

62nd Annual Meeting and Conference



National Association of Congregational Christian Churches

“Who Is My Neighbor?”

*But he wanted to justify himself, so he asked Jesus,
“And who is my neighbor?”*

LUKE 10:29

June 25-28, 2016  Detroit, Michigan

The CONGREGATIONALIST

Magazine of the Congregational Way since 1849

VOL. 167/NO. 3

CONGREGATIONALIST.ORG

SEPTEMBER 2015

\$3.75



**SALT LAKE
MEETING**

**NEW
EXECUTIVE
DIRECTOR
MICHAEL CHITTUM**

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Harriet Beecher Stowe (1811-1896)

Another of Lyman Beecher's famous children was Harriet Beecher Stowe, author of *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. Of course, the book is famous, and I had known about it since childhood, but I never wanted to read it because I had always assumed it would be nothing more than simple-minded propaganda. But after the last person living in my great-grandfather's house died, I inherited some of the books from the family library, including *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. I was surprised to find that it was well written, that the characters were mostly very believable and very well-developed, with some slaveholders portrayed sympathetically and some abolitionists shown to be less than perfect, and that far from being a servile sycophant who just said, "Yes sir, Master," Uncle Tom was actually a Christ-like character who symbolically showed how the institution of slavery was in effect crucifying Jesus all over again every time someone was enslaved or a slave was abused or killed.

Lincoln's words on meeting Mrs. Stowe are well known: "So you're the little lady who started this great war."¹ But Harriet didn't see it that way. Her conviction was that God Himself had written the book, simply using her as His instrument. The book was an immediate best-seller all over the world, being translated into 40 languages. Providentially, the popularity of the French translation also led to a huge demand for the Bible in France. *Uncle Tom's Cabin* was praised by such famous writers as Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, John Greenleaf Whittier, George Sand, Henry James, and Leo Tolstoy.

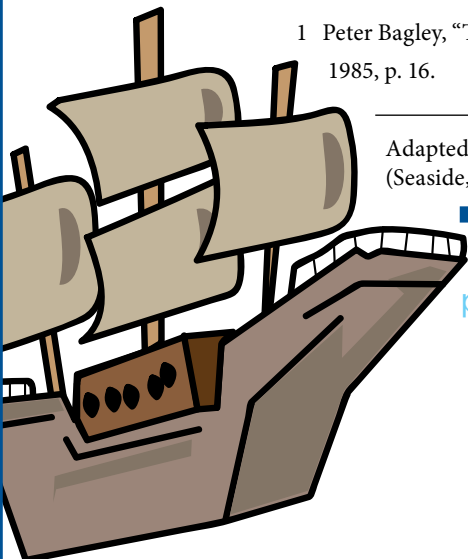
Harriet was an old-fashioned Congregationalist. She never attended the theater, so she presumably never saw any of the very popular stage productions of her story. She was also somewhat naïve. Although she was a New Englander, she loved the South. She thought that even Southerners would be convinced by her novel that slavery had to be outlawed forever, and that then the South would become a nearly perfect Christian society.

¹ Peter Bagley, "The Little Lady Who Started the War," *THE CONGREGATIONALIST*, August–September 1985, p. 16.

Adapted and reprinted, with permission, from *The Congregational Minute*, by Robert Hellam (Seaside, Calif.: Robert Hellam, 2012)

All these died in faith, and received not the promises, but saw them afar off, and believed them, and received them thankfully, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth.

—HEBREWS 11:13 (Geneva Bible)



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FEATURES

- 8 HONOR ROLL**
Distinguished Individual Donors
- 12 THE CONGREGATIONAL SOCIETY OF CLASSICAL RETREAT GUIDES**
by Charles Packer
- 14 ANNUAL MEETING AND CONFERENCE**
Joy in the Morning (and Afternoon, and Evening)
- 18 CONGREGATIONAL LECTURE**
God the Subject and Object of Worship
by John Miller
- 20 BIBLE LECTURE**
Humans in God's Ecology
by Seth Jones
- 23 JAMMIN' WITH THE KIDZ AT THE DREAM CENTER**
by Lynn Merkel, Joanne Simpson, and Sherilyn Foster
- 25 FRESH EYES ON HISTORY AND POLITY**
by Doug Murphy
- 27 FROM PACIFIC LAGOON TO WESTMINSTER ABBEY**
by Manfred Waldemar Kohl
- 33 OUT OF BOUNDS**
Part 2
by Arlin T. Larson

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Neither *THE CONGREGATIONALIST* nor the National Association has a creed or holds positions on social or theological issues; but we recognize the authority of each local church to do so for itself, if and as it wishes, and we encourage thoughtful and respectful discussion of our agreements and differences.

DEPARTMENTS

Vol. 167/No. 3

SEPTEMBER 2015

3 STRANGERS AND PILGRIMS...

Harriet Beecher Stowe (1811-1896)

6 OUR VOYAGE TOGETHER

Looking Forward

31 RELATION

Editorial Independence:

40 NEWS AND NEEDS

42 ALONG THE WAY

44 NECROLOGY

46 PASTORATES AND PULPITS

46 CALENDAR



ON THE COVER:

Native American performer Nino Reyos, in tribal regalia, performs a haunting melody on a wooden flute at the 61st Annual Meeting and Conference of the NACCC in Salt Lake City.

Looking Forward

An interesting thing happened to me on the way to the 2015 NACCC Annual Meeting and Conference. After much conversation with the Executive Director Search Committee, I accepted the invitation to become the executive director of the National Association and the Congregational Foundation.

Many across the National Association of Congregational Christian Churches know me, but I am certain that many others do not. Allow me to introduce myself.

Born in Knoxville, Tennessee, I received my B.S. from the University of Tennessee, and a Master of Divinity and Ph.D. degrees from the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Ky. I served Baptist churches in Kentucky, Virginia, and Alabama. I had the joy of serving Plymouth Congregational Church in Wichita, Kan., 1997-2006; Covenant Congregational Church on the Piedmont College campus in Georgia, 2006-2008; and First Congregational Church, Salt Lake City, 2008-2015. Along the way, I served on the NACCC's Division for Ministry, Nominating Committee, Strategic Planning Committee, and the Implementation Committee. I have been married to Vicki for 41 years, and we have two sons, who live with their wives in the Midwest.



MICHAEL CHITTUM
Executive Secretary

What are my goals for this first year?

I know there will be unexpected things happen that will demand my attention. Aside from the unexpected, however, I hope to spend much time listening to you. Part of the defined responsibilities of the executive director is to “work toward creating a vision or growth plan based on the activities and input of member churches.” This will require me to listen to staff, members of the three ministry councils, leaders of state and regional associations, ministers and members of our churches. I hope to hear from you about what is working well, what is not, and what you hope for from the staff of the NA. Together we can shape the direction and work of our National Association in positive ways so that it will help each church be successful.

The second goal for this first year is to work with the Board of Directors of the Congregational Foundation in hiring a director of development. This position is crucial for our association to achieve financial stability so that we can continue to provide support for Congregational Christian churches in following the Congregational Way.

My last goal is to work with you in helping our Shared Ministry Fund reach financial viability. As you know, the work of the association is primarily financed through this fund. For many years, we have depended on using our reserves in order to meet the budget. That practice must stop. Working

by Michael Chittum

together, we must ensure that contributions to the Shared Ministry Fund increase so the association functions with proper financial stewardship.

With all of this, I will continue to work with Olivet College, supervise the Oak Creek staff, and try to continue the stellar work of the Center for Congregational Leadership. This is an exciting prospect for me. I invite you to join with me as we work together to promote our association and its work in the Congregational Way.

Changing of the Guard

From the early days of the National Association of Congregational Christian Churches, our “executive secretary” has been the professional, most often a clergyman but sometimes a layman, in charge of the day-to-day functioning of the national office in Oak Creek, Wis.

Most recently, the Rev. Dr. Tom Richard served in that position from 2001 to early 2013. During his tenure, the association launched the Center for Congregational Leadership at Olivet College in Michigan, led by the Rev. Dr. Betsey Mauro, who served as director of the center, dean of the Congregational Foundation for Theological Studies, and an adjunct professor at the college.

When Dr. Richard retired from the post in January 2013, the Executive Committee engaged the Rev. Casey vanderBent as “interim executive secretary,” to help guide the NA through its transition to the new organizational model envisioned in the strategic planning process of 2010-2013. Rev. vanderBent concluded his interim service in March 2015. A new chief executive was not yet in place; so Dr. Mauro filled in as acting chief through June 30.

Meanwhile, recruitment had begun for a new chief—now known as “executive director,” a position combining the former functions of executive secretary and director of the CCL (except for dean of CFTS, which is now a part-time paid staff position held by the Rev. Dr. Charles Packer, see p. 43). The new executive director will be based at Olivet but will continue to supervise the staff at Oak Creek.

The NACCC Board of Directors selected the Rev. Dr. Michael Chittum, until now the senior minister of First Congregational Church of Salt Lake City, to be our new executive director, effective July 1, 2015.



Honor Roll

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All gifts to our common cause are important, regardless of the source or amount.

The National Association of Congregational Christian Churches wishes to thank all of the individual and family donors who supported our mission during Calendar Year 2014 (January 1, 2014-December 31, 2014). We are thankful for each and every gift joyfully given. If you note any errors or omissions, please contact Rebecca Moore at 800-262-1620, ext. 1617.

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Centering oneself in the Divine through guided silent meditation can lead to spiritual growth.

Wendy Van Tassel

Support IN THE SILENCE

The Ministry of the Congregational Society of Classical Retreat Guides

by Charles Packer

Jesus invited the disciples to “Come away to a deserted place all by yourselves and rest a while” (Mark 6:31). Elijah discovered the presence of God in the “still, small voice” or “gentle whisper” he heard out of the silence (1 Kings 19:11-13).

The invitation to encounter the Lord in the midst of quiet and solitude is still issued and is valued among many in the National Association of Congregational Christian Churches, through the ministry of the Congregational Society of Classical Retreat Guides.

The society hosts at least two retreats each year. The first is the Quiet Day, typically held the day before the NACCC Annual Meeting and Conference commences. Participants withdraw to a site nearby, and a retreat guide from the society leads the group through three spoken meditations that break long stretches of silence. Each Quiet Day begins and ends with brief devotions. A hallmark of all events sponsored by the society is the responsive praying of the Southwell Litany, a spiritual work of the Church of England in the 17th century, that helps to clarify the conscience and prepare one to enter the Quiet.



Labyrinth at the Colombiere Retreat Center. Vesna S. Zdravkoski

This year’s Quiet Day, held at the Wabash Episcopal Retreat and Conference Center in Salt Lake City, was directed by the Rev. Karl Schimpf. He shared personal reflections of ways in which it has been important to keep Christ in the center of our individual, ministerial, and associational lives. Karl used biblical, contemporary, and historical illustrations—notably St. Francis of Assisi—as resources to re-align our hearts and minds with that of Christ.

Occasionally, in the past, the Quiet Day has been scheduled as an overnight retreat. But a more extended version of the Quiet Day takes place each fall—the Silent Retreat—to gather those in need of spiritual restoration. Usually starting on a weekday evening, the retreat extends through the next day and night before concluding on the morning of the third day, giving a more prolonged experience of silence. Mornings and evenings are marked with devotions, and the retreat guide gives three short spoken presentations, with much contemplative time between for prayer and inner engagement.

Continued on p. 22

What makes the NACCC tick?

Our annual family gathering and love-fest is a big part of it.

Joy in the Morning

(and Afternoon, and Evening!)

“Let the rivers clap their hands; let the mountains sing together for joy!”

Photos by Larry Sommers

More than 200 Congregationalists, representing 93 member churches, echoed the joy as they gathered at the Sheraton Salt Lake City Hotel June 20-23 for the 61st Annual Meeting and Conference of the National Association of Congregational Christian Churches.

First Congregational Church of Salt Lake City, 150 years old, hosted the meeting and provided 27 workers to help the meeting run smoothly. Coincidentally, Salt Lake’s pastor, Michael Chittum, was announced as the National Association’s new executive director.

BUSINESS MEETING

Moderator Jim DeLine presided, ably assisted by Vice Moderator Laura Hamby, Secretary Judy Campbell, and Parliamentarian Sherry Glab. Delegates affirmed a joint Board of Directors/Leadership Council recommendation to move from the association’s ancient two-fold structure to a single entity, still known as the National Association of Congregational Christian Churches but organized as a 501(c)3 corporation. This allows more straightforward handling of corporate assets and expenses, and may also confer greater liability protection for local member churches.

In addition, delegates ratified actions taken early in the past year by the now-defunct Executive Committee and subsequently by the Board of Directors and Leadership Council, which assumed its functions early in the year. Only one Leadership Council decision, a policy intended to prevent a subcommittee or task team from being able to “circumvent the work of its convening board or council,” failed of ratification.



Michael Chittum, newly-appointed executive director, addresses the delegates and attendees.



Two items of new business gained unanimous acceptance by the delegates: (1) A motion by the Rev. William Lange of Detroit, Mich., directing appointment of an *ad hoc* committee “to organize and focus the NACCC recognition of the 2020, 400th Anniversary of the Plymouth Pilgrim’s [sic] landing on these shores”; and (2) a motion by the Rev. Tom Richard, Sherman Oaks, Calif., to draft a statement of sympathy addressed to the Emanuel African Methodist Episcopal Church in Charleston, S.C., where nine members of a Bible study were killed June 17 by a racially-motivated shooter.

Amid signs of new vitality as the restructuring of recent years takes hold, the Leadership Council decided in pre-meetings to put improvement of the Year Round Delegate program “on the front burner” for the coming year. The program, widely heralded as a big improvement in NACCC operations, is generally thought to need fine-tuning in order to deliver its originally envisioned benefits.

New members of the leadership team this year will include Norm Erlendson, Middletown, Conn., historian; Jodee Lord, Staten Island, N.Y., Annual Meeting and Conference Committee member-at-large on the Leadership Council; Miriam Bryant, Marshalltown, Iowa, Board of Directors; Don Olsen, Wichita, Kan., Board of Directors; Patrick F. Hunt, Berea, Ohio, Growth Ministry Council; Mary Brooks, Pomona, Calif., Growth Ministry Council; Carol P. Taylor, Beloit, Wis., Growth Ministry Council; Margery Sinclair, Fox Point, Wis., Mission and Outreach Ministry Council; Doug Gray, Squantum, Mass., Mission and Outreach Ministry Council; and Marisol Ferrer Malloy, Bound Brook N.J., Vitality Ministry Council.

Other leaders remain in place, either because their terms have not expired or because they are succeeding themselves in one-year terms (secretary and treasurer).

LECTURES, WORSHIP, BLOGGING

The non-business part of the gathering was kicked off by this year’s Congregational Lecturer, the Rev. Dr. Cindy Bacon Hammer, Madison, Wis., who focused on the meaning and importance of worship (*see pp. 18-19*). She also led a “Joy Filled Worship” service at the end of the conference, on Tuesday evening.

Left: Delegates and attendees pray in response to the previous week’s shootings in Charleston.

Right: Nino Reyos, in tribal regalia, leads Congregationalists in a get-acquainted dance.

Single entity,
Sympathy to
Charleston,
Prepping for
the Pilgrims



The main Sunday worship and communion service was led by the Rev. Dr. Michael Chittum, assisted by liturgist Laura Hamby, choir director Devon Bettolo, and keyboardist Teresa Clawson. Chittum preached on “Joy in God’s Safety.” Besides Dr. Chittum, the Revs. Joe Clarke, Karl Schimpf, Art Ritter, and Betsey Mauro—all with links to Salt Lake City—administered the Lord’s Supper.

Other worship events included brief morning devotions each day of the meeting and special services each of the first three nights—Taizé on Saturday, a healing service on Sunday, and a candlelight service on Monday.

Dr. Amy Erickson, assistant professor of Hebrew Bible at Iliff School of Theology, Denver, delivered three provocative Bible Lectures (*see pp. 20-22*), drawing forth online debate among the NA’s corps of live-bloggers even as she was speaking.

The blogging enterprise at the NA meeting has come of age, with a well-ordered online presence designed and instituted by the Rev. Chris Meirose. A battery of bloggers seated at the side of the main meeting room kept up a live stream of commentary on the proceedings (*see naccc15.wordpress.com*).

WORKSHOPS, ENTERTAINMENT, SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENTS

Besides main program events and blogs, there were 18 workshops, this year spaced throughout the program, on Sunday, Monday, and Tuesday afternoons. They addressed such diverse topics as “Leaving a Living Legacy,” Holy Hilarity Sunday, the Rejoicing Spirits ministry for those with developmental and intellectual disabilities, “Stewarding Your Church Records,” and an introduction to new Growth Ministry Council resources for local churches.

Sunday and Monday night entertainment options provided a glimpse into Western cultures. On Sunday, dancer and woodwind artist Nino Reyos provided a captivating introduction to the haunting variety of sounds made available through Native American wooden flutes. On Monday, Lannie “The Marshal” Scopes and Craig “Creek” Johnson, a duo known as “Hired Guns,” performed a rousing version of traditional cowboy music.

On Tuesday afternoon, Beth Borland and the Rev. Mimi Biedron previewed the next Annual Meeting and Conference, to be held June 25-28, 2016, in Detroit. The conference theme will be “Who is My Neighbor?” (Luke 10:29). The Congregational Lecture will be given by the Rev. William Lange, and



Camaraderie in the corridors.



the Bible Lecturer will be the Rev. Dr. Stephen Butler Murray, president of Evangelical Theological Seminary.

Attendees also viewed a video and received a “Save the Date” announcement for the International Congregational Fellowship’s Quadrennial Meeting to be held July 6-11, 2017 in Capetown, South Africa. The theme is: “Called to Freedom Through One Lord, Jesus Christ—Freedom in Worship, Freedom of Mind, Freedom to Serve.” Planned events include an outing to Robben Island, where Nelson Mandela was imprisoned.

Several NA people were honored with awards:

- The Rev. Dr. Tom Richard received the Board of Directors’ citation for his many years of distinguished service to the National Association.
- The Rev. Marisol Ferrer Malloy, Bound Brook Congregational Church, Bound Brook, N.J., received the Marion Bradshaw Award to be used for continuing education other than a degree program.
- The Harry R. Butman Award for ministry was awarded to two recipients this year: The Rev. Dr. Les Wicker, First Congregational Church of Naples, Fla.; and the Rev. Dr. Cindy Bacon Hammer, Heritage Congregational Church, Madison, Wis.
- Dottie Schimpf, wife of Rev. Karl Schimpf and parish nurse for North Shore Congregational Church, Fox Point, Wis., received the Jennette Butman Award for the spouse of a Congregational minister who has assisted in ministry.

In addition, two who have recently left positions of importance in the NACCC—the Rev. Dr. Betsey Mauro, and the Rev. Dr. Arlin Larson—were honored with appreciation gifts.

The Annual Meeting and Conference cannot happen without the efforts of many people involved in its planning and execution. This year, Carol Price of First Congregational Church, Salt Lake, co-chaired the host committee, working closely with Rev. Dr. Michael Chittum.

The Rev. Wendy Van Tassell co-chaired the Annual Meeting and Conference Committee, and as usual, Carrie Dahm provided indispensable staff support for the Annual Meeting and Conference.

From left to right: The Rev. Karl Schimpf administers the Lord’s Supper to Marria Casner.

The Rev. Dr. Betsey Mauro rejoices in her gift cards.

The Rev. Julie Johnson Staples explains the advantages of the new “single entity” plan.

Dr. Tom Gossett, left, and Grant Leonard tell about Indian Trails Mission.

Moderator Jim DeLine presents a certificate of appreciation to the Salt Lake City First Congregational Church host committee, represented by Michael Chittum and Carol Price.

This year's Congregational Lecture gives us insight to what worship means in our Congregational context.

CONGREGATIONAL LECTURE

God the Subject and Object of Worship

by John Miller



Larry Sommers

The Rev. Dr. Cindy Bacon Hammer presents the Congregational Lecture.

“I love worship, and that is why I’m standing here.”

The Rev. Dr. Cindy Bacon Hammer promised us an interactive lecture intended to inspire full participation in worship over gathering as a bunch of “pew potatoes.” This invitation made her lecture, from the beginning, a worship experience in itself.

Cindy wound her lecture around a repeated question: “What makes worship, worship?” This question allowed us all to deepen our understanding as she took us through worship in its meaning, history, practice and intentions.

Our first attempt at answering the question gave everyone the chance to brainstorm a list of things necessary for worship. From there, Cindy took us to the meaning of worship, with an approach rooted in a quote from Marva Dawn—“God is both the subject and the object of worship.” We repeated that idea together and dove into reflection on each element of the challenging, rewarding work of worship.

Cindy showed us a drawing she made while studying worship with students from First Congregational Church of Burlington, Iowa, where she served as senior minister. The bright colors and flowing lines expressed her thoughts about what God might look like, her sense of God’s love, power and action. The vivid image jumped off the screen, an expression of worship in its creation and its sharing.

From there, we looked at the worship service—“that 60 minutes or so we gather to worship in an organized, communal way with those God has gathered together in covenant to meet in the meetinghouse.” While our Puritan and Pilgrim forebears removed anything deemed distracting from their worship settings, this was to focus on God as subject and as object of worship. They found those simple settings the ideal place to seek “more light and truth to break forth from God’s word,” an anticipation that was spiritually stimulating.



Next, we reviewed the fourfold form of Reformed worship:

- Gathering the people, coming away from the world, and coming together in community;
- engaging with the Word of God;
- responding with prayer, offering and sacrament;
- and sending people out, changed, blessed, and inspired by and for God.

Finally, Cindy took us to our present-day discussions of worship, ranging from Pilgrim forms to modern worship forms, and the question of which forms carry the most powerful message. After giving us time to expand and reflect on our lists of needed worship elements, Cindy challenged us to think about which factor compels our worship practices

With all of that to absorb and ponder, Cindy brought us back to our lists; what to add, or delete, or change? And then she offered her own powerful list: Reverence, “that attitude that we wear that says that God is God and we are not, that God is the source of all that is, that God is worth worshiping, worth bowing down before, worth our very lives.” This reverence takes us beyond appearances or practices to God at the heart of it all, and all that we do for God.

This thought was profound and could have been the powerful finish of the lecture, but Cindy as a humble servant took us further, to an insight from a member of Heritage Congregational Church, Madison, Wis., who defined worship as “surrender;” to our own lists to continue to adjust and reflect; to a welcoming attitude toward varied choices that can get us to the worshipful posture we need.

“Reverence is that attitude that we wear that says that God is God and we are not, that God is the source of all that is, that God is worth worshiping, worth bowing down before, worth our very lives.”

the most: Our own desires, or the work of God as object and subject of all we do. Clergy can over-think worship with lots of education and theory; laity can work from fuzzy spiritual memory. Do these realities get in the way of the real work and act of worship?

Fear not, this lecture came with solutions! To make God the subject of worship, we should follow three key principles: Put scripture at the center, awaken to God’s presence with us in worship, and focus on learning all we can about God. These simple yet profound ideas place us in right relation with God.

In turn, to make God the object of worship, there are four additional principles to guide us: We expect to meet God in worship, we offer ourselves to God, we make a sincere offering to God in all we do, and we reach toward God, committing ourselves and our covenant community to God.

Cindy encouraged us to embrace our Congregational freedom to follow the Spirit, finding common ground in the subject and object of worship as preferences vary, making it all about God and for God. Her message was inspirational, accessible, welcoming and empowering. Sharing this lecture as a discussion starter in our local congregations and for personal reflection can deepen our respective worship journeys, a great gift from Rev. Dr. Cindy Bacon Hammer.



THE REV. JOHN MILLER has served the First Congregational Church of Royal Oak, Mich., since October 2001. He has served the NACCC on the Communication Services Committee, the Congregational Church Development Division and the Executive Committee. He is married to Chris and father to Abbi and Ethan.

A provocative view of the Bible sparks lively debate among attendees.

BIBLE LECTURE

Humans in God's Ecology

by Seth Jones

Dr. Amy Erickson was rigorous, funny, and quick on her feet as she presented Creation elements of the Old Testament in three Bible Lectures.

Dr. Erickson is associate professor of the Hebrew Bible at Iliff School of Theology in Denver. Her goal was to provide ways to help us think faithfully and responsibly about the global ecological crisis through Scripture. Her talks aligned with the meeting's theme, "Let the rivers clap their hands, let the mountains sing together for joy" from Psalm 98; they also happened to coincide with the June 18 release of Pope Francis' environmental encyclical *Laudato Si' (Praise Be to You)*.

Dr. Erickson attempted a difficult task: To change minds and worldviews rather than give people one more thing to do. In her first lecture, she spoke to the despair present as we consider the state of the world and the environment. "What difference does it make



Dr. Amy Erickson delivers the first of three Bible Lectures.

Larry Sommers

if I do anything at all?" she asked, when all around us we get news every day about the degradation of the ecology of the planet. Perhaps, she suggested, the problem is with our framework—how we imagine ourselves in the world. "All creation exists in the presence of God" is a foundational understanding of the world in the Wisdom literature of the Old Testament, and this is where Dr. Erickson began her attempt to reframe and reform our worldview.

SEEING THE CREATED WORLD ANEW

From here, she led us into examining the feminine

God is a grand creative agent who is radically present in his unplanned and untamed worlds ...

presentation of Wisdom in Proverbs 8. She suggested this was perhaps a midrash on Genesis 1, presenting a nuanced view of God’s creation. In Proverbs 8, in Woman Wisdom’s vision of Creation, humanity is not an administrator of the created order, but rather a source of delight for God. Dr. Erickson asked us to imagine our presence in the environment as being for the delight of God and therefore to enter the world seeking the things that delight God. The phrase she used for this attitude was “intentional neophilia,” referencing the book *On Looking*, by Alexandra Horowitz. The neophiliac is best described as one who always seeks the new, and is best reflected in the behavior of dogs on a walk or toddlers discovering new things in their surroundings. If we take intentional neophilia as a stance to engage the world, we are no longer results-oriented. Instead, our intense curiosity and openness brings us always closer to the holiness God intends for the world. How could we not have a better relationship to God’s creation with that approach?

HUMANKIND’S PLACE IN A WILD WORLD

In her second lecture, Dr. Erickson delved into the last five chapters of Job (38-42). She suggested that we read these verses invitationally, rather than the traditional reading of an accusation, or legal argument, by God against Job. God, she suggested, is answering Job’s cries for justice by inviting Job to participate in the vast Creation with God, showing us that

creation is intimately tied to God’s justice. The role of the human being in the Book of Job is interesting, however. Human beings are merely another aspect of the created order and are not the greatest of God’s creations. Those titles are reserved for Behemoth and Leviathan. The world is not organized for human purposes at all, nor is there some grand plan in place. Instead, Creation, according to Dr. Erickson’s read of these last chapters of Job, is a “heterogeneous jumble of cosmic worlds” where God’s flagrant diversity and creativity is on display. God is a grand creative agent who is radically present in his unplanned and untamed worlds, a view which is a direct challenge to the omniscient, omnipotent and omnibenevolent Western image of God.

DOMINION AMID GOD’S BLESSINGS

In her third lecture, with the foundations of Woman Wisdom and the wildly creative image of God in Job, we went to the very beginning of creation in Genesis 1-3. Dr. Erickson examined the meaning of dominion in Genesis 1:28—“God blessed them, and God said to them, ‘Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the air and over every living thing that moves upon the earth’” (NRSV)—as the final approach to shifting our mindsets away from a “doing” mentality into a deeper and more God-oriented mentality. “Dominion” for humans over Creation should always be understood as, “dominion in the way of God,” per Gerhard von Rad. We are to develop a “skilled mastery over the creatures” defined by the blessings and love of God. Everything in creation is conditioned on the blessings God has given all of creation in Genesis 1 and 2, a blessing we share with the flora and fauna, the creatures of earth and sea, the land and sea itself, even the cosmos.

We live in a world where we have deliberately cut off our bodies from the environment. We thus believe ourselves to be separate from the ecological crisis which surrounds us, and therefore spend a lot of effort trying to fix the thing we have broken with

“What difference does it make if I do anything at all?”



the same mindset that broke it. Instead, Dr. Erickson sought to change our mindsets and worldview so that we can see the created world the way God intends it to be—a raging, seething, frothing, creative diversity which is always on the edge of chaos. We get to participate with God in this “creation party in the house,” the phrase Dr. Erickson used to begin her lectures with us on Sunday.

Dr. Erickson’s lectures were effective in the sense that there was no middle ground in the gathered community’s response. She was either loved for her provocative, irreverent suggestions about the nature of God; or she was passionately opposed for her

disregard of God’s sovereignty and omnipotence. Her presentations created good arguments in the lobby and beyond the Annual Meeting itself, generating vigorous online discussion as well. This suggests she was an excellent choice for our devoted, argumentative and loving Congregational association.



THE REV. SETH JONES lives with his wife, Kate, and daughter, Rhiannon, three blocks from the ocean in Rockland, Maine, where he serves Rockland Congregational Church. Seth is a graduate of CFTS and a second career pastor. He has served in various capacities in the NACCC, works with the homeless coalition in Rockland, and has sought to develop ecumenical relationships in the mid-coast Maine area.

RETREAT GUIDES CONTINUED FROM P.13

All who wish to come away for a period of refreshment Tuesday-Thursday, Oct. 27-29, 2015, are invited venture to the Colombiere Conference and Retreat Center, Clarkston, Mich. The Rev. Mark Jarvie of First Congregational Church, Lake Odessa, Mich., an experienced retreat guide presently training as a spiritual director through Spring Arbor University, will lead our retreat.

The Congregational Society of Classical Retreat Guides was formed in the 1980s largely through the efforts of the Rev. Dr. Arvel M. Steece, chaplain-director emeritus. It seeks to offer spiritual direction, pursued in the silence, and to be a resource for deepening awareness of the presence of the divine in all of the facets and programs of the local congregation. In addition to its retreats, the society maintains resources, print and electronic,

for cultivating the devotional life as individuals and church communities, and it offers training sessions for those who wish to serve as guides to understand the structure, format, and objectives of silent spiritual retreats.

For more information or to take part in any of these programs, please contact the Rev. Dr. Charles Packer, chaplain-director, drcapacker@gmail.com or 734-755-4131.



THE REV. DR. CHARLES PACKER is senior minister of Pine Hill Congregational Church, Southgate, Mich., dean of the Congregational Foundation for Theological Studies, and chaplain-director of the Congregational Society of Classical Retreat Guides.

What does faith in action look like? Ask a youth.

Jammin' with the Kidz at the Dream Center



by Lynn Merkel and Joanne Simpson

What happens when 87 teens, young adults, and leaders descend on a city? Mission, ministry, worship, praise, fun, and fellowship!

National Association of Pilgrim Fellowship and Heritage of Pilgrim Endeavor members spent June 24-28 in St. Louis serving the community near the Dream Center, a “thriving, multi-cultural, urban church of over 700 people changing the face of the St. Louis Metropolitan area.” We were inspired and challenged by our speaker Rev. Tom Boehne and led in worship by jazz vocalist and worship leader Chris Williams (accompanied by Revs. Matt Moncrief and Wendy Van Tassell).

We took part in activities organized by the Dream Center. The HOPE group (college-aged) worked on a single home—painting, gardening, and completing any home repairs. Other groups sorted clothes in the clothing closet, sorted food in the warehouse, packed backpacks for school children, prepared and served food served in the soup kitchen, stocked the food pantry and assisted its shoppers. We helped people wash clothes with the “Loads of Love” program, pulled weeds and laid a path in a community garden, collected trash and weeded in the neighborhoods with the “Adopt-a-Block” program. We



Top: Olivia Graham with a new friend in swirly facepaint at KidzJam. Photo by Sharon Brown.

Above: Chris Williams leads worship. Photo by Kristin Lewis.

Right: Nina Nikolic, Bre Wilkerson, Gretta Delaney and Meredith Turner serve lunch at the Dream Center. Photo by Sharon Brown.

also enjoyed playing with kids during their “KidzJam” time and visiting the elderly in the retirement home. One evening HOPE participated in street ministry by

“I love helping people!”

“My heart was touched in a way I’ve never experienced before.”

“NAPF/HOPE really feels like a family!”



meeting with people living in tents or on the street and sharing food and prayer.

The NAPF group and counselors had the opportunity to go to the City Museum, built in the former International Shoe Company factory and warehouse. This is a place that encourages relaxation and play, with lots of slides, including one that's 10 stories high; giant ball pits; a school bus hanging off a top corner of the building; and a rooftop with a Ferris wheel and beautiful panoramic views of St. Louis. The counselors enjoyed themselves as much as the youths. Everyone got to be a child again!

After Sunday worship at the Dream Center Church, the entire group enjoyed visiting the Gateway Arch. Traveling to the top in tram "capsules" was a stretch

for some, but worthwhile for the views from the top.

Our time in St. Louis concluded with installation of Liz Russell and Greg Merkel as the new HOPE officers, worship, communion and closing circle.

Join us in 2016 in Detroit!



JOANNE SIMPSON AND LYNN MERKEL have served the NACCC in various leadership roles since the 1980s and have been part of the NAPF/HOPE leadership team for many years. Joanne lives in Lynn, Mass., and Lynn lives in Franklin, Wis.

A Castle in the Projects

by Sherilyn Foster

When I first learned that NAPF/HOPE was partnering with the St. Louis Dream Center for mission work, I pictured a run-down place, full of people just trying to do their best. What a surprise when we pulled up to what I could only describe as a castle!

The Dream Center turned out to be a pristine, organized place full of people making a difference in the community. The orientation was impressive as we learned about the many ministries—After School Feeding Program, Adopt-a-Block, Loads of Love, KidzJam—and how much of a difference they are making in the community. People say we can change the world by making waves in the ocean, but I never truly understood that until working at the Dream Center.

One of the outreaches I did was KidzJam. While some of the NAPF youth went knocking on doors to tell kids the date and location of the upcoming KidzJam (a roving fun center on wheels), I was assigned to work at the actual site—and by actual site, I mean the wrong site! We followed the "KidzJam" truck, only to find they had misread the schedule and went to the wrong site. But it was too late: Kids had seen the truck, heard the special "honk," and were pouring into the parking lot to dance and learn about God. That was the moment where I realized the Dream Center is making tidal waves in their community.

My friend, Nick Hergatt, described the Dream Center as an oasis in the middle of a desert. I think that is the best description of it. The main goal is to rebuild dreams, and that is what I got out of it. A week there was like a vacation, rather than a "mission trip," because it was getting away from all the negativity and surrounding myself with good people trying to make the world better.

The Dream Center is a castle in the middle of the projects; an oasis in a desert; and a beacon of hope in a world of need.



Sherilyn Foster and Rev. Andrew Walton stock food pantry shelves.

Mindy Jaster

SHERILYN FOSTER is an NAPF member from Meadowbrook Congregational Church, Novi, Mich.



fresh eyes on History and Polity

by Doug Murphy

I've just returned from the Salt Lake City Annual Meeting and Conference and was amazed at all the incredible people that I met: Such affection for one another, such caring for churches other than their own. There was an almost tangible sense of family among the attenders.

But amid all the joy and celebration was a sense of defeat and loss that hovered just underneath the surface. I heard more than once, "The group seems to be getting older and older every year"; and, "Our church is getting smaller and smaller—we just can't seem to figure a way to grow." I have to admit I felt a little sad walking to my room each night.

a bright spot

In the midst of all this, I found a real bright spot: The "History and Polity" workshop. We learned about Pilgrims, Puritans, and Separatists, as well as great people such as Martin Luther, John Calvin, Jonathan Edwards, John Cotton, and Robert Browne. We also touched on great events in Congregational history, such as the Great Awakening, the "Plan of Union 1801-1851," the Burial Hill Declaration of 1865, and much more.

But this was just the start; I knew I needed to learn more. Through the National Association's Web site, nacc.org, I signed up for the "On-line History and Polity" course. I dove in and immediately realized that I needed to look at our history through the eyes of a soldier, not a scholar.

Scholars and soldiers are the ones who study history the most. Scholars want to look at what people used

to do; soldiers want to see what remains to be done. Those who are scholars study history for the sake of information; those who are soldiers study it for the sake of mission. So when I study our history, I want to know:

- *What were we trying to accomplish?*
- *What have been our directing values?*
- *What passions and accomplishments have directed us throughout our rich history?*

When I look at our narrative, as I would a story from God's Word, I find that we are more than the first denomination in the United States. We are more than Pilgrims and Puritans. So what are we? Who are we?

a revolution!

We are a grass-roots, revolutionary way of being the church ... where every member matters, where every attender makes a difference. We are based more on intentionality and unity than on tradition and hierarchy.

We have a faith that places Jesus at the center and celebrates the tension and mystery of the Bible, as opposed to elevating the commentaries and authors that teach us about Him.

Our story is a new story with a beautiful and rich past, a new chapter written with every new seeker who comes through the doors.

Congregationalism looks as different from one city to the next as the accents of speech, the style of

clothes, the preference of music, or the varied styles of architecture. We are ever-evolving in our appearance. But we are resolute in heart.

We value freedom and welcome all to belong and learn with us.

We will partner with those different from ourselves, because the mission of our God and the needs of the people are greater than our comforts, preferences, or social groups. We are a covenant people who live by the promises of God and a deep, grace-filled commitment to one other.

We are mission-minded congregations that aren't afraid to engage culture, to create ... and even to challenge our own comforts, because in the end, others coming to a place of peace with God is our greatest joy.

So next time someone asks, "What is a Congregationalist?" don't just fall back to, "We are

the same as the Pilgrims and Puritans." They were more than their name, and so are we.

Sir Isaac Newton said, "If I have seen further, it is by standing upon the shoulders of giants." The idea is that we see more and farther than our predecessors, not because we have keener vision or greater height, but because we are lifted up and borne aloft on their gigantic stature.

Let us not forget the giants who have come before us, but at the same time let us keep our eyes forward to see what God might have in store for us.



PASTOR DOUG MURPHY has served churches in Arizona, Washington, and Oregon, and he now serves as senior pastor at Ingle Chapel, Milton-Freewater, Ore. His background is heavy in reviving struggling church ministries and speaking on apologetics. He is new to Congregationalism and is excited about the future in the NACCC.

"History is the only education, all the rest is training."

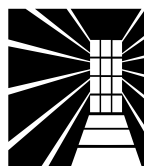
Julie Johnson Staples



Self-described history buff Julie Johnson Staples discovered the Library & Archives as a CFTS Fellow, and returned with her Masters of Theology studies at Harvard. The CLA provided critical original source material for her study of multiracial 17th century Puritans. She continues to access our collection whether assisting churches in writing their histories or developing a sermon.

Julie Johnson Staples
Interim Senior Minister

Flatbush Tompkins Congregational Church, Brooklyn, NY
National Board of Directors, NACCC
Advisory Circle, Congregational Library & Archives



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Funny how one thing leads to another ... clear across the world.

From the **Lagoon in the Pacific** to the **Pulpit of Westminster Abbey**

**An After Dinner Talk¹ at the John Bunyan Meeting
in Bedford, England, Feb. 26, 2015**

by Manfred Waldemar Kohl

For years I served on the international board of the Liebenzell Mission in New Jersey, USA.² The primary mission field of this mission organization was the islands of the South Pacific, especially the island district of Micronesia.³ As a board member I traveled to the South Pacific islands every six months to attend various mission programs. The area in the center of Micronesia in which the islands of Ponape and Truk are located is often called a “lagoon in the Pacific.”


These islands have a history of Congregational missions. The American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions⁴ sent missionaries to the islands as early as 1879. The first Congregational missionaries to travel to these islands were Albert and Susan Sturges and Robert and Mary Logan.⁵ One traveled from island to island by a boat called the *Morningstar*. Sunday School children from hundreds of Congregational and other churches in

1 The Theological Commission of ICF prepared a special celebration and dinner at the 40th anniversary of the founding of ICF at Chislehurst, near London, England.

2 The Liebenzell Mission has its headquarters in the town of Liebenzell in the Black Forest in southern Germany. After the Second World War a branch office was established in the town of Schooley's Mountain, New Jersey, USA. Over the years the Liebenzell Mission USA became an independent partner of the Liebenzell International Mission organization.

3 Micronesia became a United Nations Trust Territory in 1946 under the trusteeship of the United States.

4 The American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions (A.B.C.F.M.) had its headquarters in Boston, Mass., USA.



New England made donations to purchase that boat. Each child received a document, a kind of “stock paper,” for each dollar donated, thus becoming a “stockholder” of the Congregational Mission Project in the South Pacific.⁶ The history of this mission in the South Pacific was so fascinating that I undertook the writing of a book entitled *Lagoon in the Pacific: The Story of Truk*.⁷

CHISLEHURST MEETING

Dr. Harry Butman heard about this book and made contact with me, inviting me to participate in the establishing of an International Congregational Fellowship. At that time I was serving as pastor of the historic First Congregational Church in Middleboro, Mass., USA. I was fascinated that international Congregationalism might become a reality. For centuries Congregationalism had had a global ministry/outreach,⁸ but after the various mergers this was neglected. Harry Butman sent an invitation to Congregationalists around the world to come to Chislehurst, England, in May 1975. I attended this meeting, probably the youngest of all the participants. At the end of the conference, a Declaration was prepared and this very historic document was signed by all present.⁹ It is therefore a unique privilege for me to participate today in celebrating the 40th anniversary of the founding of the International Congregational Fellowship.

Every participant was excited about the many plans and ideas shared at that first meeting. A decision was made that in July of 1977 a major gathering of all Congregationalists from around the world should take place in London, England. I was asked to be on the Planning/Executive Committee.

A VILLAGE PRIEST

Since I traveled from my home church in the U.S. to London, England, I planned to spend a few days in the little village of Gries in the Austrian Alps. Over the years I had spent many weeks of meaningful vacation and “time out” for creative writing in this small, isolated village with fewer than 100 inhabitants. The only restaurant in the village at that time was managed by the Catholic priest to supplement his meager income. This priest was a retired Jesuit missionary who had served for many years in the southern islands of the Philippines. He spoke of severe persecution and local encounters. On several occasions he almost lost his life. Both of his legs had been broken numerous times, and he walked with two crutches and braces. He and I became good friends. I shared with him my experience in the founding of the new International Congregational Fellowship. To my surprise, that Catholic priest had spent many years of his life studying the history of Congregationalism in England and he was very familiar with the names of Richard Clyfton, John Robinson, William

5 David and Leona Crawford, *Missionary Adventures in the South Pacific* (Rutland, Vt., and Tokyo, Japan: Charles E. Tuttle Company Publishers, 1967), pp. 215-240. See also E.S. Dodge, *New England and The South Seas* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1965).

6 J.S. Warren, *The Morning Star: History of the Children's Missionary Vessel and of the Marquesan and Micronesian Missions* (Boston: American Tract Society, 1860). See also A.S. Baker, *Morning Stars and Missionary Packet* (Honolulu, Hawaii: Board of the Hawaiian Evangelical Association, 1945).

7 Manfred Waldemar Kohl, *Lagoon in the Pacific: The Story of Truk* (Schooley's Mountain, N.J.: Liebenzell Mission U.S.A., 1971).

8 Ralph F.G. Calder, *To Introduce the Family* (London: The International Congregational Council, 1953); Albert Peel and Douglas Horton, *International Congregationalism* (n.p., n.d.); Arthur A. Rouner, Jr., *The Congregational Way of Life* (Oak Creek, Wis.: Hammond Publishing, 1972), pp. 79ff.

9 Manfred Waldemar Kohl, *Congregationalism in America* (Oak Creek, Wis.: The Congregational Press, 1977). See “A New Beginning at Chislehurst,” p. 62-63.

Brewster, William Bradford, and others. He was of the opinion that the Congregationalists are still part of Christianity in England and therefore should have equal rights to places like Westminster Abbey and other cathedrals claimed as the sole property of the Church of England. It was this Catholic historian and village priest who challenged me to write to the Dean of Westminster Abbey requesting that the Congregationalists have equal rights to use the Abbey for their worship services.

GRACIOUS RESPONSE

I mentioned that idea to the new ICF Executive/Planning Committee, who were stunned and filled with doubt, convinced that this would be impossible and that we would make ourselves a laughing stock. I insisted that at least we should write and find out if our closing worship service, with communion, could be held at Westminster Abbey. To the surprise of everyone, our letter was promptly answered and we were told that the entire Abbey would be available to us, that Congregationalists could speak from the pulpit, and that we could celebrate communion in the Abbey. We indeed made history! Dr. David Gray delivered a sermon prepared by his father, Rev. Henry David Gray.¹⁰

A second surprise was that we were allowed the use of the Pieterskerk in Leiden, where we closed our first international assembly in July 1977. The speaker at that service was Dr. Manfred W. Kohl.

All these experiences can be summarized in the words of William Bradford, "Thus out of small beginnings greater things have been produced."¹¹



THE REV. DR. MANFRED WALDEMAR KOHL serves as ambassador for Overseas Council International, an organization that assists theological institutions, primarily in the non-Western world. He also served as executive director for World Vision International in Africa and Europe. He has a Th.M., Th.D., and D.Min. He has published articles and books in the area of institutional development, theological education, and fundraising. His material has been published in English, German, Russian, and Portuguese.

First Congregational Church

of Clear Lake, Iowa, seeks a senior pastor to lead us in the growth of our mission "A Passion for God, Compassion for People."

Clear Lake is a bustling summer resort community with abundant recreational opportunities, halfway between Des Moines and Minneapolis.

See our website, congregationalclearlake.com, or our profile at nacc.org.

Send resume to Search Committee Secretary Bill Cooney at 65 Four Winds Drive, Clear Lake, IA 50428 or e-mail fcsearch@netins.net.



**205 West 10th Avenue North
Clear Lake, IA 50428 • 641.357.2818**

¹⁰ The sermon, as well as all the papers and activities of the 1977 conference are recorded in the "International Congregational Conference 1977 Proceedings" available at the ICF office/archives.

¹¹ Kohl, *Congregationalism in America*, p. 64.

THE CONGREGATIONALIST EDITORIAL POLICY

The policy of *THE CONGREGATIONALIST* magazine involves ten strategic principles:

1. Communicate the ongoing story of Congregationalism in a relevant and timely manner.
2. Enhance and support, but not be limited to the mission of the National Association of Congregational Christian Churches.
3. Maintain editorial integrity and independence as stated in its masthead.
4. Serve the Congregational Way in the media marketplace.
5. Offer balanced editorial contents by covering Congregational Heritage (past, present, and future); commentary on social issues; inspirational, educational, and entertaining articles with religious orientation; church programs and activities with emphasis on problem-solving; NACCC programs and activities; and standing departments, book reviews, letters, and obituaries.
6. Strive for high quality of content and appearance.
7. Primarily offer contents written by Congregationalists with Congregational orientation, addressed to an audience of Congregationalists.
8. Accommodate a variety of authors by gender, vocation, age, and religious and social viewpoints.
9. Invite input from readers surveys, letters and requests for information.
10. Provide editorial content that is independent, succinct, direct and pertinent.

Editorial Independence: Still Needed, After All These Years

In 1849, *THE CONGREGATIONALIST* began life, an independent publication. With no denominational affiliation, it was self-supporting, through subscriptions and advertising sales. It had no master but Christ to answer to.

A SILVER TRUMPET

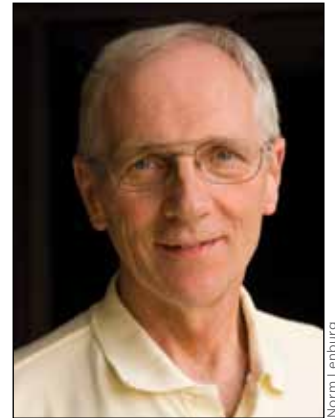
But the demographic, ecclesiastical, and economic facts of life gradually changed; and in 1958, the newborn National Association of Congregational Christian Churches assumed stewardship of the magazine, with the Rev. Joseph J. Russell as editor. Page One of the first issue featured a “guest editorial” by the Rev. Harry R. Butman of Los Angeles, chairman of the Executive Committee of the National Association. With characteristic élan, Dr. Butman proclaimed:

With the reappearance of a name once most honored in all American religious journalism, and the establishment of a commission to build free churches, and to spread the free church faith, we are seeing a spiritual renaissance. ... For we have a message to proclaim, and that message is freedom. ... An army charges best when a trumpet is sounded. ... God grant, in the days to come, that all who cherish freedom and toil for its triumph may be cheered, in reading this reborn paper, by words of truth and challenge, and chronicles of achievement and comradeship. May it be a silver trumpet which shall with no uncertain sound forever blow the brave music of freedom.

TWO ROLES

Although *THE CONGREGATIONALIST* retained its ancient editorial independence, it necessarily also became the “house organ” of the NACCC. So in the days since Dr. Butman’s clarion call, there has sometimes arisen confusion between the magazine’s *special* status as a messenger of the National Association and its *primary* role as “The Magazine of the Congregational Way.” Actually, the editor must attend faithfully to both roles, as reflected in our official Editorial Policy (*shown at left*). Nevertheless, the continuing need for editorial independence is sometimes called into question.

We are now going through such a period, incidental to the search for a new editor. The Board of Directors appointed a well-qualified task team* to look into “editorial purpose and philosophy” for *THE CONGREGATIONALIST*. It is gratifying to report that the task team unanimously recommended a strong policy of continuing editorial independence for *THE CONGREGATIONALIST*. We believe this is



LARRY SOMMERS, *Editor*

Continued on pg. 32

* Varn Philbrook (chair), Edith Bartley (scribe), Don Olsen, Julie Johnson Staples, Dawn Carlson, and Randy Asendorf.

a correct policy; the Board of Directors unanimously embraced it Aug. 6, and we hope the Editorial Search Committee will find it gives useful definition to their efforts.

While relishing this concord, however, we must not fail to point out, for future reference, exactly *why* such editorial independence is needed.

- It is not for the editor's benefit, but for the benefit of the readers.
- It does not ensure the smooth functioning of the National Association, but on the contrary may sometimes betoken turbulence in the association's affairs.
- It is not a mere genuflection to long-held tradition, but instead offers a way forward, that the genius of Congregationalism may brighten our future.

WHY PUBLISH THE MAGAZINE?

Former editor Joe Polhemus said, "*THE CONGREGATIONALIST* and the NACCC are more dependent on each other than independent. Their future is the same."

Joe was right about that, because both *THE CONGREGATIONALIST* and the NACCC exist to serve the same cause: The Congregational Way. If we remove Congregationalism from the equation, there is no reason to continue either the magazine or the association.

With all its eccentricities, the National Association does embody the living tradition of American Congregationalism; and while it exists "to serve the churches that serve Christ," the central pillar of its service to local churches is upholding the Congregational identity that serves them so well.

With its wide-ranging content and its airing of divergent views, *THE CONGREGATIONALIST* supports the historic and continuing identity of our Way. It's not simple or formulaic; it requires engagement with a variety of slippery questions; most of all, it demands a full commitment to the authentic family conversation around our Congregational "kitchen table."

Our point is that, although *THE CONGREGATIONALIST* is a happy venue in which to air association business, *the National Association did not take on the stewardship of this publication to gain a house organ*. The NACCC publishes *THE CONGREGATIONALIST* because it is essential in describing, defending, promoting, and exemplifying the Congregational Way—which is the association's prime cause.

To say again what we have said before: **Our readers are informed not just by the contents of the magazine, but even more, by the *inclusiveness of the conversation* it fosters.**

CONCLUSION

The best way to support inclusive conversation is to support the editor's freedom to edit. It's an art, not a science; and in our association, it depends heavily on the continued willingness of contributors, both lay and clergy, to say their say in our pages. The editor is not so much a gatekeeper as a facilitator. It's not a job for a committee, no matter how well-intentioned.

That's why editorial independence is required.

Boundary issues in the church have a lot to do with “burnout.”

OUT of BOUNDS!

Part 2

Upon returning from her husband’s family reunion, a church member stopped by to see me. “You know,” she said, “we talk about burnout at work, but that’s not anything compared to what we saw where Bob’s family comes from. There, if you get into trouble with the community, they literally burn your house down. It happened to someone just before we got there!”

BURNOUT

Though extreme, being burned out of house and home, and thus unable to carry on with one’s life, is not a bad analogy for what many professional and situational care-givers experience when they are “burned out” in their work. What is consumed is not lumber, shingles, wallboard, and furniture—but something inner. It is the inner vitality and sense of engagement that made them effective at helping others in the first place. The phrase “people-work-related emotional exhaustion” captures a lot of it.

However, the effects are not felt only by the caregiver—social worker, police officer, attorney,

by Arlin T. Larson

family member, or minister—but by those they are caring for, as well as by sponsoring agencies, whose goals are no longer being met effectively.

This second article in our series on boundary issues in church life will reflect on how inadequate or inappropriate boundaries can lead to the emotional overload evidenced in burnout.

Ever since the phenomenon was described 40 years ago, we have heard talk about “clergy burnout.” Burnout doesn’t affect only clergy; but clergy are affected, and churches are among the institutions in which burnout occurs. We ministers, of course, avoid the topic, at least in public. Any sign of weakness or unhappiness could jeopardize our positions. For their part, church members don’t want to think they might be the reason the minister feels burned out. Governing boards may feel it is up to the minister to buck up and adjust to the demands of the job. It is not, however, helpful to point fingers.

“BURNOUT IS A SYNDROME OF EMOTIONAL EXHAUSTION, DEPERSONALIZATION, AND REDUCED PERSONAL ACCOMPLISHMENT THAT CAN OCCUR AMONG INDIVIDUALS WHO DO ‘PEOPLE WORK.’”

Burnout is a hazard of people-work, of intense, day-in-and-day-out, emotionally charged encounters. What can be done is to recognize the symptoms and the dangers and make personal and organizational adjustments. Appropriate boundaries are needed so that recipients of ministry receive the help needed, that a church’s helping mission is carried out efficiently, and that those providing ministry have the proper tools for personal and professional integrity.

THREE ASPECTS

Christina Maslach is a founder of the field of professional burnout and its leading authority.¹ Her analysis is helpful for understanding clergy burnout and the role the institution of the church plays. She notes that burnout is highly concentrated in people engaged in “people work.” While recognizing that burnout is similar to clinical depression, she says it differs in that it does not necessarily spill over into other areas of a person’s life.

“Burnout,” she says, “is a syndrome of emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and reduced personal accomplishment that can occur among individuals who do ‘people work.’”²

- **Emotional exhaustion** (the heart of burnout syndrome): “A person gets overly involved emotionally, overextends him- or herself, and feels overwhelmed by the emotional demands imposed by other people. ... They feel drained and used up.” (This feeling is sometimes called “compassion fatigue.”)

The worker may feel that God is demanding too much, more than they can bear. In terms of boundaries, there may be too much *emotional* empathy, in which helpers take on the clients’ feelings themselves, and too little *intellectual* empathy, in

which sympathetic understanding provides needed professional distance.

- **Depersonalization:** “The development of [a] detached, callous, and even dehumanized response signals a second aspect of the burnout syndrome—*depersonalization*. It is as though the individual is viewing other people through rust-colored glasses—developing a poor opinion of them, expecting the worst from them, and even actively disliking them.”

I once knew a man who was a confession-taker for the district attorney’s office in a major city. He was on call for 24 hours three days each week to respond to rapes and murders. Most of those arrested, he said, were actually proud of what they had done, bragged about it, and were happy to re-enact it in front of a camera. After three years of this work, he couldn’t take it anymore; it had begun to feel like all people are evil and malicious.

Even God can become depersonalized, seen not as the living well-spring of hope and love but as a detached and uncaring force. An excessive case load or depersonalizing job definition exacerbate the situation by setting boundaries that limit the helper’s regard for the other to a single factor—the presenting problem.

- **Reduced personal accomplishment:** “Providers have a gnawing sense of inadequacy about their ability to relate to recipients, and this may result in a self-imposed verdict of ‘failure.’”

This will likely include a sense of spiritual failure—the helper’s failure to live up to God’s expectations. There is a real tendency toward self-blame: “I guess I’m just not cut out for this kind of work.” The helper’s commitment constricts from full engagement with the work and with those being helped to minimal involvement—“just getting the job done.”

1 Christina Maslach, *Burnout: The Cost of Caring* (Los Altos, Calif.: Major Books, 2015), summarizes her 40 years of work in the field. See also Christina Maslach and Susan Jackson, “The Measurement of Experienced Burnout,” *Journal of Occupational Behaviour*, Vol. 2, pp. 99-113 (1981).
2 *Burnout*, pp. 2-8.



Readers of this article may recognize some or all of these factors in their own experience. I cannot count the number of times these topics have come up in talks with teachers, social workers, doctors, nurses, and many others. A recent news article even reported burnout among workers in the government's anti-terror drone program: Weeks of observing and becoming acquainted with potential targets, their families, and their villages creates empathy beyond the professional boundaries of targeted killing.³

Even though clergy are among those most satisfied with their profession and have lower rates of attrition than many other professions,⁴ they experience the same feelings as other helpers. Sharing these feelings is common among clergy friends and at clergy association meetings. One clergy association's members were all mainline, with the exception of the charismatic pastor of a local mega-church. When asked why he attended the group, he replied that he participated in another clergy group, too. "However, the other group is really competitive with lots of comparisons and bragging about attendance and altar calls—it is not relaxing," he said. "With you guys, though, I can let down a little and just be myself."

Learning that "people work" naturally pushes all of us in these directions can be a relief in itself. We are not alone!

PEOPLE WORK

In a chapter entitled "Involvement with People as a Source of Burnout," Maslach mentions several factors that make people work inherently stressful.⁵ One is that interactions are focused on people's problems, not their whole selves. That is natural, since people seek help specifically because of problems they have.

3 Pratap Chatterjee, "Our Drone War Burnout," *New York Times* July 14, 2015. (<http://www.nytimes.com/2015/07/14/opinion/our-drone-war-burnout.html?mwrsm=Email>).

4 Into Action, "How Many Quit? Estimating the Clergy Attrition Rate." (<http://into-action.net/research/many-quit-estimating-clergy-attrition-rate/>).

5 *Burnout*, p. 25.

Second, in most instances there is little if any positive feedback. Those seeking help may arrive in a bad mood, take help for granted, or complain of dissatisfaction; the helper, on the other hand, is expected always to be courteous, positive, and open. Third, encounters with helpers revolve around emotionally charged situations requiring intense mental effort. Fourth, while crises may be dealt with expeditiously, many helpers face clients with chronic, intractable, and, therefore, supremely frustrating problems.

The boundaries, as defined by all involved—helpers, recipients, and sponsoring organizations—are problem-centered. After all, problems are what have brought them together.

Ministers, like those in other helping professions, chose their profession for the very purpose of doing good and being helpful. It is, therefore, only natural to ask, "If they find it so stressful, why don't they find something else to do?" If the burnout is extreme, that may indeed be the answer. More often, however, the point is to deal creatively and effectively with the challenges presented so that the work can be done.

Boundaries must be defined that protect the personal and professional integrity of the helpers as well as to define the context of the work.

Ministers interact with people in highly-charged situations—deaths, illnesses, family breakups, job losses. They feel at least somewhat responsible for the welfare of every person in the congregation. They may become engaged in controversial political situations within the congregation, the community, and the denomination. They work mostly with volunteer co-workers over whom they have little control. They know that they may get the blame for things that don't happen but little credit when they do. The minister is expected to make his/her spouse and children part of the team.

Continued on p. 47

*The lifetime passion of a grand old Congregationalist
gives us all access to a treasury of knowledge.*

The Arvel M. and Kathleen Steece Theological Library

by Marie Steele

Want to learn more about Congregationalism? What were our ancestors thinking? How did Congregationalism become what it is today?

According to the *American Congregational Year-Book*, Vol. 5 (New York: American Congregational Union, 1858), "...Congregationalism is, in doctrine, evangelical religion. In polity, it is the government of each church by its own members; not by a minister, whether bearing the title of bishop or not; not by a general assembly, or by a session of elders; not by a company of deacons, or by one deacon; but the government of the church by the members of the church. It is Congregationalism, because it is congregational."

A more recent description, from the *1974-1975 Yearbook* of the Congregational Federation, Nottingham, England, says it is "... founded on a full recognition of their own distinctive principle, namely, the scriptural right of every separate Church to maintain perfect independence in the government and administration of its own particular affairs, and therefore that the Federation shall not in any case assume legislative authority, or become a court of appeal."



Olivet College photo by Bruce Snyder

Marie Steele examines the Steece Collection.

A MAJOR DONATION

These are just two answers found in yearbooks that are a part of the Arvel M. and Kathleen Steece Theological Library. In 2011, the Rev. Dr. Steece donated to the Center for Congregational Leadership a large part of his theological library, to be housed with the Center at Olivet, Mich. Dr. Steece collected items from all areas of Congregationalism, including church history journals, hymnals, and songbooks dating back to 1834, *Congregational Yearbooks*, *The Proceedings of the Unitarian Historical Society*, *The American Congregational Yearbook 1858*, *The*

Congregational Yearbook of the Congregational Federation, A.D. the magazine of the United Church of Christ, *United Church Herald and Advance*, *the National Journal of Congregational Christian Churches*, and *THE CONGREGATIONALIST*.

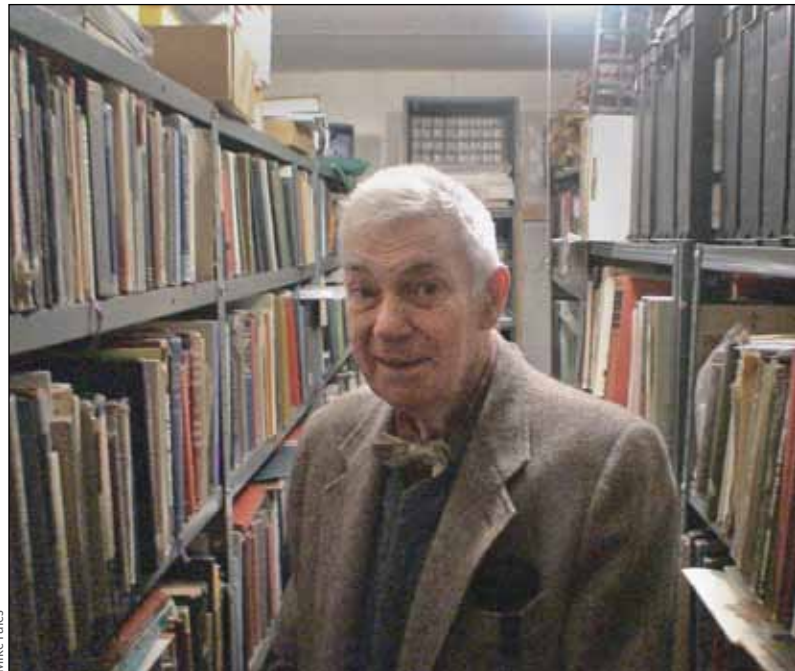
Volunteers from Olivet College and Olivet Congregational Church traveled to Steece's home in Shelburne Falls, Mass., to pick up and transport the treasured items that he had collected throughout his noted career. More than 4,000 books, magazines, journals, and pamphlets were delivered to the Center for Congregational Leadership. Half of these were catalogued by the Burrage Library staff and are available at the library for circulation; the rest are curated by the Center and are available for research purposes on site.

As a lover of books, I was excited to see what treasures were contained in the dozens of boxes that enclosed the Arvel M. and Kathleen Steece Theological Library. I was not disappointed as I sorted through them. Congregational magazines long out of print, association newsletters, and Congregational Yearbooks as far back as 1879 provide a fascinating look into our Congregational history.

RESOURCES CONCENTRATED AT OLIVET

This is a unique collection of religious and theological books and magazines managed by the Center and Olivet College's Burrage Library. The more than 2,000 volumes available for circulation can be found at olivetcollege.edu; then choose the Advanced Search option and under "Collections," scroll down to "Arvel M. Steece." The magazines and other archive books are available for research purposes at the Center.

In addition to the Steece Library, the Founders Memorial Library is also located at the Center for Congregational Leadership. A current catalogue in Excel spreadsheet format can be downloaded at centerforcongregationalleadership.com/digital-catalogue.html. This collection also includes materials donated by the West Coast Congregational Library,



Mike Falles

The Rev. Dr. Arvel M. Steece, 89, poses with some of his books Jan. 5, 2011, on the occasion of his donating them to the Center for Congregational Leadership at Olivet College.

such as bound copies of *The Congregational Quarterly* 1869-1878 and *THE CONGREGATIONALIST* 1924-1930.

The Founders Memorial Library, supported by the Twenty-First Century Fund to provide for research and study of the Congregational Way, was dedicated in 1989 and originally housed at the Oak Creek, Wis., office of the NACCC. Its name recognizes those individuals and churches present at the Fort Shelby Hotel, Detroit, when the association was founded in 1955, as well as those who attended the first Annual Meeting in Wauwatosa, Wis., in October 1956.

If you are in the Olivet area, we invite you to stop by and browse both collections.



MARIE STEELE is the assistant to the dean of the Center for Congregational Leadership and serves as the NACCC's pastoral relations coordinator. She edits and produces the NACCC News and maintains Web sites for the Center and the NA's Digital Archives as well as the Founders Library.

Church musicians: Need an organized approach to planning? Here's one.

Planning Music for **Worship**

by Peter Stickney

Long-range planning for the church year is crucial especially when preparing high-quality music for our congregations. Whether you are responsible for multiple services with a large choir of 40 singers, or one service at a tiny but mighty church with a choir of eight, best results are achieved with careful planning.

Many of us church musicians are responsible for choosing all or some of the hymns used in each service. In addition, many of us follow the lectionary for the church year and do our best to honor the sermon theme of the day.

I like to choose anthems, opening hymns, and postludes for the entire year in advance. Although my wonderful pastor was a bit shocked to learn the long-range planning that works for me, he has rallied to the task and is able to forecast about six months of sermon titles in advance.

Although I have been a member of the Congregational Church since age 12, for more than 30 years I have used the *Desk Calendar and Plan Book* distributed by the United Church of Christ (\$15, available at uccresources.com) for music planning. This is a fine resource with lectionary readings on the calendar and the liturgical

Photos by Ray Lund

seasons indicated, plus important non-liturgical Sundays that can be observed with a theme, such as American Indian Sunday, Laity Sunday, Ecumenical Sunday, and others.

I also invite you to look at *Prepare! An Ecumenical Music and Worship Planner*, by David Bone and Mary Scifres (Abingdon Press, \$23.99 at cokebury.com), based on a September-August church year. This is a wonderful tool.

- Lectionary readings for each Sunday are printed out, so I am not constantly foraging through multiple open books to organize all the stories, text and themes in my mind; everything is on one page. Having the scripture ready and available has saved me lots of time, energy, and frustration.
- An abundance of hymn suggestions, both ancient and contemporary, is presented for each week. The authors have helpfully included several hymnbooks and contemporary hymn resources for each week.



Musicians perform in worship at First Parish Church, Saco, Maine.

- Each specific week—with date, place in the liturgy, and liturgical color—is listed in BIG print at the top of each page. Somehow I find this amazingly comforting, offering assurance that I did not make a giant boo-boo and put the incorrect date with an anthem or opening hymn, or choose the incorrect scripture for the sung psalm. Having made such mistakes, I'm not eager to repeat them!
- The last column on the right side of each page, headed "Other Suggestions," is a handy little box with ideas for many visuals related to the scriptures, such as a dove or flames for the Holy Spirit. There is a wealth of ideas to foster color, powerful symbols that can be added to worship and to the children's tactile experience. Further, there are additional suggestions for service music, prayers, alternative lessons to the lectionary scriptures and useful meaningful guidance within the context of the liturgy.

I generally don't use every single anthem or solo suggestion in the book, but they are well selected, and many music programs will certainly benefit from the information. Let's face it: We all have unique ministries, with different musical tastes, abilities, traditions, and resources. Further, we all have different situations in choosing the music for our liturgies.

At this point of my music ministry, my colleagues show a wonderful trust that the Spirit will inhabit the music prepared for worship. Naturally, I always give

the pastor and the Worship and Arts Committee the music selections to peek at. All selections are subject to change as the Spirit moves. That said, I believe the Spirit moves in beautiful uncton; if we are tuned in, there will generally be peace in decisions for music selection, and the music rendered will be infused with divine energy.

I would be remiss if I did not mention that even when using the *UCC Desk Calendar and Plan Book* and *Prepare! An Ecumenical Music and Worship Planner*, I find it important to rely on the most powerful tool, prayer. It's free and it works. Use it liberally in your planning, together with the two resources mentioned, and you have a tried and true recipe for success.

By the way, frequent practice helps, too.



PETER STICKNEY, D.S.M., is choral director at Cheverus High School, Cheverus, Maine; commissioned minister of music for the United Church of Christ at First Parish Church in Saco, Maine; and Kantor for the Newfield Congregational Church, Newfield, Maine. He received his Master of Music from the University of Maine and his Doctor of Sacred Music from the Graduate Theological Foundation (Mishawaka, Ind.). Peter is an active member of the American Guild of Organists and the American Choral Directors Association, and he serves on the board of the United Church of Christ Musicians Association and edits their journal *Music, Worship and Ministry*.

NEWS

NEPAL EARTHQUAKE UPDATE

The Mission and Outreach Ministry Council has collected over \$6,000 through One Great Hour of Sharing for those affected by the Nepal earthquake. The funds have been sent to Nepal through our Recommended Mission, **Indian Community Fellowship (India)**.



Building new homes

SCIENCE FAIR

In May, **Panamerican Institute (Mexico)** held its annual science fair, where 25 science projects were presented. First prize went to the team who built a hydraulic robot; second prize was won by girls who built a solar lamp. Sponsors were very generous and provided t-shirts and prizes.



Hydraulic Robot



Science Fair winners

The second-year students competed in the State Physics Contest in Ensenada. Two students went on to the National Contest and won bronze metals. Congratulations to these students.

Twenty-one students graduated from Panamerican Institute on July 4. You can sponsor a student for \$35 a month. The institute also has a new Web site: paischool.org.

NEW CHURCHES FOR CMFE

Christian Mission in the Far East (Philippines) has added two new churches. Tagbaros Calvary Church is

in Maco, Compostela Valley Province, southeast Philippines. Rev. Jaime Julian installed Rev. and Mrs. Nerio Malitoc and the church officers on June 28.



Hanging bridge to the church



Tagbaros Calvary Church members

The second church is Calvary Christian Fellowship in Nuevo, Iloco, Mawab Camual Province, in the same region of the Philippines as Tagbaros Calvary Church.



Rev. Jaime Julian, left, at the groundbreaking

They broke ground on July 13. This is a bigger building project. And they call it “a monument of our faith.” They put their trust in God to provide everything until the completion of the church building.

FACEBOOK

You can connect with many our missionaries and missions on Facebook: Elvis SaDo (Myanmar); Matthew Oladele, (Nigeria); Erlinda Julian, (Philippines); Awit Cachola-Castillo, (Philippines); Josue Marisela Hernandez (Honduras); Juanita Santos Rodríguez (Mexico); **Ministerio Vida (Honduras)**; **Morgan Scott Project for Cooperative Christian Concerns (Tennessee)**; **Indian Trails Missions, Inc. (Official) (Arizona)**; **Seafarer’s Friend (Massachusetts)**; **The Piney Woods School (Mississippi)**; **Mision Mazahua (Mexico)**.

MISSION TIDBITS

Awit and Nanny Castillo from **National Association of Congregational Churches (Philippines)** celebrated their 50th Wedding Anniversary in July.

Hosanna Industries (Pennsylvania) celebrated its 25th Anniversary.

Ministerio Vida Hospital (Honduras) delivered its first baby in May.

Congregational Church of Myanmar (Myanmar) recently celebrated its 15th anniversary with love, joy, and happiness. They are grateful to those who support them and pray for them.

Happy Life Children's Home (Kenya) is rated the #1 orphanage in the city of Nairobi. They want to start a medical clinic to take care of their children.



Congregational Church of Myanmar celebration

Piney Woods School (Mississippi) has increased enrollment by about 30 students for this academic school year.

Bread of Life Mission (Florida) had 81 children in its Vacation Bible School with help from a church from Georgia and a local Baptist church.

NEEDS

CHRISTMAS IS COMING

Yes, it may be early—but if you are giving to the missions for Christmas, early is better. Oct. 19 is the cut-off date to send funds to some of the missions.

- **Panamerican Institute (Mexico)** gives food baskets to all of their students. One basket costs \$40.
- **NACC (Philippines) and Misión Mazahua (Mexico)** give an extra month's salary to their employees for Christmas.
- **Christ to the Villages (Nigeria)** gives gifts to the widows and pastors.
- **Christian Mission in the Far East (Philippines)** needs two new chainsaws to help with the building of the new church and also to help with clearing typhoon damage.
- **Seafarer's Friend (Massachusetts)** gives out ditty bags and phone cards to the seafarers they visit.
- **Bread of Life Mission (Florida)** gives PayLess Shoes gift cards to the migrant workers.

PRAYER REQUESTS

Pray for Julio Santana of **Bread of Life (Florida)**. He had knee replacement surgery in June and is still recovering.

Pray for the two new churches affiliated with **Christian Mission in the Far East (Philippines)**.

Thank you for your support!

For more information on any of these missions; or to make a donation to any of the above projects; please contact Linda Miller at the NACCC office, 800-262-1620, ext. 1618 or lmiller@nacc.org.

**The Mission and Outreach
Ministry Council, NACCC
PO Box 288,
Oak Creek WI 53154**

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

News from the fellowship of churches

AN UNEXPECTED VISITOR DROPPED IN



The Rev. Marilyn Danielson prays over the old bell recovered from the wreckage of the church steeple after the Portland, Mich., tornado.

The steeple of First Congregational Church of Portland, Mich., became the church's most prominent pew-sitter as a result of the June 22, 2015 tornado that destroyed Portland's three historic hilltop churches and another storefront church.



Rod Sanford, Lansing State Journal

Thomas Saint-Amour

The newly-restored 109-year-old steeple became a pew-sitter at *First Congregational Church of Portland, Mich.*, on the afternoon of June 22, when a tornado sent it crashing through the roof and into the sanctuary. The 162-year-old meetinghouse was destroyed, with only the more recent fellowship hall salvageable. Three nearby churches were also leveled in the storm.

The **Rev. Marilyn Danielson**, FCC's pastor, rushed home from Salt Lake City to help confront the disaster. Many Portland residents, including Marilyn's husband, **Warren Danielson**, narrowly missed serious injury or death.

The 200-member congregation has continued to meet every Sunday—at first, in the local high school, jointly with the other dispossessed churches; then by themselves, at St. Andrew's Lutheran Church; and, starting July 19, in the church's own fellowship hall, which has been repaired enough to use.

"The response, from the NACCC, from our state associations, and from the community has been so sweet," said Danielson. "We have learned that the church is truly the people and not so much about the meeting house. There is a new appreciation for each and everyone, not only in the churches but in the community as well."

Fortunately, the church building was insured.

"While we still mourn the loss and conjure up so many precious memories," Danielson said, "we are moving forward and are convinced that God wants this church to rise again, similar but better than before. We are moving from grieving to anticipating, from dread to excitement, from looking backward to looking to the future. We believe God of resurrection will see us through. We pray we will be faithful to Him."

The NACCC has started a "One Great Hour of Sharing" appeal to help with the costs of rebuilding.

Gifts may be sent to:

One Great Hour of Sharing
c/o NACCC
P O Box 288
Oak Creek WI 53154

Make checks payable to **OGHS—Portland Tornado**

NEW MENTOR FOR CFTS STUDENTS—The **Rev. Dr. Charles Packer** became director of the *Congregational Foundation for Theological Studies* May 1. He is responsible for guiding the theological education of CFTS Fellows enrolled in a variety of accredited seminaries and ensuring their theological studies are supplemented by education on the history and polity of Congregationalism. Dr. Packer is a Biblical Studies graduate of the University of Iowa, with an M.Div. degree

from the University of Dubuque Theological Seminary and a D.Min. from the Ecumenical Theological Seminary of Detroit. He has served churches in Iowa and Michigan and has worked as a chaplain, a teaching assistant, and a librarian. His scholarly work has won major awards, and he has served



Packer in regional Congregational associations and the National Association. In addition to this new part-time appointment as an NACCC staff member, Packer is senior minister of *Pine Hill Congregational Church, Southgate, Mich.*, and serves as chaplain-director of the *Congregational Society of Classical Retreat Guides*.

SAVE THE DATES



Table Mountain, South Africa.

Photo by Damien du Toit. Licensed under Creative Commons (CC BY-NC-SA 2.0).

The *International Congregational Fellowship* will hold its 11th Quadrennial Conference in Capetown, South Africa, July 6-11, 2017, at Stellenbosch University.

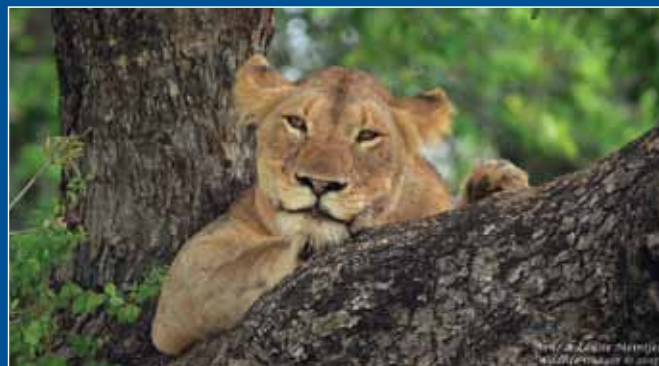
The meeting's theme is "Many people from many lands and many cultures **Called to Freedom** Through One Lord, Jesus Christ: *Freedom in Worship, Freedom of Mind, Freedom to Serve*," said the **Rev. Dr. Geraint Tudur** of Wales, moderator of the ICF.

Dr. Tudur, the **Rev. Dr. Bruce Theron**, the fellowship's moderator-elect, and 13 others from around the world gathered at Bigfork, Mont., May 22-25 to start plans for an international meeting that will fully integrate the youth and adult programs. The program outline was approved by the ICF's executive body in June, and concrete planning for the conference has begun.

The 2017 Capetown meeting will include formal presentations and a variety of experiential breakouts geared to the varied learning styles of participants. There will also be side trips to scenic Table Mountain and to Robben Island, where **Nelson Mandela** was imprisoned, plus visits with members of local Congregational churches.

Organizers are aiming for a daily conference cost of US\$48, for those using regular university accommodations. Round-trip air fare between the U.S. and South Africa ranges from \$1,100 up, and the trip may be combined with a safari or other vacation choices.

Further information will be shared at facebook.com/groups/intercong/.



African lion in Kruger National Park.

Photo by Arno Meintjes. Licensed under Creative Commons (CC BY-NC-SA 2.0).



MURIEL REAM

Muriel Elizabeth Ream, 94, died in Brookfield, Wis., on Feb. 19, 2015. She was married for 59 years to the Rev. Norman S. Ream, who served several Milwaukee-area churches and led the First Congregational Church of Wauwatosa from 1958 until his retirement in 1983.

An accomplished pianist, she played piano at a Lutheran church in Estes Park, Colo., where she and Norman lived from 1983 to until shortly before his death in 2003. She combined her love for music and poetry, composing hymns and putting some of her favorite poetry to music.

A stickler when it came to grammar, Muriel taught her children and grandchildren the distinction between “who” and “whom,” and admonished them never to leave the house without sunscreen! She was famous for her lamb roast with mint jelly and made sure no one ever left her home hungry.

“There will never be another one like her,” wrote the Rev. Burkert Cree from his home in Switzerland. “They are rejoicing to have her, now, with them—in Heaven ... her True Home.”

She is survived by four children, 11 grandchildren, and five great-grandchildren. Gifts may be made to the Ream Fund at the Congregational Home, 13900 Burleigh Road, Brookfield WI 53005; or to the Fund for American Studies, 1706 New Hampshire Ave. NW, Washington DC 20009.



HAROLD HOOD

Harold Hood, who had retired as the chief judge pro tem of the Michigan Court of Appeals, died May 5 following a battle with leukemia. He was 84.

“He was an extremely brilliant jurist,” said Lorraine Weber, executive director of the Detroit Metropolitan Bar Association Foundation. “He understood the impact of the law not just on the larger questions of our time but also in terms of how it impacts individuals, day to day.”

Mr. Hood graduated from the University of Michigan and served in the Korean War. He founded his own law firm, served as legal counsel to the City of Detroit, and by the late 1960s had become chief assistant U.S. attorney for Michigan’s Eastern District—the first person of color to serve in that role. In 1973 he was appointed judge in the city’s Common Pleas Court. There he met his wife, Lottie Jones Hood—she was his court reporter. The two married in 1977.

“He was really the same with everybody,” said Lottie, describing his even-temperedness. “He was polite and the same with the prisoners as he was with the other judges.”

Hood rose through the ranks as a judge, eventually reaching the Michigan Court of Appeals in 1982. After his retirement as chief judge pro tem, he continued to shape

policy as a trustee on the Michigan State Bar Foundation. In 2003, the year he retired, the Association of Black Judges in Michigan established a Judge Harold Hood Award, which recognizes a judge's exceptional performance.

At First Congregational Church of Detroit, where his wife became pastor, he sang in the choir, taught Sunday school, shoveled snow and even worked as head chef—a role in which he was best known for his corn casserole and barbecued beef brisket. He was also well-known and respected in the NACCC, supporting with quiet pride his wife in her many leadership roles in the period 2002-2012.

“He was what you would call a servant leader,” said Lottie Hood. “He could lead, and he could serve. I don't think he saw the difference between the two.”

Harold is survived by his wife, Lottie, a sister, a brother, and four children.

ANNE BUTMAN

Anne Leacock Butman, 68, of Hanson, Mass., died July 22, 2015. A graduate of Andover High School, the University of Massachusetts Boston, and Bridgewater State College, she was a teacher for 28 years in the Town of Hanson.

She was a member of the First Congregational Church in Hanson, where she sang in the choir and she was a member of the singing group “The Hearts” as well. She volunteered and was a member of Seafarer's Friend mission in nearby Chelsea.

She served the National Association on the Spiritual Resources Commission, the Missionary Society, the Executive Committee, the Nominating Committee, and the World Christian Relations Commission.

“Anne was gifted in making connections,” wrote her pastor, Susan Webster. “She was a staunch supporter of the NA and was responsible for getting many people involved over the years as well as making the NA more visible in our area churches.”

Anne was the wife of Peter Butman and the mother of Laura Hottleman and Jon Butman. She was preceded in death by a sister, June Leacock.

A memorial service will be celebrated Sept. 12, 2015, at 11 a.m. in the First Congregational Church, 639 High St., Hanson, Mass. Relatives and friends are respectfully invited to attend. Donations may be made in Anne's memory to the First Congregational in Hanson or the Seafarer's Friend.

THOMAS GOSSETT

The Rev. Dr. Tom Gossett, co-founder and long-time mission director of Indian Trails Missions, Inc., Payson, Arizona, passed away Aug. 1. *A full obituary notice, with photo, will be published in our December 2015 issue.*



PASTORATES AND PULPITS

ORDINATIONS

First Congregational Church, Grand Junction, Mich., ordained the Rev. Todd Van Grouw, with the concurrence of a vicinage council, June 28, 2015.

RECENT CALLS

Plymouth Congregational Church, Minneapolis, Minn., has called the Rev. Dr. Carla Bailey as senior pastor.

First Congregational Church, Akron, Ohio, has called the Rev. Nanette Pitt as senior pastor.

First Congregational Church, Vermontville, Mich., has called the Rev. Christopher Gillies as senior pastor.

Colebrook Congregational Church, Colebrook, Conn., has called the Rev. Geoffrey Smith as senior pastor.

Ventnor City Community Church, Ventnor, N.J., has called the Rev. Gene Wilkins as senior pastor.

Flatbush-Tompkins Congregational Church,

Brooklyn, N.Y., has called the Rev. Julie Johnson Staples as interim minister.

Congregational Church of the Valley, Chandler, Ariz., has called the Rev. Victor Hardy as senior pastor.

IN SEARCH

SENIOR MINISTERS

Arbor Grove Congregational Church Jackson, Mich.

Ashby Congregational Church and Hyannis Congregational Church (share pastor) Ashby and Hyannis, Neb.

Central Congregational Church Galesburg, Ill.

Congregational Church of the Chimes Sherman Oaks, Calif.

Craig Memorial Congregational Church Paradise, Calif.

First Congregational Church Ashland, Neb.

First Congregational Church Clear Lake, Iowa

First Congregational Church Roscommon, Mich.

First Congregational Church Saugatuck, Mich.

First Congregational Church Toulon, Ill.

Flatbush-Tompkins Congregational Church Brooklyn, N.Y.

First Congregational Church Marshfield, Mass.

McGraft Memorial Congregational Church Muskegon, Mich.

Orthodox Congregational Church Petersham, Mass.

Rockwood First Congregational Church Rockwood, Mich.

Plymouth Church Brooklyn, N.Y.

Second Congregational Church Jewett City, Conn.

Union Congregational Christian Church Marbury, Ala.

CALENDAR

OCTOBER 19 - General copy deadline for *THE CONGREGATIONALIST* December 2015 issue - Contact Larry Sommers, editor@nacc.org or 800-262-1620, ext. 1610.

OCTOBER 27-29 - Silent Retreat, Congregational Society of Classical Retreat Guides — Colombiere Conference and Retreat Center, Clarkston, Michigan. Contact Charles Packer, drcapacker@gmail.com or 734-755-4131.

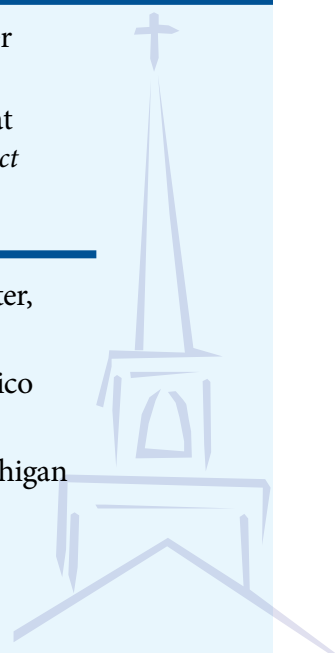
SAVE THE DATE

APRIL 4-7, 2016 - 47th Annual NACCC Ministers' Convocation—Weber Center, Adrian, Michigan. Contact Marie Steele, msteele@nacc.org or 800-262-1620, ext. 1614.

JUNE 23-30, 2016 - Missionary Assistance Corps trip to Misión Mazahua, Mexico Contact Jack Brown, pilgrim_pastor@hotmail.com or 269-749-2631.

JUNE 25-28, 2016 - NACCC 62nd Annual Meeting and Conference—Detroit, Michigan

JULY 6-11, 2017 - International Congregational Fellowship 11th Quadrennial Conference—Stellenbosch University, Capetown, South Africa



United Church of Marco Island
Marco Island, Fla.

United Congregational Church
Norwich, Conn.

INTENTIONAL TRANSITIONAL
MINISTER

First Church of Christ
Lynn, Mass.

NON-NACCC CHURCHES

Friendship Congregational
Christian Church
Baxley, Ga.

Third Avenue Congregational
Christian Church
Danville, Va.

The Beach Church
Pensacola Beach, Fla.

OUT OF BOUNDS CONTINUED FROM P. 35

Expectations on the part of minister, church members, and governing boards tend to be high—after all, it is God’s work. Yet results are rarely of Kingdom quality. At the same time, it often feels like the bottom line is just like every business—are the attendance and financial numbers looking good? This is especially difficult in today’s declining market for mainline religion.

The next article in this series will explore how to recognize burnout when it occurs and what churches and ministers can do about it.



THE REV. DR. ARLIN T. LARSON is the principal author of the NACCC’s *Misconduct in Ministry* handbook. During his 40-year career as a pastor, campus minister, teacher, and college administrator, he has worked as a volunteer and board member for numerous social agencies, including a treatment program for victims of child sexual abuse. “He and his wife, Sharon, a literacy coach for a local school district, live in Belfast, Maine, where he is secretary of the area interfaith clergy association”.

NEXT: RECOGNIZING AND DEFEATING BURNOUT

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Copy deadline for each issue is noted in the previous issue’s “Calendar” section.

Letters to the Editor are welcome. All letters may be edited for clarity and length. We regret we cannot publish or respond to all letters.

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THE CONGREGATIONALIST | ISSN 0010-5856 | Postage paid at Madison, WI 53714-9998. Published quarterly by the National Association of Congregational Christian Churches, 8473 S. Howell Ave., Oak Creek, WI 53201-0288. Periodicals postage paid at Madison, WI and additional mailings offices. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to *The Congregationalist* 8473 S. Howell Ave., Oak Creek, WI 53201-0288.

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With the exceptions stated above, the subscription price for *THE CONGREGATIONALIST* is \$15 per year, or \$75 for six bundled copies sent to one address.

Single copies may be purchased from the National Association office for \$3.75 plus \$3.20 to cover shipping and handling.

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