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The CONGREGATIONALIST

Magazine of the Congregational Way

Vol. 164/No. 2

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June 2012

ABOLITION TOWNS: GALESBURG

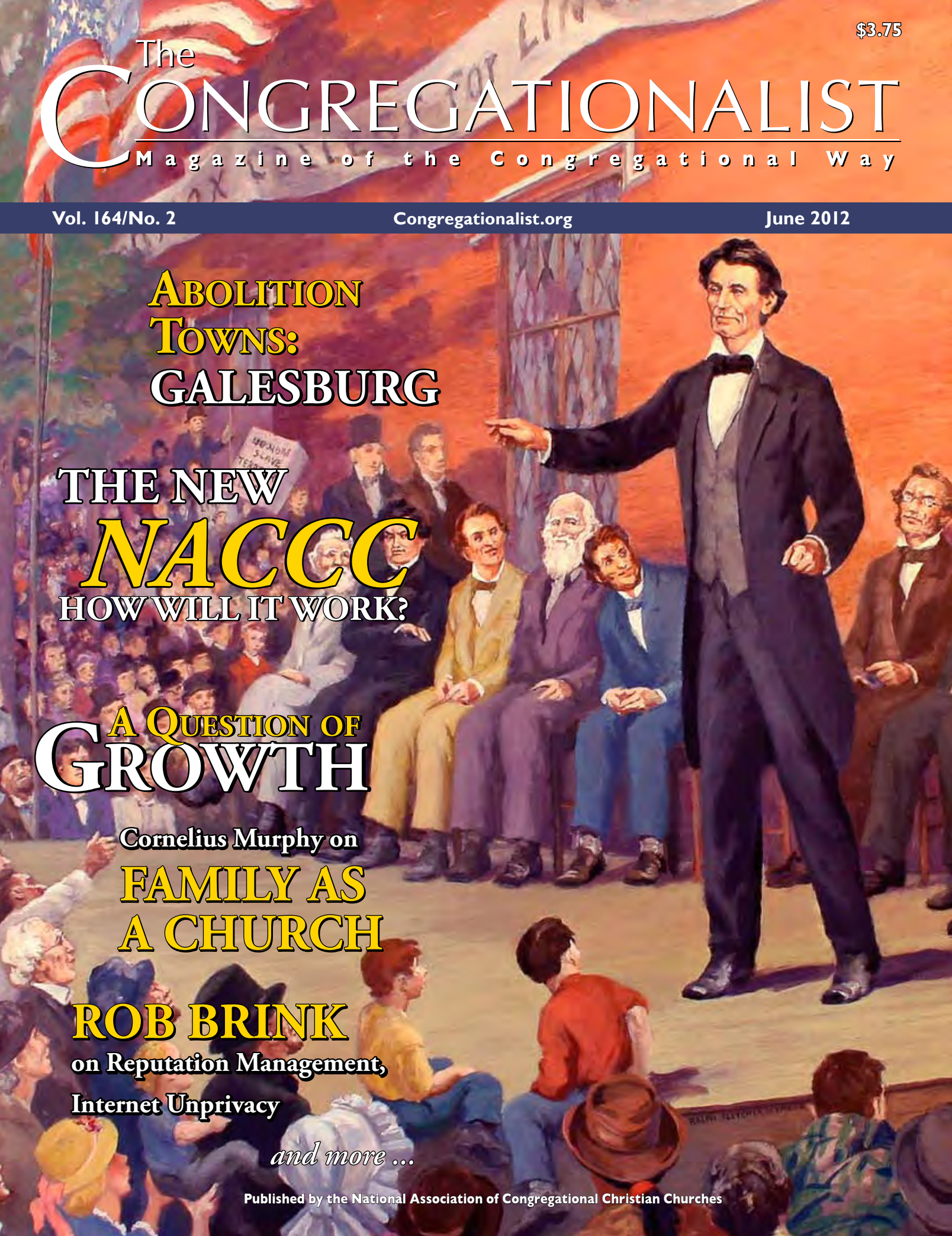
THE NEW NACCC HOW WILL IT WORK?

A QUESTION OF GROWTH

Cornelius Murphy on FAMILY AS A CHURCH

ROB BRINK on Reputation Management, Internet Unprivacy

and more ...





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FEATURES



6 THE NEW NACCC

Rollout

By Jim Owens



12 ABOLITION TOWNS:

Part 2 – Galesburg

By Larry Sommers

20 THE FAMILY AS A DOMESTIC CHURCH

Part 1: The Protestant Vision

By Cornelius F. Murphy Jr.



26 A QUESTION OF GROWTH

By Stephen Chapin Garner and Jerry Thornell

The
CONGREGATIONALIST
Magazine of the Congregational Way

Vol. 164/No. 2

June 2012



ON THE COVER:

Abraham Lincoln makes the moral argument against slavery in his fifth debate against Sen. Stephen A. Douglas at Old Main, Knox College, Oct. 7, 1858. In the Abolition stronghold of Galesburg, Ill., Lincoln says Douglas “is blowing out the moral lights around us, when he contends that whoever wants slaves has a right to hold them.” Center section of Lincoln-Douglas Debate oil painting by Ralph Fletcher Seymour, courtesy of Knox College. The full canvas, with Douglas seated behind Lincoln, is reproduced smaller on p.17.

BOOK REVIEW

19 **Welding a Movement**

Abolitionism Becomes a Force in 19th-Century America

By Larry Sommers

DEPARTMENTS

4 **Relation**
*“Toiling up new
Calv’ries ever ...”*

5 **From My Heart To Yours**
*The Who, and the
Who Beyond the Who*

10 **Along the Way**

24 **Calendar**

25 **Necrology**

26 **Missionary News
and Needs**

30 **NetMending**
*Reputation Management,
and Internet Unprivacy*

31 **Pastorates and Pulpits**

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Development Dept.

“Toiling up new Calv’ries ever ...”

In the great battle of life, the saints often get wounded. But they keep bouncing back.

- “Just to tell you how I’m doing: I’m walking now with the prosthesis, but I will always have to use a walker because of my other crooked leg.”—Rev. Dr. Marva Dawn, April 7 e-mail. Not long after blessing us with her Bible Lectures last June, she had broken her leg and had an amputation—one more wound on an arduous road of precarious health that she yet walks with faith and grace.
- “I ran the Two Oceans Ultra Marathon in Cape Town with the open wounds on Saturday, 07 April 2012.”—Rev. Scott Couper, April 17 e-mail. The energetic and ebullient development director for Inanda Seminary, South Africa, had been badly mauled by a police dog while protecting the school’s residents and employees from an unwarranted intrusion by what seems to have been a local police unit gone rogue. The incident is now being sorted out by South Africa’s legal system.

Both stories speak to the need for prayer, the healing grace of God, and the hazards of life in our world.

LARRY SOMMERS, *Editor*

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Bringing together Congregational Christian Churches for mutual care and outreach to our world in the name of Jesus Christ.

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The Who, and the Who Beyond the Who

I went to church recently. That wouldn't be unusual, except: I attended worship.

I didn't go to visit the leaders of the church, to bring greetings from the NACCC, to celebrate some event in the church, or to preach—which is what I do 95 percent of the weekends I'm in the field. I went to hear a colleague preach. The message was timely, the music was inspiring, and the hymns were all ones that I love to sing. Could not have been better.

But it was. At the end of the service an older woman sitting in the pew in front of me, turned and greeted me. She reached over the back of the pew, took my face in her hands and said, "I know the question is who."

At first her gesture took me by surprise, but then I understood and smiled. "You remembered," I said. "Thank you so much for mentioning that."

Almost a month earlier I had preached a sermon in that same church. In that sermon I said, "It is not a matter of what is next. It's about who is next." She wanted me to know that she heard it and remembered.

For almost ten months the Transition Team has been diligently working on imagining how the Strategic Plan, passed at last year's Annual Meeting and Conference, could be implemented. There were sub-teams (fifteen people in all) working on various parts of the implementation plan. Of the fifteen, nine are clergy and six are lay leaders. Four are women, eleven men. They are from Florida, Georgia, Illinois, Maine, Michigan, Minnesota, New York, Utah, and Wisconsin. They are diverse, passionate and respectful of one another.

There were others involved in this process—the Membership and Procedures sub-committee of the Executive Committee, the Executive Committee itself, and a legal team appointed by the Executive Committee—all dedicated to the implementation of the Strategic Plan.

What a chore! What a goal! All of us dealing with the question of "What's next?" What's next for our beloved association?

But they were also dealing with the question of who's next.

As important as other questions might be—"Who will the leaders will be?," "How will the leadership teams be configured?," "Is one team more important than another?"—the real question is: "Who is this plan for? Who are the beneficiaries of this plan?" And the answer is: Our churches. Because they are the association.

And, through all these months of planning, we have had a sense of who all this work is for. We do not fear what's next, because we know who we are working for. It is the "Who" beyond the "who." It's God.



REV. DR. THOMAS M. RICHARD
Executive Secretary

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**Editor's
Round
Table**

Join today—and invest in the vitality of our magazine! **Thank You!**

The New NACCC

by Jim Owens



“The implementation of the Strategic Plan shifts our institutional energy from fixed tasks of the NACCC to the nurturing and tending of relationships among the churches, and does that with increased flexibility by seeking out and lifting up the gifts abundant in our local churches through participation in agile, team-based ministries.”

– Strategic Plan Transition Team

The Strategic Plan that re-envisioned the National Association of Congregational Christian Churches has come full circle. Dreams have been dreamed, plans have been drafted, structures re-designed, services evaluated and streamlined, and delegates engaged from our associational churches. We now stand, with great joy, on the cusp of implementation.

All this so we can be more responsive to needs of our local congregational churches.

As I stood before the gathered body as keynote speaker at last year’s annual gathering in Scottsdale, I spoke these words:

“Over the next few days we will discuss the new proposed Strategic Plan. I believe it has the potential, for more of our ‘congregational’ people to be involved in the ministry and life of the NA. But it will only work if our churches and our people will support it. This is our association; it can only be as good as we make it. Amen.”

Little did I understand the journey we would travel in the Transition Team charged with planning the implementation of the

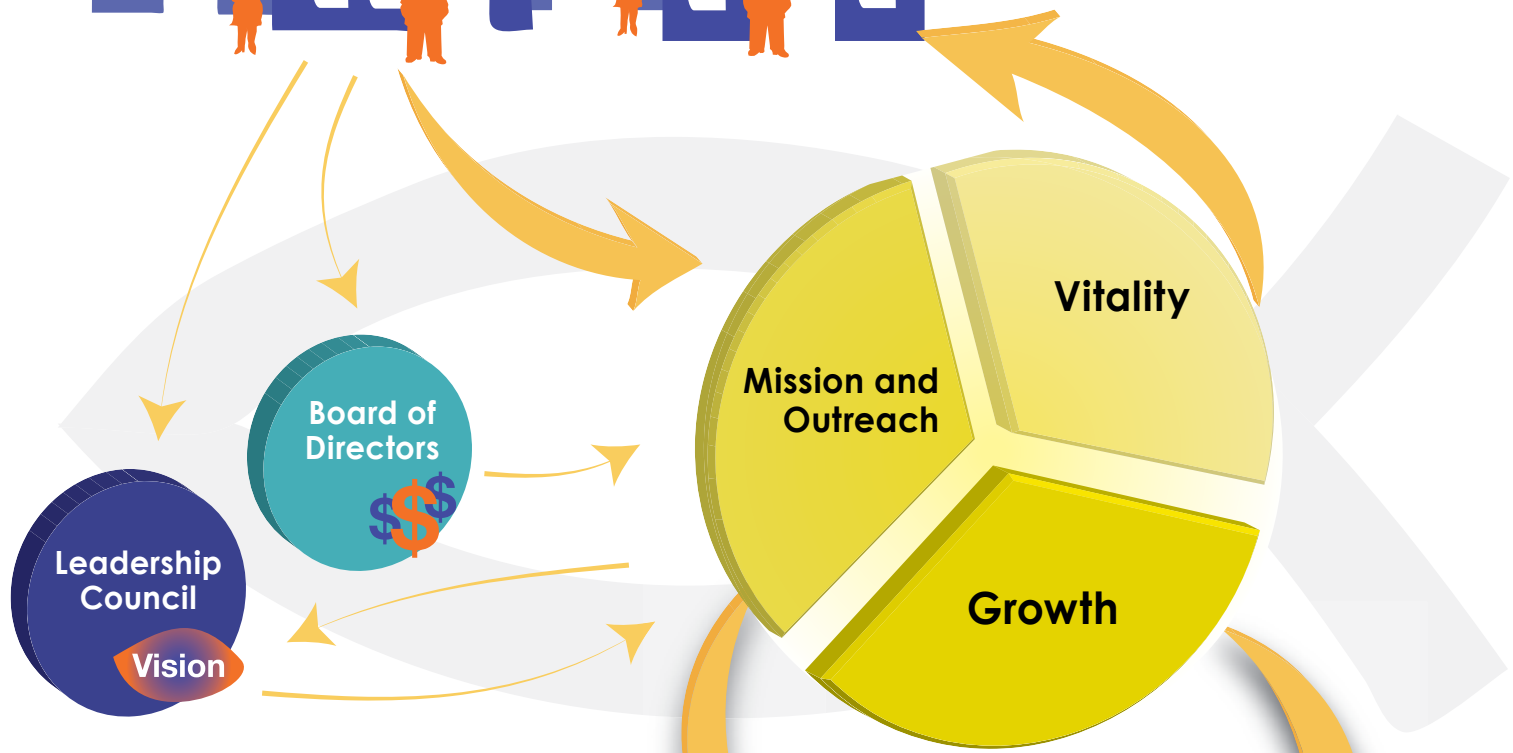
approved Strategic Plan. It has not been an easy journey; as a team we have argued, agonized, and at last agreed. Team members have been passionately focused and engaged over the course of nearly a year on the task at hand, to see this Strategic Plan move from concept, to design, and ultimately to implementation. After months of design, discussion, and deliberation we are prepared to present the plan, to move forward with the blessing of the body at this year’s Annual Meeting and Conference in Minnesota.

Through the process, certain words have recurred again and again: Communication, Clarity, Connectivity, Continuity, and Creativity. These are words that promise hope as we move into the future.

Communication: We now have a system in place that allows information to flow back and forth between our local churches and the NACCC through the Year Round Delegate. Our new Ministry Councils will work together through the Leadership Council to prioritize resources and personnel. From the new Leadership Council and the corporation Board of Directors to the Ministry Councils with their many task



The New NA – Bringing together Congregational Christian churches for mutual care and outreach to our world in the name of Jesus Christ



Churches, represented by Annual Meeting Delegates, elect three Ministry Councils with task teams that do the work of the association, using funds and resources overseen by an elected Board of Directors, with vision and priorities articulated through an elected Leadership Council.



Between Annual Meetings, each church's Year Round Delegate fosters active communication between the church and the National Association.



teams, everyone will be aware of the great ministries being accomplished across the NACCC.

Clarity: Proverbs 29:18 says, “Where there is no vision the people perish.” The future is clear; a healthy National Association is made up of healthy local churches. Our

association doesn't exist for its own benefit, but for the benefit of the member churches. We must never lose sight of this fact.

Connectivity: The National Association is working on establishing partnerships with each of the regional and

Churches with Year Round Delegates

More than 150 of the 281 active member churches of the NACCC have so far named Year Round Delegates. This new role was created to be a vital added communication link between the local church and the National Association.

Churches that have not yet named a Year Round Delegate are urged to do so by filling out and submitting the Year Round Delegate form available at naccc.org.

The following churches have already named Year Round Delegates:

First Congregational Church	Anchorage AK	Port Byron Congregational Church	Port Byron IL	Pilgrim Congregational Church	Bloomfield Hills MI
Pine Forest Congregational Christian Church	Valley AL	Thawville Congregational Church	Thawville IL	Plymouth Congregational Church	Lansing MI
Union Congregational Christian Church	Marbury AL	Chapel of the Dunes	Gary IN	Plymouth Congregational Church	Watervliet MI
Congregational Church of Sun City	Sun City AZ	Community Congregational Church	South Bend IN	Rapid River Congregational Church	Rapid River MI
Central Congregational Church	La Mesa CA	First Congregational Church	Terre Haute IN	Rockwood First Congregational Church	Rockwood MI
Church of the Oaks	Del Rey Oaks CA	South Vigo Congregational Christian Church	West Terre Haute IN	Traditional Congregational Church	Stanton MI
Congregational Church of Soquel	Soquel CA	First Congregational Church	Hutchinson KS	Wallin Congregational Church	Grand Rapids MI
Congregational Church of the Messiah	Los Angeles CA	Maple Hill Comm Congregational Church	Maple Hill KS	Duluth Congregational Church	Duluth MN
Desert Congregational Church	Twentynine Palms CA	Plymouth Congregational Church	Wichita KS	People's Congregational Church	Bayport MN
El Dorado Community Church	El Dorado CA	Becket Federated Church	Becket MA	SouthCross Community Church	Burnsville MN
First Congregational Church	Los Angeles CA	Berkshire Community Church	Pittsfield MA	Congregational Church	Iberia MO
First Congregational Church	National City CA	First Church of Christ	Lynn MA	Amelia Christian Church	Clayton NC
First Congregational Church	Redlands CA	First Church of Squantum	Squantum MA	Bear Creek Congregational Church	Robbins NC
First Congregational Church of Salida	Salida CA	First Congregational Church	Becket MA	St Lukes Reformed Church	Salisbury NC
Grace North Church	Berkeley CA	First Congregational Church	Hanson MA	First Congregational Church	Ashland NE
New Faith Fellowship of Orange County C C	Orange CA	First Congregational Church of Marshfield	Marshfield MA	Hemingford Congregational Church	Hemingford NE
Pilgrim Congregational Church	Pomona CA	First Congregational Church	Middleboro MA	First Congregational Church	Hinsdale NH
Plymouth Congregational Church	San Diego CA	First Congregational Church	Rochester MA	First Congregational Church	Pittsfield NH
First Congregational Church of Barkhamsted	Pleasant Valley CT	Florence Congregational Church	Florence MA	Congregational Ch of Bound Brook	Bound Brook NJ
Founders Congregational Church	Harwinton CT	Union Congregational Church	Wallaxton MA	Cadman Memorial Congregational Church	Brooklyn NY
Goshen Congregational Church	Lebanon CT	Dixfield Congregational Church	Dixfield ME	First Congregational Church	Albany NY
Greenville Congregational Church	Norwich CT	Elijah Kellogg Congregational Church	Harpswell ME	First Congregational Church	Crown Point NY
Mohegan Congregational Church	Uncasville CT	First Congregational Church	Searsport ME	Flatbush-Tompkins Congregational	Brooklyn NY
Newbury Congregational Church	Brookfield CT	Forest Avenue Congregational Church	Bangor ME	Oakwood Heights Community Church	Staten Island NY
Preston City Congregational Church	Preston CT	Kenduskeag Union Church	Kenduskeag ME	Plymouth Church	Brooklyn NY
Second Congregational Church of Winsted	Winsted CT	Lubec Congregational Christian Church	Lubec ME	East Market Street United Church Of Christ	Akron OH
Third Congregational Church	Middletown CT	Marshfield Congregational Church	Marshfield ME	First Congregational Church	Mansfield OH
Comm Congregational Christian Church	Citrus Springs FL	Pilgrim Community Church Of Camden	Warren ME	First Congregational Church	Sullivan OH
First Congregational Church	Cape Coral FL	Rockland Congregational Church	Rockland ME	First Congregational Church	Taleado OH
First Congregational Church of Naples	Naples FL	Sawyer Memorial Congregational Church	Jonesport ME	Heritage Congregational Church	Berea OH
First Congregational Church of Zephyrhills	Zephyrhills FL	Sebago Lake Congregational Church	Standish ME	Ingle Chapel Congregational Church	Milton-Freewater OR
Grace Fellowship Congregational Church	Sanford FL	Second Congregational Church	Biddeford ME	First Congregational Church of Etna	Pittsburgh PA
Jupiter First Church	Jupiter FL	Arbor Grove Congregational Church	Jackson MI	Riverpoint Congregational Church	West Warwick RI
Lighthouse Fellowship Chapel	Bonita Springs FL	Britton Congregational Christian Church	Britton MI	First Congregational Church	Crossville TN
Pilgrim Congregational Church Of Pomona Park	Pomona Park FL	First Congregational Church	Clarkston MI	First Congregational Church	Salt Lake City UT
Stuart Congregational Church	Stuart FL	First Congregational Church of Detroit	Detroit MI	North Pownal Congregational Church	North Pownal VT
Center Congregational Church	Atlanta GA	First Congregational Church	Frankfort MI	Heritage Congregational Church	Spokane WA
County Line Congregational Chr Church	Hampton GA	First Congregational Church of Fruitport	Fruitport MI	Seattle Congregational Church	Shoreline WA
Liberty Congregational Church	Dewey Rose GA	First Congregational Church	Lake Odessa MI	Warden Community Church	Warden WA
The Methodist-Congl Federated Church	Demorest GA	First Congregational Church of Pittsford	Pittsford MI	Community Congregational Church	Kewaunee WI
Berwick Congregational Church	Berwick IA	First Congregational Church	Roscommon MI	Community Congregational Church	Lone Rock WI
First Congregational Church	Burlington IA	First Congregational Church	Royal Oak MI	Faith Community Church	Franklin WI
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First Congregational Church	Spencer IA	Mayflower Congregational Church	Lansing MI	Heritage Congregational Christian Church	Madison WI
Grace Congregational Church of Greenville	Greenville IA	McGraff Memorial Congregational Church	Muskegon MI	Lake Country Congregational Church	Hartland WI
La Moile Congregational Community Church	Marshalltown IA	Meadowbrook Congregational Church	Novi MI	North Shore Congregational Church	Fox Point WI
The Little Brown Church In The Vale	Nashua IA	Merrill Congregational Christian Church	Merrill MI	Ozaukee Congregational Church	Grafton WI
Big Woods Congregational Church	Warrenville IL	North Congregational Church	Farmington Hills MI	Pilgrim Congregational Church	Green Bay WI
First Congregational Church	Beardstown IL	Olivet Congregational Church	Olivet MI	Plymouth Congregational Church	Racine WI
First Congregational Church	Toulon IL	Onondaga Community Church	Onondaga MI		

state associations. State and regional associations will play a greater part in providing services and people to serve on the many task teams needed to meet the needs of the local church. Although autonomous, no one has to go at it alone; we are here for one another. We are here to help each other in times of trouble and to lift each other up and rejoice in times of celebration.

Continuity: We will not forget where we have come from and how we got here. With the reassignment of current members serving on Divisions, we will ensure the projects and works currently underway will continue without interruption. Other ways to continue to strengthen the new task teams and Ministry Councils come from those who are now considered alumni of the old Divisions. There is a wealth of knowledge and ideas to be used as we move forward as a new, re-envisioned NA.

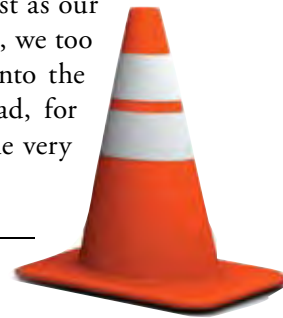
Creativity: The openness of the new structure allows for the freedom to evolve. No one can know what we may feel called to do for Christendom in the future. The possibilities to serve in new ways are endless. When the need arises for a

new team, or to eliminate or modify an old one, we can now move forward to ensure the ministries of the NA are meeting their full potential.

With the implementation of the Strategic Plan, we will empower and energize our local churches, our state and regional associations, and our National Association to work together for the advancement of the Kingdom of God.

The future is now as we, a Congregational people, continue to fulfill the Great Commandment to love one another, and the Great Commission to go and share the Gospel of Jesus Christ with the world. Just as our forefathers stepped out into the unknown, we too can do great things as we move ahead into the future. We must not fear the work ahead, for Jesus has promised to be with us until the very end. Amen.

THE REV. JIM OWENS *is a member of the Transition Team.*



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News from the fellowship of churches



Amber LeClear

IS THAT AVAILABLE FOR KINDLE?

Commemorating 400 years of the King James Version of the Bible, *Olivet College, Olivet, Mich.*, hosted a lecture and display of historic Bibles April 11. **John Kondelik**, former librarian at Olivet and recently retired librarian at Albion College, Albion, Mich., gave an illustrated lecture and displayed a first edition King James Bible, one of just over 200 in existence, from Albion's collection, plus several other historic Bibles. The free public event was co-sponsored by Olivet's Humanities Department and Religious Studies Program and the *Olivet Congregational Church*.

Olivet College senior Jessica Howard examines an old Bible April 11 as the college observed the 400th anniversary of publication of the King James Bible by hosting a lecture and display of historic Bibles.

WORD & NOTE—*Plymouth Congregational Church, Wichita, Kan.*, hosted retired Episcopal bishop **John Shelby Spong** and the vocal ensemble Cantus at its annual Word & Note series in February. More than 1,000 people attended the three-day event.

In lectures related to his latest book, *Re-Claiming the Bible for a Non-Religious World*, Bishop Spong took the audience on an exploration of the Bible and shared his thoughts on how humanity's understanding of God has developed over the centuries. His sermon on Sunday, Feb. 19, titled "From Plagues of Frogs to Love Your Enemies" continued the theme of his lectures and inspired the congregation to further consider God's message of love and compassion in the context of today's world and our daily living.

Spong is a visiting lecturer at Harvard and at universities and churches worldwide. He delivers more than two hundred public lectures each year and has made media appearances including a profile segment on *60 Minutes* and appearances on *Good Morning America*, *Fox News Live*, *Politically Incorrect*, *Larry King Live*, *The O'Reilly Factor*, *William F. Buckley's Firing Line*, and *Extra*.

Rounding out the weekend, the premier men's vocal ensemble **Cantus** presented a program titled, *On the Shoulders of Giants*. Spanning many periods and genres, the program included both secular and sacred music. Cantus has toured throughout the United States and in Canada, West Africa, and Europe.

Plymouth Church is excited to welcome United Methodist bishop **William Willimon** as the featured speaker for Word & Note 2013.



Panamerican Institute photo

Long-ago students at Panamerican Institute learn office skills relevant to future employment.

GOLDEN—The *Panamerican Institute* will celebrate its golden anniversary with a formal dinner at Hotel Palacio Azteca, Tijuana, Mexico, July 21 at 7:00 p.m.

The NACCC-sponsored mission in Tijuana was started as *Academia de las Californias* 50 years ago by the late **Rev. Edgar Welty**. With its mission of educating the impoverished youths of the hillside *colonias*, PAI has been strongly supported by NA churches, particularly those of the *Cal-West Association*, ever since. It is now guided by its president, **Juana Santos**, herself a PAI graduate of 1976. (See our September 2012 issue for an article on the history of *Panamerican Institute*.)

The July 21 celebration will include presentations, guest dignitaries and honorees, *baile folklórico*, dinner and dancing. *PLEASE NOTE: THIS WILL BE THE INSTITUTE'S ONLY OFFICIAL 50TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION.* A previously announced open house in October has been canceled, according to **Laura Jean Hamby**, *Congregational Church of Soquel, Calif.*, a member of the institute's board of trustees.

Cost for the dinner is \$25.00 a person, RSVP. For more information, contact silviaana.soto7@gmail.com and visit www.hotelpalacioazteca.com.

BALLOTS FOR SHALLOTS (OR, SUPPORT YOUR LOCAL ZUCCHINI)—**Linda Miller**, NACCC missions administrator, sends news of a hot election campaign reported by *First Congregational Church of McCook, Neb.* To support the Good Earth Program, a vegetable gardening aid ministry of the NA-sponsored *Morgan Scott Project, Deer Lodge, Tenn.*, the McCook church asked members vote for their favorite vegetables during the Lenten season, using dollars as ballots.

Congregants voted for peas, carrots, tomatoes, radishes, and candy bars.

"Yes," they reported, "we did our research and have found that the candy bar is indeed a vegetable. (Comes from the Cocoa **Bean**—did we stretch it a little?)"

The election winner was peas, with a total of \$192.28 in donations—followed by tomatoes (\$170.92), radishes (\$100.00), and a last-place tie between carrots and candy bars (\$93.40 each).

The McCook veggie race netted a total of \$650 for the Morgan Scott Project.

100 YEARS, B'GOSH—*First Congregational Church of Oshkosh, Wis.*, hosted an April 10 concert of the piano and viola music of Johannes Brahms as part of its centennial celebration.

Pianist **Eli Kalman**, a member of the University of Wisconsin—Oshkosh Music Department, performed the composer's *Sonata for Piano No. 3 in F Minor*, an early composition. Viola virtuoso **Sharon Tenhundfeld** then joined for the *Sonata in E-flat Major for Viola and Piano*, written about 40 years later.

"It's remarkable that a local church has a nine-foot Steinway concert grand piano," said **Joanne Peterson**, the church's organist and choir director. "This 100 year-old piano has tremendous tone. It is the perfect accompanying instrument for the viola.

"We're so pleased to have two musicians of their caliber as part of our series."

CALLED TO NEW SERVICE—**Mary York** has been selected to the board of governors of the Congregational Foundation, a separate organization that provides financial support to the National Association of Congregational Christian Churches to further the Congregational Way.

A lifelong Congregationalist and a member of *First Congregational Church of Wauwatosa, Wis.*, Mary has served in many leadership positions at her church and chaired the host committee for the NACCC's 2005 Annual Meeting and Conference. She and her husband, Merrill, reside in Elm Grove, Wis.

The Congregational Foundation manages assets in accordance with donor wishes and raises funds for the vital work of the NACCC. Donations qualify for tax deduction under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code.

AIDED BY PROVIDENCE—Three member churches of the National Association will receive Providence Fund "scholarships" to help their delegates attend the 2012 Annual

Continued on p. 24

8th Congregational Symposium



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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 second of three articles examining these “abolition towns.”

PART 2—GALESBURG

by Larry Sommers

1837 was a momentous year on the prairie.

Western Illinois had become a boundary zone between two very different cultures. The earliest settlers had been predominantly Southerners, colloquially called “Hoosiers.” But in the 1830s, “Yankees” from New York and New England came to the state in swarms. At least 28 colonies migrated to the Prairie State from the Northeast between 1830 and 1838—no fewer than 18 in the three-year period 1835-1837, according to Hermann Muelder (*Fighters for Freedom*, p. 109 and Appendix).

These Congregationalist and Presbyterian Yankees brought Abolition principles to Illinois and settled among established residents who gave their anti-slavery rhetoric at best a cool reception, by those neutral on the issue of slavery, but sometimes an angry and even violent response on the part of others more hostile to their views.

At Alton, just across the Mississippi River from Missouri, citizens founded the Illinois Anti-Slavery Society in a three-day meeting Oct. 26-28, 1837. In the same city only ten days later, abolitionist editor Elijah P. Lovejoy was shot to death while defending his printing press from a pro-slavery mob.

A less tumultuous event, but one of lasting influence, had occurred in February 1837, when the Illinois legislature granted a charter to Knox Manual Labor College. (Abraham

Lincoln, then a representative from Sangamon County, voted “aye.”)

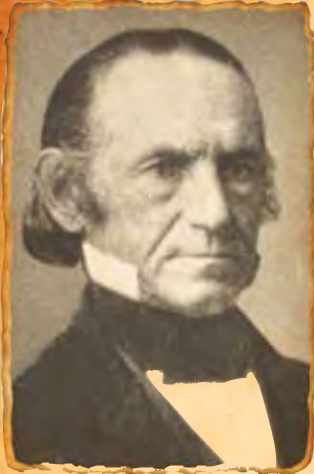
Galesburg, the town founded to support the new college, formed an Anti-Slavery Society that June and pledged \$100—a significant sum—for the cause, anticipating the formation of the state-level society by more than four months.

Abolition was the great cause, besides the coming Kingdom of God, that dominated the era and animated the Galesburg colonists, even as they embraced other reformist impulses abroad in the land, including temperance, Sabbatarianism, the rejection of secret societies, and improvement of the status of women.

GEORGE WASHINGTON GALE

Both the impetus and the format for the Galesburg colony came from the Rev. George Washington Gale, a somewhat frail, dyspeptic Presbyterian minister from Oneida County, in the heart of the “Burned-over District” of Western New York—so called for the flames of religious enthusiasm that continually swept the region.

Gale was not a noteworthy preacher but had a gift of presence. He became the facilitator of a vast new evangelistic movement; for it was Gale, in the early 1820s, who besought



Knox College

The Rev. George Washington Gale

and attended the conversion of the young Charles Grandison Finney, took him into his home, taught him for two years, and sponsored him for membership in the Oneida Presbytery. Finney rose swiftly to be the superstar of 19th-century revival preachers.

If Gale was chagrined to be eclipsed by his former student, he gave no sign. Rather, he redoubled his efforts by taking seven more students into his farm home for instruction, accepting farm chores in lieu of cash tuition. This arrangement worked out so well that Gale decided to start an institution to train young men for ministry and other useful roles using his “manual labor” system.

Thus the Oneida Institute of Science and Industry was born in 1827 at Whitesboro, N.Y., with financial support from almost 800 persons in 14 counties. It was one of the earliest schools operated under the manual labor system and became a celebrated model of this new educational method, whereby students worked three to four hours a day at labor supporting the institution, in exchange for deep discounts in their cash tuition.

One of many notable students was Theodore Dwight Weld, a dynamic leader to whom his classmates looked for inspiration and direction. During his studies at Whitesboro (1830-1833), Weld heard Finney preach at nearby Utica and was converted. He subsequently led the 1833 student revolt at Lane Seminary in Cincinnati that gave a new direction to the development of Oberlin College (see Part 1 of this series in our March 2012 issue, p. 14), and by 1836 was operating at the very center of the Abolition movement, directing a force of 70 full-time agitators for the American Anti-Slavery Society (see related book review, p. 19).

Thus was Gale outstripped by yet another of his students; but by this time he was already turning over the reins of the Oneida Institute and immersing himself in his ultimate project and statement to the world: A new manual labor college in the valley of the Mississippi.

THE PLAN

Gale’s “Circular and Plan,” published in 1834, makes clear his preoccupation: “The indications of Providence, as well as the requisitions of Christ, impose on Christians of this day peculiar obligations ... for spreading the gospel through the world.”

The task of equipping preachers, he pointed out, is not only a spiritual matter, but an urgent need of civil society.

Otherwise the nation would be left to the mercies of a generation “reared ... under the forming hand of those who are no less the enemies of civil liberty than of a pure gospel.”

Gale’s solution was a manual labor college to train up ministers for the Western frontier:

It is perfectly in the power of a few families of moderate property to rear up such institutions, at this time, in the valley of the Mississippi, on a permanent basis with a great part of the endowment required and on a liberal and extensive scale with a great advantage to themselves and families.

Gale planned to raise \$40,000 in subscriptions and buy a whole township—36 square miles of land—at the government price of \$1.25 per acre. Three square miles would be set aside for the college campus and village lots and the remainder sold at \$5.00 per acre to colonists who would make the trip



Southwest view of Oneida Institute, Whitesboro, N.Y.

Gale's Oneida Institute, Whitesboro, N.Y.

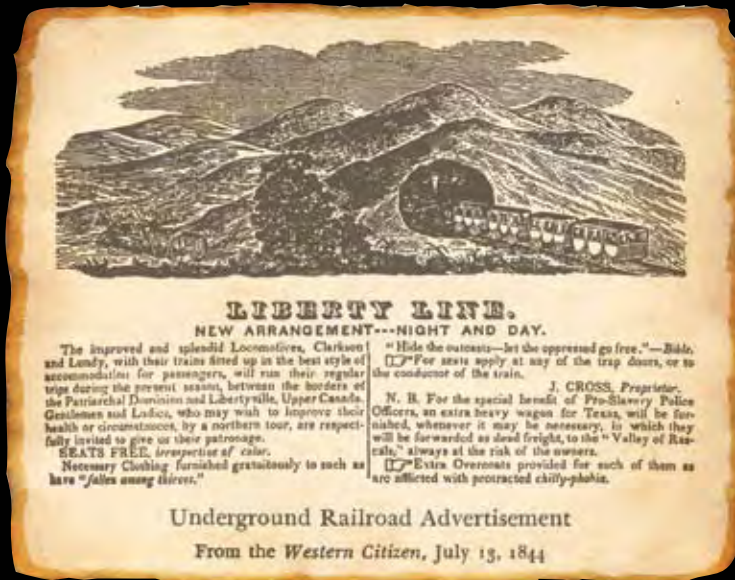
to Illinois and take up farming on the rich prairie soil. Profits from the sale of excess land would fund the construction of college buildings, and any unsold land would be retained by the college’s board of trustees for later use “as the Board may deem best, for the interests of the college.”

Each 80-acre tract purchased for \$400 would also carry with it a tuition-free education for one of the purchaser’s offspring—a brilliant marketing concept, but one that caused considerable strain on the college’s cash flow in later years as students pursued their educations with no current cash contribution.

PRAIRIE COLONY LAUNCHED

So practical was Gale’s proposal, however, that the college and town ultimately survived and prospered, even though the plan’s execution coincided with the financial Panic of 1837, which slowed the rise in land values on which the plan largely depended.

GALESBURG AND THE UNDERGROUND RAILROAD



Knox College

Knox County abolitionist John Cross boldly advertised his affiliation with the Underground Railroad in this 1844 display ad from an anti-slavery newspaper, *The Western Citizen*.

Galesburg was one of three major Underground Railroad centers in the Military Tract, along with Quincy and Princeton, according to Owen Muelder, director of the Galesburg Colony Underground Railroad Freedom Center at Knox College (*The Underground Railroad in Western Illinois*, map, p. 33).

Among many Underground Railroad participants in Western Illinois were—

- **George Washington Gale**, indicted in 1843 for aiding the escape of fugitive slaves.
- **Jonathan Blanchard**, the college's second president.
- **John Cross**, a Presbyterian minister and one of Weld's Seventy, who while residing in Knox County boldly proclaimed himself "Superintendent" of the Underground Railroad, going to far as to take out display ads to that effect in abolitionist newspapers.
- **Owen Lovejoy**, Congregationalist minister at Princeton, the next major station up the line from Galesburg. Upon the murder of his brother Elijah Lovejoy, Owen stepped forward and vowed to take up his brother's cause.

Underground Railroad "conductors" in and near Galesburg took care of escaping slaves and helped them move on to Canada or other safe havens. Sometimes the First Church of Christ (Congregational) became an overnight lodging for escapees being transferred through Galesburg.

But Galesburg was, itself, a safe haven. In 1843 it became the permanent home of Susan "Aunt Sukey" Richardson after her escape from a harsh master in Southern Illinois. She earned her way as a cook, laundress, and nurse; bought a house of her own; joined the old colony church, and lived in Galesburg—protected by the local anti-slavery establishment—until around 1900.

Land—closer to 20 sections than the 36 originally planned—was purchased at the government office in Quincy in the fall of 1835 by a team comprising Gale's main financial backer, Silvanus Ferris, and the man who was to become the colony's general factotum, Nehemiah West. The colony's land was in the northern part of the Military Tract,¹ between the Illinois and Mississippi rivers, roughly the zone where Illinois bulges westward into Iowa and Missouri.

Colonists sold their farms in upstate New York and headed for the Illinois prairie, seven wagon parties of 20 to 40 persons arriving at the new colony site in 1836 and 1837. Settlers at first lived in "Log City," a straggling collection of cabins on Henderson Creek, just north of the new town site, while they were building more permanent homes.

As this work progressed, the founders also got started on Gale's college, the colony's *raison d'être*. In December 1836 the institution's trustees chose the name "Knox Manual Labor College."² Nehemiah West and a local man, James Knox (as it happens) were dispatched to Vandalia, where the legislature sat, to secure a charter for the college, and at length they succeeded.

About the same time, the colony's church was founded as a Presbyterian entity. Back in New York, where churches had been organized on the Plan of Union—Congregationalists and Presbyterians sharing worship and governance in the same church—denominational identity had not been a big issue. Now Gale brushed the Plan of Union aside, insisting that the presbytery and synod of his

¹ Government land originally set aside for veterans of the War of 1812.

² Whether the school was named for Presbyterian Reformer John Knox, Revolutionary War hero Henry Knox, or simply for the county in which it was located, has been the subject of endless speculation but no certain knowledge.

own polity would be of long-term benefit to the college. Congregationalists, who equaled the colony's Presbyterians in number, acquiesced—for the time being.

In 1838 the first college building was built, an all-purpose building on Main Street, used for both church and secular purposes. The first floor was occupied by "the Knox Academy," a preparatory school that functioned for decades as a feeder school for the college proper.

ABOLITION

The colonists' forwardness on Abolition placed Galesburg in the thick of the state's anti-slavery fight from the start. When the first anniversary meeting of the Illinois Anti-Slavery Society was held in October 1838 at Farmington, the largest contingent of attendees came from Galesburg, which became the center of the state society's activities until three years later, when its place was eclipsed by the up-and-coming village of Chicago.

But the small city on the prairie continued to be a hotbed of Abolition sentiment and a haven for fugitive slaves, its whole civic apparatus deeply involved in the Underground Railroad (*see sidebar, facing page*).

Meanwhile, the college had begun academic life in 1841 under its newly installed president, the Rev. Hiram Huntington Kellogg, a friend of evangelists and reformers from the Burned-over District and a fervent follower of Charles Grandison Finney. In 1833 Kellogg had founded a Young Ladies' Domestic Seminary on the manual labor plan in Clinton, N.Y.—a school which, notably, included young ladies of color in its classes.

Kellogg went off to London in 1843 for the World Anti-Slavery Convention, traveling with the fiery abolitionist Rev. Jonathan Blanchard of Cincinnati. He returned, after a year of disappointing fundraising efforts in England, to a college with its finances in disarray. Gale and the trustees eased Kellogg out of his job, seeking a more dynamic and successful leader. The parting seemed amicable, with the respected Kellogg nominating his own successor—dynamic Jonathan Blanchard.

POLITY AND POLITICS

Blanchard came in 1845, trailing clouds of glory:

Thus he arrived in the town, tall, commanding, strikingly handsome, faultlessly dressed in silk hat and frock coat, a dynamic reformer, ready on short notice to excoriate any malefactors guilty of what he considered the seven deadly sins—card playing, dancing, blasphemy, Sabbath breaking, intemperance, slavery, and

failing to walk with the church (Calkins, They Broke the Prairie, p. 139).

Born and bred a New England Congregationalist, Blanchard was pastor of the renowned Sixth Presbyterian Church of Cincinnati. This denominational connection no doubt reassured Gale—falsely so, as it turned out.

Abolitionists were now turning to party politics and other institutional forms of leverage, in addition to simple advocacy and consciousness-raising. Presbyterians struggled to maintain fellowship between Northern and Southern churches in their National Assembly, and the consequent frustration and embarrassment of anti-slavery Presbyterians became one of several factors that led to a schism between Old School and New School Presbyterians at their 1838 meeting in Philadelphia.

This rupture was not complete, however, as New School Presbyterians like those in Galesburg still strove to heal the breach with their Old School brethren—who in turn, were unwilling to break fellowship with their Southern churches over slavery.

To a purist like Blanchard, this was reason enough to side with the Congregationalists in the community, whose polity imposed no such constraints, and who continually pressured the Presbyterians to sever all ties with non-abolitionist churches. In 1851 Gale and others withdrew from the old colony church, now dominated by Congregationalists, and formed the First Presbyterian Church of Galesburg.

The Congregationalists, now in complete control of the original (Presbyterian) church, eventually reorganized as a Congregational church under the name "First Church of Christ," with the church linked to a parallel legal entity called "the Presbyterian Society" for the sake of the real estate, which had been deeded to the Presbyterian church.

These maneuverings fostered bad blood between Galesburg's two founding denominations; and the community's two moral and intellectual colossi, Gale and Blanchard, stood on opposite sides.



Sometime Presbyterian turned Congregationalist, the Rev. Jonathan Blanchard, whose fiery dispute with Gale eventually doomed his tenure as president of Knox College.

The two were very much alike—strong-willed zealots. Blanchard could not brook dereliction in the absolute outright condemnation of slavery. Gale, for his part, had built in Illinois the concrete model of his Oneida County dreams and could not bear to have his colony disrupted by the interloper from Cincinnati.



The "Brick Congregational Church," where Edward Beecher preached and Mother Bickerdyke was inspired to serve Union Army soldiers.

They spent the next several years playing chess with living men—competing Congregational and Presbyterian appointments to the Knox College Board of Trustees.

In 1855 the First Church of Christ split, with 47 members forming a new Congregational church that called the Rev. Edward Beecher to be its minister. Beecher, son of Lyman Beecher and brother of Harriet Beecher Stowe and Henry Ward Beecher, was an "old Illinois hand," having served as founding president of Illinois College at Jacksonville,

a Congregationalist institution. As a close friend of Elijah Lovejoy, he had helped defend Lovejoy's third printing press from the Alton mob in 1837, departing only days before Lovejoy was killed defending his fourth press. Beecher had left Illinois in 1844 to pastor the Salem Street Church in Boston, spending 11 years in its pulpit before being called to the new "Brick Church" in Galesburg.³

Though having no official connection to the college, Beecher nevertheless plunged into the Knox controversy on the side of Blanchard and the Congregationalists. The cheers and jeers of a clergyman of his eminence could not be entirely ignored; he at least irritated the conversation and exacerbated its already acerbic character.

At last Blanchard was forced out⁴ and succeeded by Gale's selectee, the Rev. Harvey Curtis, a Presbyterian from Chicago. Despite being embroiled in controversy through most of his 12-year tenure, Blanchard had brought academic stability and financial prosperity—augmented by the arrival of the railroad in 1854—to the little college on the prairie. Knox's financial affairs were in good order, and the college had just erected two fine new buildings that still stand today—a female seminary later named Whiting Hall, and the main classroom building, now known as Old Main.

LINCOLN AND DOUGLAS

Through a window of the latter building, onto a wooden platform erected for the occasion, stepped Senator Stephen A. Douglas and his electoral challenger, the lanky Abraham Lincoln, for the fifth of their famous debates, on Oct. 7, 1858. Thousands showed up and stood in a raw wind to hear the two politicians speak alternately for three hours.

What they heard, after some time spent on tactical questions lingering from previous debates, was Lincoln's first clear denunciation of slavery on the simple principle that it was evil:

And I do think ... that Judge Douglas ... is going back to the era of our liberty and independence, and, so far as in him lies, muzzling the cannon that thunders its annual joyous return; that he is blowing out the moral lights around us, when he contends that whoever wants slaves has a right to hold them; that he is penetrating, so far as lies in his power, the human soul, and eradicating the light of reason and the love of liberty, when he is in every possible way preparing the public mind, by his vast influence, for making the institution of slavery perpetual and national.

"Lincoln brought his argument down to what to him was the crux of the whole matter, that is, that slavery was wrong and must be kept back or it would spread over the whole country," journalist Ida Tarbell later wrote (*All in the Day's Work: An Autobiography*, p. 171).

Here in Galesburg was a strong constituency for the view that slavery must be abolished because it was a sin.

When the great war came, Knox and Galesburg did their part. More than a third of Knox's graduates, more than 170 men, served as volunteers for the Union. At least 50 became commissioned officers, including seven colonels and three brigadier generals (none who became household names).

Something like fame did come to another Galesburger who served in the Civil War: "Mother" Bickerdyke, a local widow worshipping at the Brick Congregational Church. When Rev. Beecher read aloud a letter complaining about conditions at the Union Army garrison at Cairo, Bickerdyke volunteered to deliver a load of supplies raised by the church for the local men. Once there, she became indispensable, providing good meals and competent nursing to the sick and wounded; overriding officious Army medical personnel; and earning the

³ Beecher also served as founding editor of *THE CONGREGATIONALIST* from 1849 to 1855. Accepting the pulpit in Galesburg ended his editorship of this publication, at that time published in Boston (without benefit of telecommuting!).

⁴ Blanchard moved on to Wheaton College, Wheaton, Ill., where he presided from 1860 to 1882, passing on the presidency to his son.

LINCOLN IN GALESBURG

Galesburg sees Abraham Lincoln as a native son—largely, perhaps, because of the fifth debate, held on the east face of Old Main, the only original Lincoln-Douglas debate site still standing. Also, no doubt, because prairie poet Carl Sandburg, born and raised in Galesburg, wrote a major biography of Lincoln.

But apart from the debate and Sandburg's biography, Lincoln was no stranger to Galesburg and Knox College.

- As a member of the legislature sitting in Vandalia in early 1837, Lincoln voted for the bill that gave the college its corporate charter.
- There is some evidence that Lincoln had visited Galesburg casually before his famous appearance in 1858.
- In 1860, the Knox College Board of Trustees awarded the newly-nominated presidential candidate an honorary Doctor of Laws degree—the school's first honorary doctorate. It was Lincoln's first degree of any kind.

Knox trustee Orville Browning, a long-time Lincoln friend, wrote him:

You will, therefore, after tomorrow, consider yourself a 'scholar,' as well as a 'gentleman,' and deport yourself accordingly. ... This may not be to you a very gratifying tribute, coming, as it does, from a young institution just struggling for reputation. ... But I may say, for your comfort, that it is ... destined to become one of the most useful colleges in the land, and that in after time it will be no discredit to you that you received your degree at her hands. ...



"He is blowing out the moral lights around us...." —Abraham Lincoln addresses thousands in the fifth Lincoln-Douglas debate. Old Main, 1858.



Top: Hiram Revels, Reconstruction-era senator from Mississippi and a prior pupil of the Knox Academy.



Right: The young S. S. McClure.

thanks of Generals Grant and Sherman, whose armies she served until the end of the war and beyond.

POSTWAR ACTIVISM

After the war, Knox alumni played important roles in the Reconstruction of the South. Most notable among them was Hiram Rhodes Revels, the first black U.S. Senator, elected after the war to the Mississippi seat formerly held by Jefferson Davis. Revels had attended the Knox Academy in 1856-1857.

More than a score of Knox men and women taught at schools for freedmen established throughout the South, mostly sponsored by the American Missionary Association, a largely Congregational society.⁵

Later in the 19th century, Knox became an incubator of turn-of-the-century "muckraking" journalism, educating Samuel S. McClure, founder of a major newspaper syndicate. Many of McClure's key employees were fellow Knox alumni. In 1893 they started *McClure's Magazine*, which published investigative pieces by Ida Tarbell, Upton Sinclair, Lincoln Steffens and other social advocacy journalists.

The two dozen Knox alumni who edited, sold, and financed McClure's carried to the New York publishing world many of the reform traditions of the Great Revival. ... Thus evangelical Christianity—though greatly modified—with its injunction to transform an evil

5 President Blanchard, Dr. Beecher, and the Rev. Flavel Bascom, pastor of the First Church of Christ, had all been officers of the anti-slavery AMA before the war.

world, helped to provide the purpose, technique, and content of many of the progressive reforms championed by the muckraking movement in a later era.

—HAROLD S. WILSON, *McClure's Magazine and the Muckrakers*, quoted by Hermann S. Muelder in *Missionaries and Muckrakers*, p. 147.

The gospel-inspired reformers of the Second Great Awakening transferred their zeal from the Burned-over District to the Illinois prairie, whence it helped end slavery and educate the

freed slaves, and echoed on as social justice journalism into the 20th century.

To be continued.

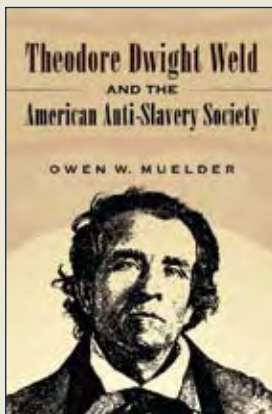


LARRY SOMMERS is the editor of *THE CONGREGATIONALIST*. He was born in Galesburg and later attended Knox College as a student.

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Theodore Dwight Weld and the American Anti-Slavery Society

OWEN W. MUELDER

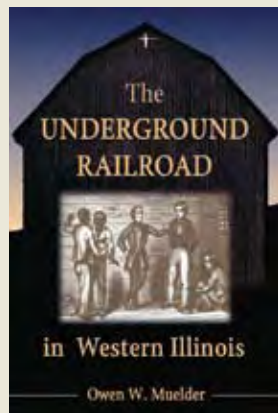
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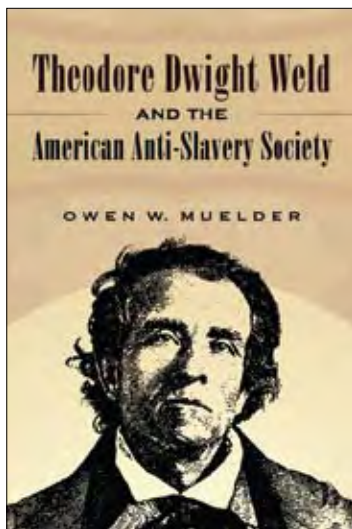
by Larry Sommers

Abolitionism Becomes a Force in 19th-Century America

Review of *Theodore Dwight Weld and the American Anti-Slavery Society*

by Owen W. Muelder

McFarland & Company, Inc., 225 pages,
\$45.00 paper/\$16.49 Kindle (Amazon)



When Finney and others began preaching a new form of Revivalism that embraced social reform, the movement to abolish slavery spread like wildfire across the Northeast and Upper Midwest. The flames were fanned by a national organization founded in December 1833, the American Anti-Slavery Society.

The society's not-so-secret weapon was the energetic, dedicated, articulate, and charismatic Theodore Dwight Weld (1803-1895). Having led students at Oneida Institute and Lane Seminary in uprisings of abolitionist sentiment (which sparked their *en masse* matriculation at the upstart Oberlin College), the young Weld then traveled around the nation, speaking against slavery at every opportunity. Within a few years, he had worn out his voice and would never regain the ability to make sustained public speeches.

But by that time, he was employed by the American Anti-Slavery Society to run a highly successful string of traveling "agents"—agitators, in today's terms—who became known as "Weld's Seventy," a reflection of their actual numbers and a reference to the disciples who had been sent out by Jesus (Luke 10).

Until now there has been no systematic catalog of the lives and activities of these crusaders, who played a great role in stimulating Northern sentiment against the "peculiar institution" that was so strongly entrenched in the economic and social life of the South.

Dr. Owen Muelder, director of the Galesburg Colony Underground Railroad Freedom Center at Knox College, has admirably filled that void. Like his previous book, *The Underground Railroad in Western Illinois*, the present work collects many original sources conveniently in one place and connects them with a well-informed and smoothly articulated narrative that enables the reader to understand the many facets of the early anti-slavery struggle.

The book begins with two chapters that sketch the development of American abolitionism through the establishment of the society and its engagement of Weld to lead its 70 agents. Chapter 3, "Members of the Seventy" names the agents—from the famous William T. Allan, Jonathan Blanchard, and Henry B. Stanton to the more obscure George Beecher (yes, one of *those* Beechers), A. A. Guthrie, and Asariah Smith—and gives a thumbnail biography of each. Chapter 4 includes accounts by members of the Seventy in their own words. Chapter 5 brings together anecdotes of the actual doings of Weld's agents, largely in the writings of others. In a brief conclusion, Muelder evaluates the impact of Weld and his agents, quoting John Greenleaf Whittier, who called Weld a man of "marvelous eloquence, which in the early days of antislavery, shamed the church and silenced the mob."

The last 75 pages of this useful little book are crammed with interesting appendices on Weld, his agents, and the history of the society; endnotes, bibliography, and an index.

Owen Muelder has done the history of the anti-slavery movement a real service.



LARRY SOMMERS is the editor of *THE CONGREGATIONALIST*.

The Family as a Domestic Church

by Cornelius F. Murphy Jr.

*A belief that the family has a religious vocation is closely intertwined with Christian history in America. Within Protestantism, the publication of Horace Bushnell's *Christian Nurture* in 1846 initiated a movement to make the family, in itself, an important witness to the vitality of faith. This desire to broaden the scope of witness to the gospel has continued within the Protestant denominations. Hopes for the sanctification of the family have come much later to the Catholic community. The Second Vatican Council's advance in understanding the Church as the People of God, rather than an essentially hierarchical system, was an important change that enhanced all the roles of the laity. Reflections on the family as an ecclesia in miniature have been greatly facilitated by the writings of the late Pope John Paul II.*

This is the first part of a two-part series examining Protestant and Catholic thoughts about the family as a sort of "domestic church."

Christian Nurture advocated a more sincere spirituality in home life and education.

During a recent summer vacation I read an early edition of Horace Bushnell's *Christian Nurture*. Bushnell was a preeminent Congregationalist pastor-theologian in 19th-century Connecticut. His efforts to be faithful to the orthodox tradition placed him in opposition to some of the prevailing practices within Protestantism. He was particularly critical of the extreme doctrines of depravity promoted by the revivalists of his time. These enthusiasts taught that children grow up in sin and can only become converted at maturity.

Bushnell was convinced that it was in childhood that the seeds of Christian character were to be sown; this placed a special responsibility upon parents. Bushnell wanted to ensure that from infancy through adolescence, home life was in harmony with the essential doctrines of the faith.

HORACE BUSHNELL'S PERSPECTIVE

Post-Revolutionary America was alive with hopes for temporal prosperity as well as individual fulfillment, and many parents were preparing their children for places in that developing commercial culture. The young were instructed in ethical principles that would lead to success, but this moral nurturing was guided more by precepts of respectability than by the deeper values of faith. *Christian Nurture* advocated a more sincere spirituality in home life and education. Bushnell wanted parents to realize how much their domestic behavior made lasting impressions on their children concerning the attractiveness, or repugnance, of the Christian life.



Part 1:

The Protestant Vision

Bushnell's work gives considerable attention to matters of discipline. While he recognized that correction is necessary, he thought that if it were harsh or unfeeling the child would have difficulty believing in a benevolent and loving God. Equally discouraging was "over-commandment." Prohibitions directed at children should be kept at a minimum, but what was demanded should be enforced.

Parental failure also involved more than excessive punishment. A child's understanding of Christianity will be impaired if his mother or father has less obvious but more damaging faults, such as being judgmental, sanctimonious, or bigoted. Even more harm was done if the parents had a morbid anxiety about the family's welfare. Inordinate concern was especially grievous because, if it becomes pervasive, it can drive from the mind of the child any belief in Divine Providence.

An ideal of a comprehensive Christianity, touching all aspects of family life, animated Bushnell's thinking. He believed that matters normally thought of as middle-class custom had to be evaluated in terms of spiritual principles. Deeply conscious of the relation between body and spirit, Bushnell not only condemned the excesses of drink; he also noted the dangers inherent in the abundant consumption of food. His concern was for holiness, not health: Whatever is immoderate turns the attention of the young away from the values of piety. Bushnell asserted that every aspect of family life, including eating and manners, ought to draw children closer to, rather than away from, God.

Bushnell heartily endorsed physical activities but he was concerned that they could be overdone. He thought that the environment of the home could provide a healthy balance to too much sport through the development of an interest in art and music. This was the special responsibility of the mother of the family, for her sensibility was drawn to whatever was serene and uplifting.

The cultivation of poetic feeling had to be elevated by Christian worship. In the 19th-century Protestant culture, strict observance of the Sabbath was a central tenet of faith. By Bushnell's time the rigors of Sunday worship and its prohibition of playful activities were being called into question.

Bushnell took these criticisms seriously and he sought to meet the challenges to faith that they posed. His main point was that on The Lord's Day there should not be any unnecessary austerities. Playfulness could be righteously restricted but not be totally banned, since it is a symbol of Christian liberty. And, as with everything else that concerned the Christian life, Sunday worship and preaching should be moderate. Otherwise, it wearies the souls of those subject to such an excess of authority. The purpose of the Sabbath was to mark a day in which God's will can be deeply felt, but also freely appreciated.

FAMILY PRAYER

Family prayer within the home was of utmost importance to Bushnell because it can bring all the fortunes of the members together into communion with God. But too often family worship was perfunctory; a matter of habitual repetition. Bushnell would move beyond such formalism but he would also avoid the opposite extreme. As with his quarrel with revivalism, Bushnell thought that family prayer should be sober and sustained, rather than a matter of dramatic, but episodic, intensity. By appealing in faith to the Divine Sovereignty, the family would hope to bring all its cares and concerns into alignment with a higher harmony. By seeking such peace, domestic life anticipates the coming of Christ at the end of time.

Communion with God can bring a lasting sweetness to the home. Domesticity is sanctified and family life is raised above the profane pursuit of comfort and success. Higher powers of thought and feeling become integral parts of Christian consciousness, and talents expand as they are free of external constraints. In such homes there is refinement without imitation, and a familial culture sustained by a sober and honest piety.

... matters normally thought of as middle-class custom had to be evaluated in terms of spiritual principles.

When religion reigns, families are transformed into little churches.

LEAVING REVIVALISM BEHIND

During the closing years of the 19th century, American Protestantism sought to leave Revivalism behind and establish more stable forms of Christian life within the home as well as within the churches. Sanctification was seen as a more gradual process, and this gave the religious role of the family greater importance. The moral position of the woman in the home was enhanced and certain rituals, such as family altars, were introduced. It was widely believed that the Christian family was not only indispensable to the spiritual destiny of its members; it also had a crucial role to play in the advancement of American civilization.

These developments met with some opposition. Fundamentalists did not accept the notion that the family had a redemptive purpose, and they also thought that the teaching of the faith was the preserve of the clergy. Even those who favored domestic worship did not believe that parents, if it were left to them, could teach all the basic doctrines of Christianity to their children.

In her study *Growing Up Protestant*, Margaret Lamberts Bend Roth observes how during this period the traditional structure of domestic society was beginning to change. An authoritarian and paternalistic standard was gradually being replaced by one that affirmed parental partnership. Greater emphasis was also given to the concept of the family rather than the ideal of the "home." The myriad interactions implicit in blood relationship were a more fruitful locus for living out the demands of faith. In addition, the purposes of child nurture were being altered. In Bushnell's time the objective was the formation of character in faith. Now, new developments in psychology drew attention to the importance of the personality of the child. Parents were encouraged to believe that their children had innate powers that could be spontaneously developed. Moreover, the experience gained through personal encounters, outside of as well as within the home, was considered to be as valuable to spiritual growth as the assimilation of doctrinal instruction.

CONSERVATIVE CRITIQUE

To a number of important thinkers these changes did not augur well for the strength of the family. In 1942 H. Shelton Smith published a critique entitled *Faith and Nurture* in which he argued that if the formation of personality depends upon the quality of social interactions, the sense of transcendence will be lost. Moreover, he rejected the idea that the spiritual life of the child could naturally evolve in an aura of innocence. The recognition of sin and the necessity of repentance remain as essential aspects of Christian faith. And while he generally affirmed Bushnell's focus on the value of the child, Smith felt obliged to point out that the great achievements of Christianity usually came from some form of adult consciousness that has moved decisively beyond the earlier stages of life.

Smith also worked for a better understanding of the separate roles of church and family in nurturing the Christian faith. Since the end of the previous century, parents had been assuming increased responsibility for the teaching of Christian doctrine to their children. The home was becoming a surrogate congregation. As such, it directed the faith and morals of all within, conducted services of prayer, Bible reading, and divine worship. It also sought means to spread the gospel in the surrounding community.

These practices, while admirable, were not broadly sustainable in a developing industrial and secular society. The growth of the economy, the spread of consumerism, and the ubiquity of technological innovations were making the attainment of middle-class prosperity the primary goals of the whole society, regardless of particular faith allegiances. In these changing circumstances, the churches themselves were in danger of becoming mere instruments for the advancement of the temporal ambitions of the modern family.

DISILLUSION AND DEINSTITUTIONALIZATION

In the latter half of the 20th century, scholars began to probe more deeply into the issue of what place the Christian family had in the overall life of the Church. Pastors were concerned that even as the number of churches increased, membership was in decline. They also began to criticize the emphasis being



placed upon the intimate and solid togetherness of families, which seemed to lead to indifference about broader social issues, especially those concerning racial discrimination. The deeper justifications for the existence of the domestic church were also thought to be theologically untenable. There was no scriptural warrant for the idea that the family was a redemptive instrument. Only marriage itself had a sanctifying purpose. There was also a growing body of opinion that denied that families could be deputized to perform tasks that rightfully belonged to the institutional church.


The increase in divorce and single parenting made the relationship between family and church more tenuous. An even greater challenge was raised by the increased disillusionment with all forms of organized religion. By the beginning of the present century a trend had begun, especially among the young, to seek greater spirituality with less doctrinal religion. This development has not only weakened ecclesiastical authority; the assertion of a direct access to the sacred means a loss of the communal support that was once available within the churches.

Yet within different faith traditions, the deinstitutionalization of religion has become more attractive. Skepticism over established religious organizations is again shifting responsibility for faith formation back from institution to parents. Sharing faith at home becomes a substitute for the previous practices of bringing a child to church for religious instruction. As religious affiliation declines, it becomes more the job of parents than of churches, to help the child form within his or her mind the meaning and value of a Christian life.

Coming in September: Part 2—The Catholic Vision.



CORNELIUS F. MURPHY JR. is a graduate of the College of the Holy Cross, with advanced degrees from the Boston College Law School and the University of Virginia. He taught law at the University of Maine and at Duquesne University and is the author of six books, including *Person and Society in American Thought: A Study in Christian Humanism* (2007).



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and see our Church Information Form on the NACCC website.

Meeting and Conference in Bloomington, Minn. This year's Providence Fund grantees are: *Mayfair-Plymouth Congregational Church, Toledo, Ohio* (\$100); *Hyannis Congregational Church, Hyannis, Neb.* (\$325); and *First Congregational Church of Barkhamsted, Pleasant Valley, Conn.* (\$325).

The Providence Fund exists to help active member churches send a delegate to the Annual Meeting and Conference. The fund provides up to \$500 for a delegate's full registration fee and partial lodging costs. The delegate's church must pay travel costs, meals not included in the registration fee, and partial lodging costs. To apply, please find the Providence Fund Guidelines and the Common Grant Application at <http://www.naccc.org/Resources/Forms.aspx>.

RICHARD FUNDS THE ARTS—Three National Association churches have received John Calvin Richard Fund grants to assist them with fine arts or performing arts events during the 2012-2013 Fiscal Year (April 1, 2012 through March 31, 2013).

First Congregational Church of Emporia, Kan., will receive \$380 to help defray costs of its 2012 Christmas cantata. *Southern Ocean Congregational Church, Little Egg Harbor, N. J.*, will receive \$350 to aid with a Crestwood Symphonette concert scheduled for Sept. 23, 2012. *First Congregational Church of Toulon, Ill.*, will receive \$500 to assist with eight gospel music services, spaced throughout the year.

The **John Calvin Richard** Fund was established by his family as a loving and living memorial to him. His love for music and theater performance was a large part of his talented but short life. The Fund awards grants to NACCC churches of 200 or fewer members to defray costs of producing and

staging fine or performing arts events. To apply, please find the Richard Fund Guidelines and the Common Grant Application at <http://www.naccc.org/Resources/Forms.aspx>.



Stacey Holcombe

Members and supporters of the Naples church break ground April 29. Visible, from left, are Roland Sutton, Dean Anderson, Larry Linderer, assistant pastor Dr. Dan Lamey, senior pastor Dr. Les Wicker, Jeanne Campbell, builder/contractor John DeAngelis, Rick Smith, Jim Farlow, job superintendent Brian McKenzie, Robert Dicensen, and commissioner Tom Henning.

DIG WE MUST—*First Congregational Church of Naples, Fla.*, a 2004 church plant of the NACCC Congregational Church Development Division, broke ground on the second phase of its building plan April 29 with a special service. The second phase will add a social hall and a Christian education and administration complex. The new buildings will be completed by the end of 2012.

The Naples church met in a school cafeteria for five years before moving into its new colonial-style sanctuary in 2009. "It has been a Fair Share Plus congregation for the NA since its beginning, has built two Habitat for Humanity homes, and is an avid supporter of missions of the Missionary Society," reports its pastor, the **Rev. Dr. Les Wicker**.

Calendar

- June 21-28 **Short-term Mission Experience**—*Misión Mazahua, Mexico.*
If interested, contact Jack Brown **immediately**, 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.*
naccc.org/CMSUploads/856_NAPFHOPE2012_flyer_reg.pdf
- July 21 **Panamerican Institute 50th Anniversary Dinner**—
Tijuana, Mexico 7:00 p.m. — Hotel Palacio Azteca,
www.hotelpalacioazteca.com \$25.00, RSVP silviaana.soto7@gmail.com
- July 30 **General Copy Deadline**—*THE CONGREGATIONALIST*
September 2012 issue
- Aug. 5-11 **Congregational History and Polity Intensive Seminar**—
Boston, Mass.
www.centerforcongregationalleadership.org or contact
Marie Steele at 800-262-1620, ext. 22, or msteele@naccc.org.

SAVE THE DATE!

November 8-10, 2012

Eighth Congregational Symposium:

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<http://wiscongregational.net> or contact Rev. Cindy Bacon
Hammer, cabaconhammer@gmail.com or 608-274-0833

July 29-Aug. 2, 2013

International Congregational Fellowship Conference

—London, UK

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

BINGO FOR VETS—Ten members of *Pilgrim Congregational Church, Warren, N.J.*, hosted a bingo party for veterans at Lyons VA Hospital on Jan. 25. The Department of Veterans Affairs provided items for the game and helped run it, while the church provided prizes for the winners, refreshments and camaraderie with the veterans.

Fifty veterans sat at several tables for the games, with one or two church members per table, helping the veterans if needed with the cards. Prizes for the winners were books of

coupons, which the vets could trade for items at the hospital's canteen store. The event was successful and the church plans to continue this program twice a year.

“No one in our country can thank the veterans enough for what they have done on behalf of us all,” said the **Rev. Virginia Scott**, senior minister. “Pilgrim Congregational Church strives to be a place ‘where faith and friendship meet each week,’ so a natural outcome of our faith is that we reach out, in loving service to others, in the name of Christ.”

■ Necrology

John Arnold Lindvall

The Rev. John Arnold Lindvall, 91, Santa Ana, Calif., died July 14, 2011.

John was born in Michigan and lived in Illinois, Colorado, and California before graduating from high school in May 1941. He studied at the Central Bible Institute of the Assemblies of God and began preaching and planting churches in the Springfield, Mo., area. He was called to pastor in Stamford, Conn., and surrounding suburbs and used the medium of radio in his ministry.



Called into the military in 1944, John served as a chaplain in the European theater of World War II, but upon discharge from the Army returned to ministry in the U.S., where he married Ella Mae Nelson in 1947. John and Mae then served on the mission field in Switzerland, Germany and Czechoslovakia.

John was recalled to military duty for the Korean War and began a career of 27 years as a military chaplain, serving all over the United States and the world. He retired in 1971 as a full colonel.

John and Mae then settled in Costa Mesa, Calif., where John served Southern California College as development director. He was ordained for pastoral ministry by Northland Congregational Church, Rockford, Mich., in 1976. He served as an interim pastor for Hollywood Congregational Church, took on a full-time pastorate at Plymouth Congregational Church of Newport Harbor, and later served as Missions Pastor at First Congregational Church of Anaheim.

Many trips around the world led John to found Mission Ministries, Inc., an ecumenical and evangelical ministry dedicated to supporting, motivating and equipping Christian workers in serving the poor and needy throughout the world.

John was preceded in death by his wife, Mae, and is survived by four children and six grandchildren. Memorial Services were held at First Congregational Church of Anaheim.

Jack E. Noble

The Rev. Dr. Jack E. Noble, a native of Ohio, died in Dothan, Ala., on March 26, at age 84.

He received his B.A. from Asbury College, his M.Div. from Asbury Theological Seminary, and an honorary D.Min. from Whitworth College, and was certified for interim ministry by the Interim Ministry Network. He served Evangelical United Brethren, Methodist, and Congregational churches in Ohio, Mississippi, and Alabama during a long pastoral career from 1953 to 2002. He then served as an interim pastor at Congregational churches in Pomeroy, Ohio; Cheyenne, Wyo.; Fort Meyers, Fla.; Marbury, Ala.; Crossville, Tenn.; and Galesburg, Ill., from 2002 until 2009.

Dr. Noble's sermons were published in the Presbyterian Journal and in the records of the U.S. House of Representatives and the U.S. Senate. He received several patriotic awards, served on the Alabama Governor's Board for the Year of the Child, worked tirelessly with mission works and pro-life groups, helped found the Christian School movement in the Southern states, and received the 2004 Harry Butman Award from the NACCC.

He was preceded in death by his wife, Phyllis Eads Noble, and is survived by five children, 15 grandchildren, and 11 great-grandchildren. His funeral service was held March 31 at First Congregational Church, Crossville, Tenn., with Rev. Earl Crutchfield officiating.



NEWS

MISSIONARIES ATTENDING THE 2012 ANNUAL MEETING AND CONFERENCE



Members of the Missionary Society and guests pray for Matthew Oladele, seated, during the 2010 Annual Meeting and Conference in Anchorage. From left: Charles Sagay (Missionary School of Hope, Cameroon), Louise Scott, the Rev. J. R. McAliley, Linda Miller, Noreen Boes, and Val Price. (Congregational Federation of the UK)

The Missionary Society is excited to have the Rev. Matthew Oladele as our invited international missionary at the 2012 Annual Meeting and Conference in Bloomington, Minn. Matthew graduated from the Congregational Foundation of Theological Studies in 2010 and went home to Nigeria to become the new director of **Christ to the Villages (Nigeria)**. It will be interesting to hear how this work has impacted his life and how he has helped the mission. Matthew will visit churches in the Northeast in June. He will be in the United States through August.

Our invited national missionary will be the Rev. Julio Santana from **Bread of Life Mission (Florida)**. Bread of Life is embarking on a new partnership to expand its program with a local Methodist church.

SHE'S MY SISTER

She's My Sister (Democratic Republic of Congo) is a new initiative sponsored by the American Bible Society (one of our Recognized Ministries) responding to vicious acts of war that have left women broken and children orphaned in the Great Lakes Region of Central Africa. The society has formed a partnership with the Bible Society of the Democratic Republic of Congo and other faith-based organizations to provide holistic Scripture-based trauma healing programs for local churches. Visit their Web site at congosister.org.

They will also be represented at our Annual Meeting and Conference with a display in the Resource Room and a segment in the Missionary Society workshops. Please check it out.

NILE AND EDNA FISHER MEMORIAL MEDICAL CENTER

Mission School of Hope (Cameroon) is building a new medical facility to provide health care to their community since there is no medical facility in the area. It will be named after Nile and Edna Fisher, the parents of the Rev. Dr. David Fisher (*Plymouth Church, Brooklyn, N.Y.*).

LOVE WORTH SHARING

Love Worth Sharing (Haiti) is doing great works. Good Shepherd Church is rebuilt and growing. The next step is to build a new school, but first the ground needs to be cleared and leveled. Their goals are to feed the children six days a week; pay salaries to the school teachers and cooks; send young men and women to college; and help other pastors and churches as funds allow. Please visit their Web site at loveworthsharingintl.org.



Students in Haiti study in the newly-rebuilt sanctuary of Good Shepherd Church.

NEWS FROM THE PHILIPPINES

The Rev. John Carson visited our missions in the Philippines in February. He was very encouraged by what he saw and how the missions are doing.

Christian Mission in the Far East (Philippines) is expanding by securing titles of properties they own and clearing land for construction. They need chainsaws to clear their land, help with roof repairs, and new church construction.



Before and after photos of usable land for NACC Philippines.

National Association of Congregational Churches (Philippines) hope to develop tilapia fishpond projects to provide food for their communities and fish to sell at the market. They need help digging wells and buying pumps to maintain the fishponds. They also plan to establish a camp for children, church groups and pastors. John also visited with two of their Magee scholars, Nina Castillo and the Rev. Chris Padegdeg.

HOSPITAL IN INDIA



Congregational Christian Hospital, Travancore, India

Travancore Church Council (India) has 39 churches that are growing physically

and spiritually. Their Congregational Christian Hospital serves 14 villages. During the last three years the hospital has added an Intensive Care Unit, operation room, pharmacy, X-ray unit, and computerized medical laboratory. They can now offer around-the-clock services, staffed by four doctors.

MORE MISSION NEWS

Asociacion Civil Cristiana Congregacional (Argentina) has a new Web

site: accj-ja.com. Please take time to visit it.

Rebecca Mackish Memorial Mission (Kansas) has a new board of directors. They started a new Bible Club last October. In April, they will start a Monday evening class for teenage girls.

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."

NEEDS

CHURCH WORK GROUP HELPING IN HONDURAS

A small group from *Ozaukee Congregational Church, Grafton, Wis.*, is preparing to visit the **Honduran Congregational Mission** in early August. The mission would like them to tackle roof repairs, which are very badly needed. However, they lack the roughly \$5,000 needed for this project.

If you, your church, or a group within your church would like to donate toward these roofing repairs, please send a check payable to the NACCC to Linda Miller's attention, with "Honduras Roofing" on the memo line. All donations will go to the Honduran Congregational Mission.

SCHOOL SUPPLIES

Soon it will be time to plan for your kids to go to school in the fall. Several missions also have to plan for school in the fall. Bread of Life, Maine Sea Coast Mission, Morgan Scott Project, Rebecca Mackish Mission, Piney Woods and Menaul School and Panamerican Institute provide school supplies for their children.

Here are a few items that they need: Backpacks, markers, scissors, pens, pencils, notebooks, binders. It could be a nice summer project for your children to gather these items in order to help the children of our missions. Call Linda if you are interested.

PRAYER REQUESTS

Christ to the Villages (Nigeria)—Pray for all our mission partners; for faithful staff; for Godly children to come to the schools; and for divine grace, divine leading, and divine provision.

Indian Trails (Arizona)—Please continue to lift up Sharon Gossett in prayer. She has very serious health issues. Keep Rev. Tom Gossett in your prayers as well.

Rebecca Mackish Mission (Kansas)—Pray for Barbara Branch's health and God's blessing of new programs.



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A Question of Growth

by Stephen Chapin Garner
and Jerry Thornell

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**PERHAPS THE
EFFORT TO GROW,
NO MATTER HOW
MISGUIDED,
UNIQUELY OPENS
US UP TO THE
POSSIBILITY AND
POTENTIAL OF THE
HOLY SPIRIT.**

Cultivating a lively community of faith is not rocket science or brain surgery. People go to church to hear a consistent word—sermons are as essential to the life of a church today as they have ever been. People go to church because they love the music—faith has been powerfully conveyed through song and stanza for generations. People go to church because their children are well taken care of—they receive assistance passing on the Christian tradition within their families. Dynamic sermons, music, and children’s programming can certainly propel growth.

But what propels exponential growth? What allows a church to grow out of a staid and stable program-based model of ministry into a transformative, life-altering community of believers? How does new and innovative ministry take hold within a community whose historical strength has been its resistance to change and its ability to endure against all odds?

A Surprising Pattern of Growth

After only a couple of years into my pastorate at the United Church of Christ Norwell I began to witness a pattern of growth that was as surprising as it was unsettling.

We would pull together a task force to address some issue of concern, meetings would be held for weeks on end, recommendations would be generated and presented to the church, resolutions would be voted on, and new programs and structures would be put into place, only to discover that we missed the mark and growth was occurring in an entirely different location than that which we had expected!

One of the earliest examples occurred within the first couple of years we spent working together. I had been working with the Alban Institute to gain clarity about the dearth of young clergy in mainline Protestant denominations. After gathering statistics from across the country, we confirmed that the lack of young people entering ministry in mainline denominations threatened the long-term health and viability of our brand of church. The math was as simple as it was disheartening: The trickle of young clergy entering pastoral ministry could not meet the great wave of ministerial retirements that could be anticipated on the horizon. Even with an increased number of second-career pastors, the impending pastoral vacancies were going to dwarf the pool of available applicants.

Armed with this irrefutable evidence of the demise the church I loved, I convinced UCC Norwell that we needed to begin to prepare ourselves to be a church without clergy. We needed to get the church ready for the impending clergy crisis.

We began by convening a task force to examine how we could more fully establish ourselves as a lay-led congregation. The result of an extensive period of discernment was to establish a new model for pastoral ministry that deemphasized the role of ordained clergy. If a program was going to be implemented in the life of our church, it needed to be generated by the efforts and initiative of church members. Pastors were no longer to engage in ministry unless they were helping to train lay members for the ministerial tasks before them.

A Lay-led Congregation

We created a Teaching Pastorate model for ministry that stressed preparing the laity to take on the work of the church. The people of the church would do the pastoral care, the teaching of children and adults, the preaching and worship leadership, and the visioning of the future.

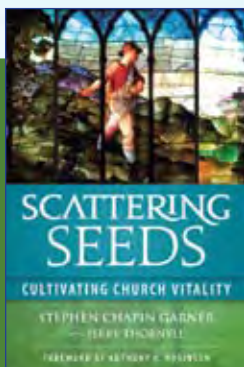
For example, the members of the church wanted a comprehensive adult education program that the church had never really established before. Our pastoral staff could have simply jumped in and started offering classes. However, with the desire to have the laity lead, we created an adult Christian education ministry team that, with a modest amount of pastoral support, would design, promote, and teach the educational offerings for our adults. Within a relatively short period, we not only increased the number of lay members in leadership roles, but we also took a gigantic leap forward in the number of adult educational offerings we provided for the congregation.

The energy the new group possessed was impressive, and it was clear they not only appreciated how they had been empowered to engage in ministry, but they also stepped up and did amazing work—work many trained pastors would not be capable of achieving.

We were already seeing signs that strong lay leadership could replace pastoral leadership in certain instances. We seemed to be on our way to being a church that could thrive without clergy. That had been the plan and we were prepared to make an attempt to implement it.

However, that was when the Holy Spirit began to upend our plans.

Church members began making appointments with me to talk about the possibility of entering seminary. One after another, church members were sensing a call to pastoral ministry. In a period of four years we sent seven church members to seminary. We had set out to create a model for ministry that would allow the church to survive without clergy, and we unwittingly created a model of ministry that prompted people to choose to pursue pastoral ministry as a career.



“A Question of Growth” by Stephen Chapin Garner and Jerry Thornell is reprinted from *Alban Weekly* (No. 392, January 30, 2012), with permission from the Alban Institute. Adapted from *Scattering Seeds: Cultivating Church Vitality*. Copyright © 2012 by The Alban Institute, Inc., Herndon, VA. All rights reserved. *Alban Weekly* is a free electronic newsletter sent once a week with timely and concise information on emerging trends and Alban’s latest resources and upcoming events. Sign up at <http://www.alban.org/weekly/>.

Unintended Consequences

We had a plan, we had a goal, we had an end result in mind, and our efforts had an effect that we never intended. In an attempt to create a clergy-free church, we wound up creating clergy that are now serving local churches in our area.

So many times we have done what we believed to be faithful discernment—we set our sights on a goal, we began our work, only to have the Holy Spirit produce growth in an entirely different direction than we intended. It has happened with such frequency that I have begun to think that any attempt to be strategic in the life of the church is fraught with peril.

And yet, perhaps the effort to grow, no matter how misguided, uniquely opens us up to the possibility and potential of the Holy Spirit. When we give the Spirit an opening to work in our churches, that is when growth takes root even in the most unexpected of ways. To this day, I am amazed at how getting it wrong has turned out to be just right.



THE REV. DR. STEPHEN CHAPIN GARNER is the pastor of the United Church in Christ in Norwell, Mass. He teaches preaching and pastoral studies at Boston University School of Theology. His books include *Getting into Character: The Art of First-Person Narrative Preaching*, *Lost in the Middle? Claiming an Inclusive Faith for Christians Who Are Both Liberal and Evangelical*, and *Found in the Middle! Theology and Ethics for Christians Who Are Both Liberal and Evangelical*.

JERRY THORNELL is a graduate of Northeastern University, has been a member of the United Church of Christ in Norwell, Mass., for over 30 years, and currently is a staff member serving as financial administrator and gifts and call coordinator. He was employed by the Polaroid Corporation for 36 years in various financial management positions.





Reputation Management, and Internet Unprivacy

For many, “reputation management” conjures pictures of spin-doctors in dark rooms twisting embarrassing truths into harmless lies. If that were the sum of it, this would be the shortest advice column ever. To quote my friend Idan Melamed: “Don’t do silly things.” Done!

If only it were that easy. Since when have gossips needed an actual wrong? Since when have church factions stuck to the facts? You can’t stop people from talking, but you can keep an ear out.

The first time we tried Google, most of us did the exact same thing. We typed in our name. If only there were some way we could teach Google to do that every day, and then send us an email if anything new pops up. That way we’d always know if someone were posting about us, or our church, or our kids.

Good news! They’re called Google Alerts and they’re free! Tell Google what you want to keep tabs on and they’ll send

you an update once a day, once a week, or as it happens. Advanced users can even have it sent to their RSS reader.* For most of us, a weekly e-mail update is fine. Check it out at google.com/alerts.

Now that you know what people are saying, it’s time to fight back. And by fight back, of course, I mean don’t fight back. Out-fighting a mudslinger? That’s a “lose,” even when you win. Your job is to fill the net with so much positive content that it outweighs the negative. Our weapons are not of this world. Overcome evil with good!

Someone left a negative review about your church? Ask five of your members to leave positive ones. Someone created a smear page about your minister? Create ten positive pages and bury it on the second page of Google. Yes, that’s a pain. It will take time and effort and maybe money, but not as much as you think. Pretending the Internet doesn’t exist won’t protect you from people who would use it against you.

And now, a word for the kids. The Internet was designed from the very beginning for sharing, not keeping secrets. Facebook is not private. Your blog is not private. Pictures you text to your friends are not private. Think of it like a massive wall with graffiti all over it. You could write small in a corner and no one would probably know. But all it takes is one person, and your embarrassing secret becomes common knowledge.

If you wouldn’t want your parents finding out, don’t post it on the net. If you wouldn’t want a college recruiter finding out, don’t post it on the net. If you wouldn’t want a future employer finding out, don’t create an easily shareable, searchable, digital signpost that says, “See this? I did this!”

Or, you know, you could try not doing it.

** If I ever use a term or phrase you don’t know, Google it!*



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Pastorates and Pulpits

RECENT CALLS

Plain Congregational Church, Bowling Green, Ohio, has called the Rev. Steve Baney as senior minister.

Liberty Congregational Church, Dewey Rose, Ga., has called the Rev. Troy Ayers as senior minister.

Wachogue Congregational Church, Springfield, Mass., has called the Rev. David Poole as senior minister.

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Tipton Community Congregational Church
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Limerick, Maine

University Congregational Church
Wichita, Kan.

Stuart Congregational Church
Stuart, Fla.

First Congregational Church
Kenosha, Wis.

Carmel Union Congregational Church
Carmel, Maine

Lakewood Village Community Church
Long Beach, Calif.

Plymouth Congregational Church
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