over 520 stores and 50 restaurants, the Mall has a gross area of 4.2 million square feet—that's over 96 acres, enough space to fit seven Yankee Stadiums inside. With ample free parking, complimentary shuttles from the Hilton and Minneapolis/St. Paul International Airport and no tax on clothing and shoes, it is easy to see why people from all over the world make the Mall a destination.

Whatever your interests, Minnesota has what you are looking for. So come for the meeting and plan on some extra time to have fun!



A Simple Gospel Message

by Leo Christian

David Reed's Book Calls Christians to Discipleship

Review of *Come, Follow Jesus! (The Real Jesus)*

by David A. Reed

CreateSpace, 135 pages, \$6.95 (Amazon)



Refreshing! Inspiring! Unique! And direct!
These are the words that come to mind when I read this book.

Its author, David Reed, served for a decade as a contributing editor of *Dr. Walter Martin's Christian Research Journal* and has authored more than a dozen books on Bible topics. He is a member of First Congregational Church of Rochester, Mass.

Having read many of David's former works, where he is very eloquent exposing cults and speaking of the Lord's return here—in this book he does something different. It's simple, but not so simple. David, in essence, takes some current and apropos topics and he applies Jesus' own words.

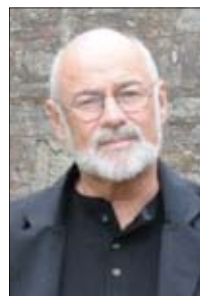
For the new believer it is engaging, and for those of us who have followed the Lord for many years, it is refreshing and challenges us to remember our first love in Christ.

As a pastor, I like to think that I speak the simple gospel that St. Paul speaks about. Too often, like many of my colleagues, I have encrusted the gospels with my own background and education.

This book simply brings the words of Jesus to bear on the matters of everyday life. David himself, in previous works, used his background and brilliance to put the spotlight on cults and -isms, but here he changes his format. He uses Jesus' own words to call

us to follow the message of the gospel. In our day, when we seem to soft-pedal the gospel and even apologize for the "hard sayings of Jesus," Reed brings them to the forefront by not allowing us to ignore them.

As one who has had the privilege of speaking to the church for many years, I am blessed to be challenged by this good man. I recommend that you read this book and buy one for a friend.



THE REV. DR. LEO DANIEL CHRISTIAN has been involved in pastoral ministry since 1977, caring for and developing churches both with Village Missions and the NACCC. He currently serves the First Congregational Church of Rochester, Mass. Leo served six months as executive secretary pro-tempore for the Connecticut Fellowship and one term as executive secretary for the New Hampshire Fellowship. He is a past chairman of the NA Missionary Society and is the 1997 recipient of the Marion Bradshaw Memorial Award.

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The Little Church That Could

View from the Pew

By Kristen Schuyler

It's a little church in a small New Jersey town—the Congregational Church of Bound Brook—and it has become my second home for the past three years, even though I have been attending since 2002, when I was seven years old.

I have watched it grow phenomenally in spirit and enthusiasm and am proud to say I have been a part of this revolution.

The church was gathered in 1876 and joined the National Association of Congregation Christian Churches (NACCC) in the 1950s. Over the years, like a lot of churches, we saw membership shrink to a steady crowd of about one hundred faithful followers.

Numbers don't faze our little church, though. In 2008, we needed to fill our vacated pulpit. We were all wondering why our little church couldn't get back up, and praying it wouldn't ever have to close its doors for good—but most of all, we were determined to write a new chapter in our history.

When the Rev. Marisol Ferrer entered our large wooden doors as a candidate for our pulpit, we swiftly and by unanimous vote called her to be our new minister. We remembered that “all things work together for good for those who love God, who are

called according to his purpose” (Romans 8:28), and we placed our faith in her leadership.

Transformation

That was the moment of transformation.

It was as if Marisol had flicked a switch and the church roared to life, like a shuttle launched into space, entering a whole new zone of excitement and new experiences. We knew we would have to take risks and get involved in unusual events. But this was a feeling we hadn't felt in a while. We were inspired and motivated to try anything.

Marisol got our church working with all types of people. We grew closer to the Hispanic population of our town. We became involved, with other shelters, in housing people during floods.

We even became friendly with other churches—including other faiths. Marisol made a strong friendship with Rabbi Jack Kramer

Below: Rev. Marisol Ferrer teaches students in Vacation Bible School at Bound Brook Congregational Church, Bound Brook, N.J.





Chuck Kemple serves Josephine Hulik at Bound Brook's pancake breakfast



Lil Johnson helps with a church cleanup project at Bound Brook in early 2009.



Kristen Schuyler and Jackie Hulik worship at Bound Brook in a January 2011 service.

from the nearby Kneseth Israel Congregation. I had never heard of a strong Christian speaking with someone of a different religion and abiding on good terms. It was a foreign concept to me.

There were other people outside our walls, and we needed to reach out to them.

In this way, Marisol taught our little church how to stay connected with others and accept responsibility for helping in a changing community. As a bonus, reaching out to others has made our name better known in our area.

People know about us. Even though they may not attend our church, they know we are part of the body of Christ and working as we were called to do. Some have been heard calling our little church "the Grand Central Station of the neighborhood."

A Sharp Turn

My grandparents started bringing me to this church when I was seven years old. I was attending the Sunday School but wanted nothing to do with anything else the church was doing. I didn't really ever enjoy being there all the years that I'd gone.

I loved to sing but didn't want to be in the children's choir. I liked food but didn't want to stay for snacks during coffee hour. Nothing was giving me a reason to stay—not the people, not the pastor, not the few activities offered.

But once Marisol changed the church's outlook, my attitude began to change and my life took a sharp turn. By this time, I was in eighth grade.

Marisol earnestly started the youth group our church has now. We have a close-knit small group of teens who get together occasionally, and we have formed a youth board where we gladly put in our two cents on matters within the church. She continually encourages us with her love and her hunger for the Holy Spirit to touch our lives in ways we never before thought He could.

Marisol's energy, charm, and love of music—she is the "Rapping Reverend"—inspired all of us teens to start our own band. We play often in our church and frequently at other neighboring churches, and we have a blast.

Our youth board is a major part of the church's revolution. The young members are the future of our little church, so we have begun to step up and start changing things to adapt to the world

around us. We are adding things that would appeal to younger generations and taking away things that may not be useful anymore, all the while keeping Jesus at the center of focus.

Our band has added modern Christian music to Sunday services. We are working on a playground for the yard outside. We have also been hosting a Vacation Bible School for one week of the summer season for the past three years. Many members are willing to volunteer to make all these things happen, and we all can feel that our church is proud of us.

"I saw a few youth when I started at the church," Marisol said, "and they were kind of disturbed and shy. They have grown physically, spiritually, and intellectually before my eyes."

Closer to Jesus

All of this has brought me, and many others, closer to Jesus. When we work on something with this church, we serve the Lord. Every time we encourage someone or help someone up when they've fallen, we serve the Lord. We laugh, cry, and pray together as a family united by God.

God brought Marisol to our little, old, crumbling church for a reason.

If you think of our whole church as a band, and God as the band director—then Marisol is the drum major. We all follow Marisol's instructions under the authority of our Everlasting Band Director, and we have grown into quite the enthusiastic bunch. The different musical sections have come together, each plays its part without failure, and we catch the attention of anyone with an ear to hear.

Something about our little church is different now—enthusiastic and ready to take on the future.

Just pause and listen, and you can hear Jesus working in this little Congregational Church of Bound Brook.



KRISTEN SCHUYLER is 16 years old and a junior at Manville High School, Manville, N.J. As the oldest of four children, she tries to be a good role model for her siblings. She enjoys reading, writing, playing guitar, singing, and spending time with family.



NEWS

PILGRIMS PRESENCE UPDATE



Pokot children fetch water from a dam site, where the open water is shared with cows and wild animals.

“Our community has experienced acute food shortage where three people died of hunger related conditions. The ministry intervened and through One Great Hour of Sharing donations they were able to feed about 6,000 households. The joined effort between the mission and other agencies and the mission saved a lot of lives.

“The mission is planning to have three nursery schools. According to Ministry of Education record about 1500 children under age 8 are not in school in the area.

“Water is a scarce commodity in the area. Community members resort to drinking water from the open dam together with cows and wild animals. The water is extremely dangerous but when there is no option community members go for it as a last option. Pilgrim Presence wants to sink a borehole for these community members.”—Geoffrey Lipale, Director, **Pilgrims Presence (Kenya)**

MISSION NEWS FLASH

Fishers of Men (Mexico): In 2011, the Evangelistic Medical Mission Crusades visited 24 different communities throughout Mexico, bringing physical hope and healing through volunteer doctors, dentists, nurses and others, while giving spiritual hope and healing through the loving touch of Jesus Christ. In these 24 communities, Fishers of Men volunteers ministered to a total of 8,235 individuals!

Misión Mazahua (Mexico): Lisa Cortes, Elizabeth Cortes and Yoshi Cortes extend thanks to all who helped them visit NACCC churches last fall. They appreciated the chance to share their

mission with the NACCC family, make new acquaintances, and renew friendships.

Morgan-Scott Project (Tennessee): They are in conversation with a doctor who would like to start a free medical clinic one day a week in their area. They are in prayer that the Morgan-Scott Project will be chosen for the site of the clinic.

Myanmar Congregational Church (Myanmar): The government has recently extended cell phone service to many areas. Now they can communicate with mission fields by phone. Five Congregational Bible College students graduated Jan. 15.

Panamerican Institute (Mexico): The institute started its new school year with 70 students and volunteers. The school year runs from August 2011 to July 2012. Five graduates earned scholarships to attend the University and six others earned scholarships to attend Preparatory School.

MISSIONARY SOCIETY FALL RETREAT



Missionary Loring Carpenter of Seafarer's Friend, center, talks with members of the Missionary Society in Boston during their fall retreat.

The Missionary Society had its fall retreat in Boston. We stayed at the Mariners House. We visited with Loring Carpenter and Gayle Avery of Seafarer's Friend. They told us of their mission, the work they do, the people they meet, their goals, their challenges, and their dreams. It was very enlightening. Thank you, Seafarer's Friend!

STORIES FROM OUR MISSIONS

Educational Concerns for Hunger Organization (Florida): The ECHO team met with one of their Asian partner organizations that years before had been instrumental in introducing coffee growing to southern Laos. While coffee had now become

a major industry, small farmers were losing market share to big growers moving into the area. Their livelihoods were imperiled.

The ECHO team asked if they might add cardamom to their coffee, Laos being a major producer of cardamom. They knew of a Nicaragua producer that added cardamom to its coffee and exported it to the Middle East, where sweet cardamom coffee is a preferred drink.

Within days, the team connected with an ECHO network member in Nicaragua who gave details on how easy it was to add cardamom to coffee during the grinding process.

From an Austrian coffee producer in Nicaragua to an ECHO network member in Nicaragua, to an NGO in Bangkok, to small-scale coffee farmers in southern Laos. The outcome of

this initiative is not yet known, but the “ECHO Effect” has offered hope to those who had despaired for their future.

Indian Community Fellowship (India): “BAND-AID: We received first-aid kits from the believers of McGrath Church [Muskegon, Mich.], but we did not know what a small piece of BAND-AID (adhesive bandage) can do in a sinner’s life! When our field worker gave a BAND-AID to a small girl injured while playing she ran and told her mother about the sticky plastic (she said) pasted on her knee!!! Her mother also looked at it with utter surprise. (1st time seeing a band-aid!!!) That’s it. Mother and her daughter come to a Cell Group. Now Mother is a Christian like you and me. A band-aid? For Indian this is more than any accomplishment. We thank God for YOU prayer partners.”

NEEDS

Morgan-Scott Project (Tennessee): Please remember the Good Earth Project; send seeds for spring planting.

PRAYER REQUESTS

Asociacion Civil Cristiana Congregational (Argentina): Prayers for the completion of their Sports and Bible Center this year; for reaching out to native Indians; for the four main areas of their mission—the Health Service, the Sponsorship Program, the Community Garden, and Christian Education—to develop regular activities.

Indian Community Fellowship (India): Prayers for stable housing for the Malakars that could also be used as a training center.

Indian Trails Mission (Arizona): Prayers for Sharon Gossett’s health.

Morgan-Scott Project (Tennessee): Prayers for replacement power tools (drills, saws) before summer 2012; for continuing to meet the needs of families that are hurting due to lack of employment.

Panamerican Institute (Mexico): Prayers for safety and strength to keep serving the Lord.

Christian Mission in the Far East (Philippines): Prayers for the protection of pastors and workers, especially the mission’s chairman. Prayers for support of the vision among the brethren of seeing a transformed nation where peace, justice, and righteousness reign; where everyone has a decent standard of living; and where Jesus Christ is recognized as Lord of all through the discipling of every Filipino for the Lord Jesus Christ.

Thank you for your support!

For more information on any of these missions, or to make a donation, contact Linda Miller at the NACCC office, 800-262-1620, ext. 13.

The Missionary Society, NACCC

PO Box 288
Oak Creek WI 53154

For a complete listing of NACCC Mission Projects, please go to our Web site, www.naccc.org, and click on “Missions.”

Along the Way

News from the fellowship of churches

SO WE MIGHT ... REJOICE TOGETHER”



Stacey Holcombe

Pilgrims young and old from *First Congregational Church of Naples, Fla.*, again marched down Immokalee Road (*above left*) to a special service in remembrance of the “first Thanksgiving.” This year the worshipers were joined by “Squanto,” portrayed by **Taylor Pratt**, a Seminole from the Big Cypress Reservation in central Florida, with his younger sister,



Evan Pratt (*above right*). The new church’s second “Pilgrim March” and Thanksgiving Service enhanced the church’s visibility in the community and helped the church connect with the Seminole community. Taylor Pratt is a high school senior and plans to attend Oklahoma Baptist University and follow his father’s footsteps in Christian ministry.



Jean Paul Cortes

St. Bernard’s Project site supervisor Nicole Spade, right, teaches Olivet freshman Chantell Ash how to use a chop saw.

WORKING HARD IN “THE BIG EASY”—After final exams, 18 *Olivet College* students and two staff members journeyed to New Orleans in the college’s eighth trip to help rehabilitate homes damaged or destroyed in 2005 by

Hurricane Katrina. Students worked with the St. Bernard Project, an organization that helps rebuild homes in St. Bernard Parish, the only county in U.S. history rendered 100 percent uninhabitable by a natural disaster.

“There are still a lot of people who do not have houses because of Katrina,” said **Riana Rowles**, an Olivet junior. Even though years have passed since the devastation of Katrina, the aftermath is still current and still needs to be addressed.”

For the fifth consecutive year, the NACCC Missionary Society aided the Olivet College project with a \$5,000 grant. The trip was coordinated by the **Rev. Mike Fales**, director of service learning and campus ministries at Olivet, assisted by **Jean Paul Cortes**, the college’s community service coordinator.

—reported by Olivet senior **Amber LeClear**

DON’T BE SHY—NACCC clergy are encouraged to submit a sermon for consideration for the 2012 **Joseph Jones Russell** Sermon Award, named for a minister who served as

Eastern field representative in the early years of the National Association and was also the first editor (1958-1962) of the restored *CONGREGATIONALIST* and had been editor of a prior Congregational periodical, *The Free Lance*.

“The sermon shall deal with the relationship of traditional Congregationalism to contemporary American life in some aspect, and shall point out the continuing viability and the relevance of the Congregational Way.” The sermon must be preached between June 30, 2011, and April 30, 2012. Sermons may be submitted as manuscripts, DVDs, podcasts, or YouTube links. A bulletin from the service must accompany the submission; the bulletin may be sent by e-mail or postal mail. Submit to **Jodee Lord**, 377 Mason Ave., Staten Island NY 10305 or jodee_teach@yahoo.com.

the family for four generations and was recently donated to Inanda Seminary by the **Rev. Daniel Lindley Hatch**, a fifth generation descendant of the Lindleys.

“The process of getting it here, FREE, is perhaps the most remarkable aspect of its homecoming,” wrote the **Rev. Scott Couper**, the seminary’s development manager. “Due to the shortage of funds, getting it from Hawaii to California, California to New York City, NYC to Johannesburg, and Joburg to Durban for free was an astounding act of charity, patience and good will by many parties (especially Rev. Daniel Hatch and **Rev. Linda Terry-Chard** of Riverside Church of New York City).”

The school planned to make a formal presentation of the historic trunk during a Feb. 24 school assembly.



Siphokazi Shongwe

"Inanda Seminary welcomes the return of a trunk used by school founders Daniel and Lucy Lindley. Posing with the trunk, from left: Development manager Scott Couper, 12th Grade student Amanda Gwantshu, and the seminary's principal, Judy Tate."

RETURN OF THE LOST ARK—After more than a century of obscure repose, a historic trunk used by Congregationalist missionaries has returned to the South African mission they started. *Inanda Seminary School for Girls*, near the city of Durban, on Jan. 28 received a footlocker-sized wooden box that once carried the possessions of the school’s founders, **Daniel and Lucy Lindley**, missionaries commissioned in 1834 by the *American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions*.



Rev. Daniel Lindley

The trunk, which bears the mark, “D. Lindley No. 3,” is thought to have been used by the missionary couple on their voyages to and from Africa, being passed down to their daughter Sarah as a hope chest around the time of the U.S. Civil War. It remained in

STOP THE PRESSES—*Heritage Congregational Christian Church, Madison, Wis.*, will host the Eighth Congregational Symposium in early November 2012. The theme will be: “You are my witnesses... Congregationalism Working with God through Evangelism, Mission, and Justice.” Further details will be announced soon.



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Neurology

Benton Gaskell

The Rev. Dr. Benton Searle Gaskell, 93, passed away July 15, 2011, at his home in Roswell, Ga. He was born in Worcester, Mass., and earned his B.A. from Amherst College in 1946, a B.D. from Hartford Seminary in 1944, and an honorary Doctorate of Divinity from Pacific School of Religion in 1954. Benton was ordained as a Congregational minister on May 30, 1943.

He first served as minister in Coventry, Conn., and then served as U.S. Navy Chaplain on the hospital ship Haven until 1946. After the war, he served Congregational churches in San Mateo, Calif.; Detroit, Mich.; Belvedere-Tiburon, Calif.; and Pomona, Calif., until his retirement in 1981. He then served as an interim minister in Alaska, and on Mackinac Island, Mich. He retired to Palm Springs, Calif., and then moved to Roswell, Ga., in 2005.

He is survived by his daughter, Deborah Gaskell Albert, and her two sons; by his stepson, David McGraw, and his three children; and by three great-grandsons.

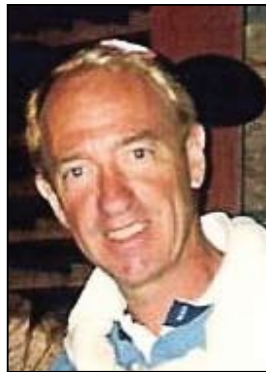
Paul Bingham

Paul Davis Bingham, 65, of Claremont, Calif., died Nov. 9, 2011, after a valiant fight against leukemia.

Paul was born in the Bronx, N.Y., in the shadow of Yankee Stadium, which defined much of his life as a scrappy, baseball-loving champion. He attended the University of North Carolina and served in the U.S. Army as a medic in Vietnam. He was a career salesman in the transportation industry, most recently at Serna's Relocation Services, which he considered "the best of the best."

Paul and Beth were married in 1987 in Sherman Oaks, Calif., lived in Anchorage, Alaska, from 1987 until 1993, and then returned to California, where Beth serves as senior minister of Pilgrim Congregational Church of Pomona.

Paul was a member of Pilgrim Congregational Church and served on the Communications Commission of the



National Association during the period when it was reformed into the Communication Services Committee. He served on the board of the Boys and Girls Club in Pomona and was actively involved in local youth and college baseball. He was an avid runner, worked out faithfully, and loved rock 'n' roll.

Above all things Paul was an incredible father to his three sons, Paul Jr., Jason, and Teddy, an absolutely devoted and loving husband, and a man of deep faith. Memorials may be given to Pilgrim Church, the Pomona Valley Hospital Foundation, Samuel Oschin Cancer Center at Cedars Sinai Hospital, or the Pomona Pitzer baseball program.

Robert Carlson

Robert T. Carlson, 68, died unexpectedly Nov. 13, 2011.

Carlson served on the Spiritual Resources Commission of the NACCC, on the Executive Committee including service as chairman, and more recently as a member of the Congregational Foundation Board of Governors.



As senior minister of East Orrington Congregational Church in Maine for 25 years, having retired in 2002, he was well-known in the greater Bangor area and was actively involved with several local social and civic programs.

At the time of his death, Carlson was being investigated by the state police, based on an allegation of child sexual abuse dating from the 1970s. State police and the Waldo County Sheriff's department have concluded his death was a suicide by drowning.

"We do not know, nor presume to know, the veracity of the accusations," wrote the executive staff members of the NACCC in a letter after his death. "However, we can say unequivocally that sexual abuse of any kind is against Christ's message of love for all and particularly his care of the vulnerable."

Carlson is survived by his wife and son and by grandchildren, great-grandchildren, nieces and nephews.

Marvis Morrison

Marvis H. Morrison, 86, died Dec. 11, 2011, in Bridgewater, N.J.

Marv was born in Chicago and graduated from Bound Brook, N.J., High School in 1943. He served in the U.S. Army Air Force in World War II. He owned and operated Morrison TV Service in Bound Brook, then worked for Union Carbide, retiring in 1988. After retiring he volunteered at many places, including the Somerset County Office on Aging and the Food Bank. He was a 50-year member of his Masonic Lodge.

Marv was an active lifelong member of the Congregational Church of Bound Brook and served as a Sunday School teacher, a Search Committee member, a trustee, a deacon, and most recently as moderator. Marv and his wife Maxine attended many NACCC meetings from 1960 until 1999, and he served on the Spiritual Resources Commission in the 1970s.

He was a kind and generous man with a wonderful sense of humor. His hobbies included gardening, woodworking, and especially clock-making.

Marv is survived by Maxine, his wife of 64 years, and by his daughter and three grandchildren. He was predeceased by his son in 2010.



Katy (who was only 16), and they spent the next 69 years together.

They moved to San Francisco, where Walt attended Glad Tidings Bible Institute, preparing for a life as a pastor, and became a pastor extraordinaire. Wherever he pastored, from Happy Camp, Calif., to his final pastorate at the Congregational Church of Soquel, the church flourished. His final calling was to the NACCC, where he oversaw the Missions program, which took him and Katy around the world twice.

Katy was born in Lone Wolf, Okla. Her family moved to Madera when she was a young child. After her marriage to Walt, and after their children were in school, Katy finished high school and then attended Sacramento State University, graduating with a teacher's credential. Later she attended Fresno State and earned her master's degree. She taught elementary school in several California towns.

Walt was an avid fisherman, and Katy also enjoyed fishing, as well as sewing, knitting, and gardening. They both loved travel, especially cruises. In retirement they took up stained glass and made many wonderful pieces, which they sold at craft fairs.

They are survived by their daughter and son, two grandsons, and four great-grandchildren. Walter is also survived by a sister and a brother, and Katy by four brothers and a sister.

Gifts may be made in memory of Walt to the Missionary Society of the NACCC, in care of the Congregational Church of Soquel; or in memory of Katy to the Alzheimer's Foundation of Central California, P.O. Box 3438, Pinedale CA 93650.

Walter Boring

Katherine "Katy" Elizabeth Boring

The Rev. Walter Arch Boring II, 87, of Coarsegold, Calif., died Dec. 28, 2011. His beloved wife Katy, 85, passed away two days later, on Dec. 30.

Walt was born and raised in Madera, Calif., graduated from high school in 1942 and the next November married his high school sweetheart,



Daniel Arnold

The Rev. Daniel D. Arnold, 70, died Dec. 30, 2011, in Newton, N.J. Born and raised in Temple, Pa., Rev. Arnold attended the University of Pennsylvania Wharton Business School and received his Master's of Divinity degree from Eastern Baptist Seminary in Philadelphia.

Rev. Arnold served Congregational Churches in Connecticut, Ohio, and Maine before being called as pastor of the Baleville Congregational Christian Church in Hampton Township, N.J., in 1983.



Continued on p. 33

busy, too. As early as 1836, Oberlinites led by Mahan tried without success to establish a regional Congregational association. In his history of the Plan of Union, William Sloane Kennedy comments:

The Oberlin party gathered up the extreme radical, and somewhat Arminian elements, and attracted many of the restless and unstable elements, and produced a prodigious ferment, with occasional explosions. But most of the Congregationalists ... found less affinity far with that, than with Presbyterianism, and remained in its former position. Many who at first, entered into the movement, were disappointed by the results.

—*The Plan of Union*, p. 204

Yet in 1871 it was Oberlin that hosted the first meeting of the National Council of Congregational Churches, with Finney as the featured preacher. Times had changed!

The achievements of the early Oberlin, college and town, are remarkable. The first bachelor's degrees awarded to women were given in 1841. One of the *Amistad* captives, Margru (later known as Sarah Margru Kinson), received an education at Oberlin. Lucy Stone, abolitionist and women's rights advocate, and Antoinette Brown Blackwell, the first woman ordained by a church in America, graduated in 1847.

In 1858, a group of 37 Oberlin residents, defying the Fugitive Slave Act, freed runaway slave John Price from custody of U.S. marshals in the "Wellington Rescue," which became a cause célèbre leading up to the Civil War. Several Oberlin students and residents accompanied John Brown (whose father had been an Oberlin trustee) to Kansas and on his raid on Harper's Ferry. Over a thousand local residents served the Union in the Civil War, including the famous Oberlin Company C, known as the "Monroe Rifles."

The *Pennsylvanian* newspaper complained, "Oberlin is the nursery of just such men as John Brown and his followers. ... Here is where the younger Browns obtain their conscientiousness in ultraisms, taught from their cradle up, so that while they rob slaveholders of their property, or commit murder for the cause of freedom, they imagine that they are doing God service" (Fletcher, *History of Oberlin College*, p. 401).

In reality, however, Oberlin stood on the moderate side of most of the reforms it championed. Finney in particular abhorred the extremism of many abolitionists. In an 1836 letter to Theodore Weld, he wrote that he feared

... the church and world, ecclesiastical and state leaders will become embroiled in one common infernal squabble that will roll a wave of blood over the land. The causes now operating are in my view certain to lead to this result ... unless the public mind can be engrossed with subject of salvation and make abolition an appendage just as we made temperance an appendage of the revival in Rochester.

—FINNEY, *Memoirs*, p. 363



Above: Oberlin graduate Antoinette Brown Blackwell, a Congregationalist and the first woman ordained to an American pulpit, spent most of her life as an outspoken feminist and social reformer.



Left: Daguerreotype of Oberlin graduate and early feminist Lucy Stone, circa 1840-1860.

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Margru, one of the Amistad captives, after being released and returned to Africa, came back to America and studied at Oberlin College under the name Sara Margru Kinson, with Lewis Tappan's financial backing. This sketch was made by New Haven artist William H. Townsend during the Amistad proceedings. Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University.

The Civil War ended slavery and vindicated the abolitionists who had seemed such outliers in the beginning. The Second Great Awakening had by then run its course and revival fervor had waned, even though Finney remained active until his death in 1875. There were now churches in Oberlin of multiple denominations, the college's energies had turned to pursuits more traditionally academic, and the Covenant had been set aside.

The evangelical colony had had its day.

Oberlin was not, however, an isolated case. One of its earliest visitors had been the Rev. George Washington Gale, Finney's pastor and mentor, and he had taken the reforming colony model westward to Galesburg, Ill. And before too long the Rev. J.B. Grinnell, a former student of Gale's at Oneida, would be planting a similar colony on the western frontier of freedom just as the Kansas-Nebraska Act of 1854 re-opened the possibility of slavery coming to the North.

To be continued.



THE REV. DR. ARLIN T. LARSON is in his ninth year as minister of First Congregational Church, Searsport, Maine, and is historian of the NACCC. While in seminary he served an internship in the campus ministry at Oberlin College and later used Oberlin as a case study in his Doctor of Ministry dissertation.

Necrology

Continued from pp.31

At his memorial service, reported Suzanne Drager, "the little white church on the hill was filled to capacity with people standing along the side walls, the basement room was filled to capacity and there were so many that ended up in the hall next door listening from speakers piping in the sounds."

Many at the service shared stories of their faith experiences with Arnold.

"If you ever had ... a cup of coffee with Dan, you were in for a treat," said Mike Brucker. "Within five minutes ten people came to the table to say hello, to lean on him in sorrow, or to fill him in on someone else's health. Before you know it, four people are sitting at the table, and Dan was listening and living the Gospel."

Rev. Arnold was a member of the Branchville Businessmen's Club and chaplain for the Hampton Township Fire Department, and a former Mason, Civil Air Patrol chaplain, and Rotary member.

He is survived by his wife of 43 years, Marie, plus three daughters, one grandson, one step-grandson, one brother, and four sisters.

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on the NACCC website.

right to life, and so on. These have an appropriate home in our public square. They are not hotheaded at all but, rather, a way to address hot-button issues from a stance that openly puts our cards on the table but recognizes at the same time, as the great 20th-century public theologian, Reinhold Niebuhr, insisted, that there may be many public policy options, not just one, that are consistent with this appeal to human dignity.

At times—at times—the dividing line will be incommensurable, that is, there will be no meeting of the minds. But we are obliged to offer our reasons; to state why that is. Different contexts will demand different forms of reason-giving, if you will, as most issues most of the time do not require of us that we unpack all of our deepest commitments. ...



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www.secondcongregational.org

Rage, or Thoughtful Engagement?

Christians just celebrated Easter, a time when believers declare that they are Easter People: “Christ is Risen. He is Risen, Indeed.”

The earthly stance this helps to inspire is one of HOPE. Not optimism, for that is the cocky conviction that everything will always turn out all right. We know that isn't true.

But we also know that it is a sin to despair. So public life should be approached with hope and with a conviction that believers and non-believers alike—and by believers here I mean those with faith convictions that are not exclusive to Christianity—can share a public space. We are in it together.

We cannot avoid the hot issues: They are before us. But we can avoid turning into hotheads who condemn one another.

The great French Algerian writer, Albert Camus, in a discussion with Christians on “What the Unbeliever Expects from Christians,” indicated that Christians should make it absolutely clear where they stand; they should condemn what needs condemning so not a doubt exists in the heart of the simplest man.



New York World-Telegram and the Sun Newspaper Photograph Collection

Albert Camus, 1957

Camus' reference point was Nazi genocide and what he took to be the often muted voice of Christians. The voice of the believer should not be muted, but neither should it be enraged or outraged.

Rage is cheap. Thoughtful engagement is much harder. But citizenship demands no less.

Thank you very much.



DR. JEAN BETHKE ELSHTAIN is the Laura Spelman Rockefeller Professor of Social and Political Ethics at the University of Chicago Divinity School, with appointments in Political Science and the Committee on International Relations, and holds the Leavey Chair in the Foundations of American Freedom at Georgetown University. She has written many books and articles and serves on many academic boards and institutions. In 2006, she delivered the prestigious Gifford Lectures at the University of Edinburgh, joining such previous Gifford Lecturers as William James, Hannah Arendt, Karl Barth and Reinhold Niebuhr. Dr. Elshtain is married, with five children and four grandchildren. She was born in the high plains of northern Colorado where her immigrant grandparents settled and spent years doing stoop labor in the sugar beet fields. She tries to honor that heritage of hard work in her own life.

Pastorates and Pulpits

RECENT CALLS

First Congregational Church of Clear Lake, Iowa, has called the Rev. Brad Thornton as senior minister.

ORDINATIONS

Plymouth Church, Brooklyn, N.Y., ordained the Rev. Julie Johnson Staples for ministry, with concurrence of a Sept. 17 vicinage council, Sept. 18, 2011.

First Congregational Church, Pittsford, Mich., ordained the Rev. Terry Bobzien for ministry, with concurrence of an Oct. 28 vicinage council, Nov. 12, 2011.

Desert Congregational Church, Twentynine Palms, Calif., ordained the Rev. Alan Morrow for ministry, with concurrence of an Oct. 29 vicinage council, Nov. 13, 2011.

First Congregational Church of Detroit, Mich., ordained the Rev. Reno Wright for ministry, with concurrence of a vicinage council, Dec. 18, 2011.

IN SEARCH

• SENIOR MINISTERS

Union Congregational Church
Braintree, Mass.

Elijah Kellogg Congregational Church
Harpwell, Maine

Second Congregational Church
Warren, Maine

Horton Congregational Church
Horton, Mich.

First Congregational Church
Wauwatosa, Wis.

Tipton Community
Congregational Church
Tipton, Mich.

First Congregational Church
Tonganoxie, Kan.

Community of Faith and Fellowship
Limerick, Maine

University Congregational Church
Wichita, Kan.

• NON-NACCC CHURCHES

Apache Wells Community Church
Mesa, Ariz.

Calendar

April 8
Easter

April 16-19

Annual Ministers' Convocation—*Mundelein, Ill.*
Betsy Mauro, 800-262-1620, ext. 12, bmauro@nacc.org;
or Marie Steele, 800-262-1620, ext. 22, msteele@nacc.org

April 23

General Copy Deadline—*THE CONGREGATIONALIST*
June 2012 issue

May 27

Pentecost

June 21-28

Short-term Mission Experience—*Misión Mazahua, Mexico.*
Jack Brown, 269-749-2631, pilgrim_pastor@hotmail.com

June 23-26

NACCC Annual Meeting and Conference—
Bloomington, Minn., mn2012.org

June 24-30

NAPF/HOPE Youth Mission Experience—*South Dakota.*
nacc.org/CMSUploads/856_NAPFHOPE2012_flyer_reg.pdf

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intercong.org/conference-information/the-2013-conference/