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The CONGREGATIONALIST

Magazine of the Congregational Way since 1849

Redeeming
the American
Dream!

UNIQUELY
POSITIONED

A Healthy
Interfaith
Study

99 YEARS OF
FAITHFULNESS

What is a
Congregational
Church?



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ON THE COVER: NACCC Houston Relief Workers (from left to right) Andy and Melanie Sheuermann from Preston City Congregational Church, Preston, CT; Dave Edwards, First Congregational Church of Saugatuck, MI; Melanie Sheuermann, Preston City Congregational Church; Michele and Jamie Nichols, First Congregational Church of Stanton, MI.

EDITORIAL STATEMENT

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Neither *The Congregationalist* nor the NACCC 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.



OUR Voyage TOGETHER

64TH ANNUAL MEETING IS NEARLY HERE!

Our annual “family gathering” for the Congregationalists of the NACCC is just around the corner. The 2018 Annual Meeting is being hosted by the California and Western States Association in San Diego. I hope you have already made your plans to be part of our annual meeting because much work and planning have been done to present speakers and workshops of benefit to the local congregations.



By Michael Chittum,
Executive Director

One of the special speakers this year is Dr. Bill Wilson, President of The Center for Healthy Churches. From his bio on the website for The Center for Healthy Churches: *He brings over 33 years of local church ministry experience to CHC . . . His denominational leadership has been extensive . . . He graduated from Murray State University, and went on to receive his Master of Divinity at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary and his Doctor of Ministry at the Graduate Theological Foundation in South Bend, Indiana. Bill is a popular speaker and writer, and he brings to his role as the leader of the work of CHC a deep passion for the local church, as well as a commitment to the health and success of both clergy and congregations. Bill's work with churches and ministers is marked by a positive and unyielding belief that Christ-centered ministry is fulfilling and relevant. His deepest desire is to encourage churches and clergy to discover a vital and vibrant future. He believes that, as difficult as it is to be the church today, there has never been a day when the church was more needed.*

Bill's presentation to us in San Diego will be as a plenary speaker so everyone at the meeting will have a chance to hear him. He will help us focus on what we can do to promote the health of our local congregation. Isn't the opportunity to hear from Bill Wilson on how your congregation can be healthier a good reason to be in San Diego for the 64th Annual Meeting of the NACCC? **JOIN US THERE!**

Grace and Peace, Michael

UNLEASHED!



Strangers AND PILGRIMS

By Marianne King

For several years, this space in the magazine has been reserved for brief bios of important Congregationalists which have been adapted from Bob Hellam's marvelous book, *The Congregational Minute*. As we near the end of that journey, we come to Harry R. Butman. Bob Hellam writes, "Dr. Butman was one of the courageous founders of our National Association, and he was one of our most influential pastors, one of the editors of *The Congregationalist* magazine, one of the moderators of our annual meetings, one of the chairmen of our Executive Committee, and one of the major historians of our movement."¹

Harry Butman was born on the East Coast -- Beverly, Massachusetts -- in 1928, and died on the West Coast -- Acton, California -- in 2005. He had significant impact on Congregationalism during his 101 years. A graduate of Bangor Theological Seminary in 1928, he was awarded the honorary degree of Doctor of Divinity by Piedmont College in 1958.

Forty years later, in 1998, Piedmont College established the Butman Chair of Religious Studies in recognition of Butman's contributions. Piedmont President Dr. James. F. Mellichamp recently called the Butman Chair "the keystone for our Department of Religion and Philosophy."

While a member of the NACCC's first Executive Committee, Butman helped resuscitate *The Congregationalist*, which had been out of print for a number of years. In the 1958 inaugural issue of the revived magazine, Butman wrote the following:

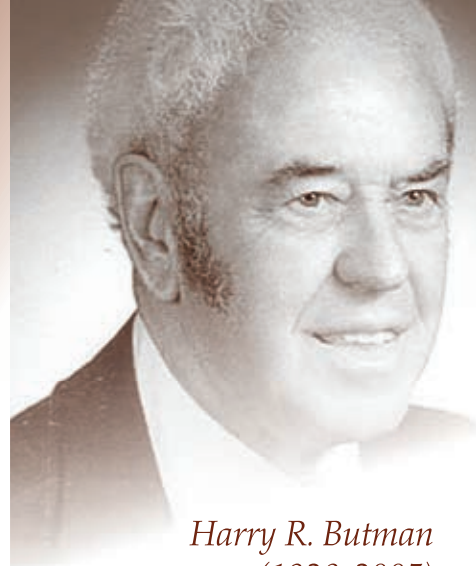
*There are those of us who yet recall the name of our paper in the great days when it was the voice of free Congregationalism. The full, and all-but-forgotten title was, "THE CONGREGATIONALIST AND HERALD OF GOSPEL LIBERTY." God grant, in the days to come, that all who cherish freedom and toil for its 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.*²

Harry Butman was a prolific author. In *The Congregational Minute*, Bob Hellam quotes from the brief biography on the back cover of one of Butman's books, *The Lord's Free People*:

*Dr. Harry R. Butman is a New Englander whose ancestral roots are deep in the Pilgrim earth. As a minister his first three pastorates were within forty miles of Plymouth Rock. When he came to Los Angeles in 1953 to become the pastor of the Congregational Church of the Messiah, he brought earth from the yard of the ancient Church at Dedham to mingle with the adobe of a California hilltop as a token of his love for the Puritan way of life.*³

Butman's friend, Mitchell Abbott, called him "the dean of American Congregationalism." His leadership of the NACCC in its earliest years and his prolific writings have helped to define the role of the NACCC and Congregationalism.

In 1977, Butman wrote the following in his paper, "Theology and Covenant in Congregationalism:"



Harry R. Butman
(1928-2005)

*As valuable as the covenant is in making it possible for the National Association to include a wide spectrum of theological opinion while remaining a fellowship, the covenant alone is not enough. It is letter, and not spirit. If our beloved National Association is to grow and witness to freedom, we must have a deep and true respect for each other's convictions, and a liberty rooted in love. Liberals must not look down their intellectual noses at conservatives, and conservatives must not hold a pharisaical attitude of pious superiority toward liberals. I once read that the medievalists had a phrase -- "Odium Theologicum" -- the hatred engendered by theological differences. It was the worst kind of loathing. It was spiritually deadly because those who indulge in that violation of the law of love thought, in Christ's cutting phase, "That they did God Service." Our fellowship has been richly blessed by God, and its witness is sorely needed in a day when organizational ecumenicity seeks to clamp creedal fetters on free minds. Let us with mutual respect and Christian love, each grant to the other the right to think of God as God leads him to do.*⁴

1 Hellam, Robert. (2012) *The Congregational Minute*, CreateSpace Publishing.

2 Butman, Harry R. (1958 February) "The Gospel We Preach." *The Congregationalist*. Vol. 1, pp. 1-2.

3 Hellam, Robert, 2012, *The Congregational Minute*, CreateSpace Publishing.

4 Butman, Harry R. (1977, June) "Theology and Covenant in Congregationalism."

www.naccc.org, Retrieved April 18, 2018.

Historic Naccc Church Gives Quincy Church Start A "New Day"

Submitted by Peter Smith

"**N**ew Day Quincy - A Christian Church" has taken a new step in its journey as a new congregation. Begun in 2015 as a daughter church of First Congregational Church in Hanson, Massachusetts, under the leadership of Rev. Joy Matos, the church met for most of that time in a Breakfast and Lunch Café in a busy area of "The City of Presidents."

The initial strategy for reaching out to local residents in the ethnically diverse neighborhood where Rev. Matos lives included literature distribution, signage, and coffee house evenings with live music. Success was limited at best, so the church planting core group gathered for a retreat to study and pray.

A new initiative was born. New Day partnered with Quincy Asian Resources, Inc., in their effort to help recent immigrants become acclimated to their new home. Representatives from the core group helped people apply for citizenship in one-day commitments. Then they took the big step: they trained and volunteered to teach ESOL -- English for Speakers of Other Languages.

From the first night, the volunteer teachers from New Day found they had students who were extremely eager to learn. One volunteer said, "They wouldn't let us take breaks! They said, 'No break, just teach.'"

Bob Cox, one of the members of the core group tells of students who were walking several miles to class, even in the rain. Marilou Hall, another core group member and a veteran school teacher, says, "One thing they tell you when you become an ESOL teacher is 'Don't become

personally involved in your students.' Forget it! That didn't happen!"

Rev. Joy Matos

*The Rev. Peter Smith (D.Min.) is Sr. Pastor of the First Congregational Church in Hanson, Mass. A member of the Mission and Outreach Ministries Council for the NACCC, Smith is also the author of *Thriving Churches Then and Now: Eight Characteristics from Church History for Pastoral Ministry*. He also enjoys caning chairs and riding a tandem bicycle with his wife, Carol.*



Offering rides to students, finding out that one had missed class because his mother was ill, and showing genuine interest in, and care for, these students -- from Myanmar, China, Venezuela and elsewhere -- led to students asking, "Where is your church? Can I come?" Soon the monthly services and the weekly Bible study were welcoming ESOL students, their family members, and their friends, to their number.

Using Alpha as their curriculum helped some of the students to make the decision to follow Jesus Christ as their Lord. Growth created a challenge, however.

The team noticed that a married couple never came together: they were alternating staying home with their children. But the café was too small to hold children's ministry. Not only that but the ESOL class had grown, creating a need to split the class to accommodate different English-speaking skill levels. A new site was needed.

Enter Union Congregational Church, in the Wollaston section of Quincy, just half a mile from the café.

Union Church was once a thriving church serving the needs of its neighborhood. In time, the neighborhood changed, but the church did not. The few members who remained, however, wanted to do something; they just didn't know how or what. When Pastor Joy approached them about the possibility of using some of their facilities for their expanding ESOL program and other ministries, Union Church enthusiastically welcomed New Day.

On Sunday, February 25, New Day Quincy held its first service in the Union Church building, complete with a Sunday School led by new members of the church plant team, mother and daughter duo Kim and Victoria Scully.

All the participants are excited about this new phase of ministry.

*Congregants worship in FCC
Clarkston's beautiful Nave*



First Congregational Church Of Clarkston Marks

187 Years

submitted by Carolyn Mills

The first weekend in February might have been Super Bowl LII, but for the First Congregational Church of Clarkston it was a celebration of 187 years as a congregation.

For the first century and a half our church was located in downtown Pontiac, Michigan. Over time, the large facility in Pontiac became difficult to handle and maintain – a target of burglaries and vandalism and expensive to heat. Furthermore, many church members were relocating north of Pontiac and drove up to 25 miles to attend worship services. With heavy hearts, the congregation voted to sell the church building in Pontiac and relocate.

For the next 20 years our beloved

former church was used as a nightclub and concert venue. A few years ago, it became a beautiful church again. It is now Grace Gospel Church, the inspiration of Rev. Kent Clark. Under his spiritual leadership, it is part of Grace Centers of Hope, where lives have been rescued, families restored, and hope renewed.

As part of our anniversary celebration, Pastor Clark invited us to come on Saturday afternoon to tour the old church that was such an important part of our history. Our pastor, Tim Chappell, who has been with us for nearly a year, was the most excited of all. It was a very heartwarming experience for the 50 or so of us who wandered through this beautifully restored church.

Pastor Clark enjoyed hearing our stories and had many of his own to tell us.

For our Sunday service Pastor Tim found a 1906 bulletin from our historical archives to follow--the same Call to Worship, the same Scripture reading and the same hymns. He even chose a robe to fit the occasion.

After a fun service we retired to our fellowship hall for a wonderful catered dinner. The tables were historically decorated by our Pastor's wife, Athena. Those members who attended the downtown church shared stories and memories.

We had a wonderful celebration thanks to the Historical Committee under the leadership of Nancy Hill, and those football fans got home in time to watch the Eagles win the Super Bowl.

Correction

We apologize for an error in the caption regarding the photo from First Congregational Church of Toulon in the March 2018 issue. Rev. Wayne C. McLeod, retired, set the record straight: "It should actually identify my friend as Pastor Ronald Toliver, who is doing an amazing job at Toulon."



A luncheon at FCC Clarkston celebrated the church's 187th anniversary as a congregation



*Church Historian Floyd Ham (left)
with Pastor Ron Tolliver (right).*

News AND NEEDS of OUR Missions

Visiting Missionaries

Spring is the time to plan for missionary visits. This year is no different. The Mission Council has invited Rev. Jaime and Linda Julian from **Christian Mission in the Far East, Philippines**, and Rev. Elvis SaDo from **Congregational Church of Myanmar**, to be our guests at the NACCC Annual Meeting and Conference in San Diego. Charles Sagay from **Mission School of Hope, Cameroon**, and possibly Rev. Charles Nyane from **Word Alive, Ghana**, will also be visiting NACCC churches..



Rev. Jaime and Linda Julian



Rev. Jaime and Linda Julian

Rev. Elvis SaDo



Work group on site in Houston: (l-r) Andy Sheuermann, Preston City CC, Preston, CT; Dave Edwards, FCC of Saugatuck, MI; Melanie Sheuermann, Preston City CC, Preston, CT; Michele and Jamie Nichols, FCC Stanton, MI.

One Great Hour of Sharing Update

Funds continue to come in for Hurricane Relief. Thanks to your donations, progress is being made. For example:

- Florence Congregational Church, Florence, Massachusetts, continues to send Life Straws water filters, batteries, and solar-powered lights to Puerto Rico. They had made 11 deliveries to the island as of March.
- The Congregational Church of Mt. Dora, Florida, was able to repair the roof of its church.
- Hosanna Industries, Pennsylvania, First Congregational Church of Stanton, Michigan, and Olivet College, Michigan (twice) have sent groups to Texas to help in its recovery from Hurricane Harvey. More groups will be going later this summer to Texas and Puerto Rico.

ECHO Workshop in East Africa

Educational Concerns for Hunger, ORG, (ECHO), N. Fort Myers, Florida, sponsors workshops around the world. March 6-8, 2018, Geoffrey Lipale and Geoffrey Lemoi, from **Pilgrim's Presence, Kenya**, attended the 3rd ECHO East Africa Pastoralist Symposium in Nanyuki, Kenya. The symposium focused on Land Tenure, Rangeland Rehabilitation and Management, and Livestock to Markets.



Geoffrey Lipale and Geoffrey Lemoi attend Symposium



Reception area at the new center.

New Medical Center

Happy Life Children's Home, Kenya, finished construction in November 2017, on the Jesse Kay Medical Center, and a dedication ceremony was held. This Center, which is directly across the courtyard, will provide care for over 50 babies and toddlers at Happy Life Children's Home, as well as medical care for the neighborhood.

Two shipping containers with medical equipment and supplies arrived at Happy Life the first week of January. The first phase of the Medical Center began operation at the end of the month, January 2018, and the Medical Center opened in February for patients. Happy Life has formed a partnership with Liberty University's Nursing School, a Christian University in Lynchburg, Virginia. Twenty-two nursing students and four professors went to Happy Life in March 2018 to provide some medical services.



For more information on any of these missions, or to donate to any of the projects, please contact Linda Miller at the NACCC Office, 800-262-1620, ext. 1618, or lmiller@naccc.org.

For a complete listing of NACCC Mission Projects, please go to our website: www.naccc.org and click on the Missions tab.

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

Mission Updates

The **Maine Seacoast Mission** continues its mission to serve Maine's island and coastal communities. Its long history (113 years) hasn't kept it from looking ahead. Mission 2020, its strategic plan, calls for new work on the islands and expanded emphasis on helping youth graduate from college and training programs.



Mission School of Hope, Cameroon, is working on one of four new school buildings for the Mission.



The Sunbeam arrives at Matinicus Harbor, Maine.

Morgan Scott Project, Tennessee, will be saying goodbye to Ella Smith on her retirement in August 2018. The new director has not been identified yet.



Prayers are Needed

We ask your prayers for Nannie Castillo, founder of the NACC **Philippines** mission, who is dealing with health concerns.

Please pray for the work groups that will be helping in the hurricane ravaged areas of Texas and Puerto Rico.

Needs

Christ to the Villages, Nigeria, is looking into large scale or commercial farming. They have purchased land, but need farm equipment, quality seeds and irrigation equipment.

Fishers of Men, Mexico, would love to have volunteers come to their mission. They also operate medical brigades, taking health care to the outlying villages. You do not need to speak Spanish to volunteer with them.

Indian Community Fellowship, India, opened a new church in Bhutan. This country is closed to Evangelism. The church worships in secret.

99 Years of



On any given Friday, you will find Phil Cook seated at the register at the North Deering Congregational Meeting House in Portland, Maine. At 99 years of age, Phil faithfully takes the orders of customers who come in to enjoy a bowl of haddock chowder, a lobster roll, a glass of punch or hot coffee and/or tea along with a time of fellowship. Phil is the guardian at the door, the first person that you see. With a big smile and hearty welcome, Phil greets the Friday faithful to a Mainer luncheon. It was during these times on Fridays that I got to know a little bit about Phil. This happened as I took a seat beside him and heard about the life of an amazing man of God.

Phil was born and raised in Calais, Maine. He grew up during the Great Depression in a section known as Milltown, a small village across from Milltown, New Brunswick, Canada. Separating these two towns is the mighty St. Croix River. Both Phil and

I have crossed this river by way of the International Bridge. I was pleased to hear this because I, too, am from Calais, Maine, though I was born 50 years after Phil. Despite the gap in time, there was much in common between my new friend and me. Phil and I both share the same experiences of walking the streets of Calais. Many of the old landmarks are still there. Both of us remember the same old stores of yesteryear -- now long gone. One particular store on Main Street right before the bridge was Tommy Andrews Tobacco Stand. Despite the deceptive name, this was a wonderful general store that I fondly remember going into as a young boy in the early 1970's with my Grandmother Dorothy. As a seven-year-old, I would look forward to a bottle of pop and a bag of chips before going over the bridge into St. Stephen, New Brunswick, to buy mustard pickles to bring home to Dad. Phil said that he graduated with Tommy Andrew's daughter Lillian in the class of 1936. With a glimmer in his eye and an impish grin, he said that Lilly was real cute! After high school, Phil joined the Army Air Corps on the eve of World War II. His life would never be the same again.

Phil trained in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, for several months to be a fighter pilot, which would take him to an air base 30 miles outside of London. Throughout the war, Phil piloted B-17 bombers in the name of liberty, flying over a Europe threatened by the dictatorial powers of Nazism. As Phil told me this story, I could see the pride in his eyes. It was as if Phil could see himself still in the cockpit almost

WWII monument in Calais, Maine

Faithfulness

by Michael W. Glidden



The Rev. Michael Glidden, D.Min, is a Member Minister at North Deering Congregational Meeting House in Portland, Maine. He has been pastoring since 1993. Rev. Glidden earned his Master of Divinity Degree in 1995 from Bangor Theological Seminary and a Doctor of Ministry Degree from Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary in 2002. He was ordained in 2000. Mike lives in Saco, Maine, with his wife Rhonda.

80 years ago. As a child, I remember at the park in Calais seeing a memorial statute to the many people who served in WWII. Many of my family are listed there; and recently I learned that Phil's name is engraved also. Seeing Phil's name as well as the others, including my family, reminded me of the great wall of faith that's listed in the Book of Hebrews. I imagined the Bible writer mentioning Phil, along with some of my family members, in this great list. Phil demonstrated faith by his acts of great courage and loyalty to his country and God. Phil struck me as a man of risk, demonstrated by his act of service. He told me that fear was never an option in doing what is right! I've realized that God desires His children to be risk takers, too. God wants us all to launch out into the sky of the unknown and bear witness to Christ's name! Phil's love of God began in his early years as a member of the Methodist-Episcopal Church in Milltown. Phil speaks fondly of going to the house of God as a boy with his family. Every Sunday, he would walk with his family up the steep hill to the little church with the steeple pointing upward to the sky. This same church is no longer Methodist-Episcopal but is now a Seventh Day Adventist church where many of my wife's (Rhonda) family attend. No matter the denomination, this church with the steeple upward on a high hill, looks down on the village and keeps it safe because of the prayers of the faithful. I could envision Phil as a young child sitting alongside his family praying.

Phil's life demonstrated the fruit of those early years. This small church played a great role in the development

of a 99-year-old man whom I consider a role model. I'm grateful that I graced the doors of North Deering because, by the providence of God, I found a friend that spoke to me about my roots and, by his great act of service, pointed me to a loving savior.

It's funny how things come full circle. Sitting beside Phil brought some consequences. He's been training me to be his replacement. Phil said that, since I am only 50 and just a young man, I'm going to take his place in the chair at the register. I realized that just showing up and pulling up a chair to have a conversation can lead to some amazing things. I wonder what stories I will share when I am 100?



Take Heed

by James P. Nichols

I recently drove home from Arizona to Michigan and took a deliberate path that led through breathtaking mountain views including Monarch Pass in Gunnison County, Colorado. One smaller joy of the drive was watching the readout from my vehicle's "instantaneous fuel economy" setting. I was getting 99 mpg for long stretches as I coasted my way down the mountain. During those stretches, I had to pump the brakes to avoid careening off the mountainside. In a similar way, it may be wise for the NACCC to pump the brakes on our collective identity lest we find it impossible to negotiate cultural and ideological curves on the road ahead.

As a newcomer to the NACCC in 2016, I asked many questions, listened to many explanations, and read nearly everything I could find pertaining to the values that govern the ethos of our association. The most oft recurring information involved an emphasis and definition of the Congregational Way and how that 400 years ago Congregationalists were oppressed within a top down Church of England system. Our original movement was responsive and corrective to the wider church's systemic shortcomings. But beyond being merely a "way," I tried to discover the NACCC's "way to what?" This is where I encountered difficulty. While searching for an elaboration on the balance of our identity, I kept running into terms like "autonomy" and "liberty." It became clear that the second and third Cs in our moniker are harder to pin down than the first. I became persuaded that predominate definitions portray us more as a National Association of Congregationalists

and less as a nationwide fellowship of Christian churches.

Within our Separatist history, there is little confusion as to what our ancestors were against. The Pilgrims fled, and few will dispute what they were fleeing from. To fully appreciate what they aspired toward, an historian might begin with the Separatist objections and deduce inversely. Modern Congregationalists are proud of our liberty for interpreting the Gospel and this freedom is ensconced in original Separatist objections. However, a careful examination as to what undergirded those original objections will show that nowhere was there a belief that Gospel definition was arbitrary. Puritan writings demonstrate that Gospel definition rests solely upon the pages of the Bible.

Our heritage has a rich love of the Scriptures. In fact, from Luther to Robinson and Browne, every instance of protest was motivated by an unequivocal commitment to biblical authority. When objections against the wider church were leveled it was never from puritanical groupthink or socially motivated discontentment, but from deeply held convictions that had grown from the study of God's Word. It cannot be over emphasized that historical Congregationalists risked their lives because of convictions forged within a commitment to the Bible as the highest authority by which every spiritual claim must be validated. As an association of Christian churches, we would be well served to reinvigorate this commitment through joyful and frequent declarations of our love for the Bible, focus upon its reading and exposition at association

gatherings, forthright advocacy of its diligent study, and clear, unequivocal, unashamed, and oft repeated declarations that the churches of the National Association of Congregational Christian Churches are molded and shaped by its teaching.

The Apostle Paul clearly states that the Word of God is valuable for reproof, correction, doctrine and instruction in righteousness (2 Timothy 3:16). He also warns about the existence of false teaching and unwitting departures from orthodoxy. These were realities then and are no less realities today. In my brief time in the NACCC, I have detected a reluctance to entertain the possibility that any among our ranks may be in error. This has led me to wonder whether an emphasis on freedom-to-interpret combined with a regular disavowal of creeds as a litmus test for fellowship have together created a wide-open door for unaccountable theology. In her work, *The Art and Practice of the Congregational Way*, the Rev. Dr. Elizabeth Mauro writes, "Congregationalists have long embraced the idea that in God's eyes, all of the faithful are spiritual equals" (p.13). What would we suppose is the basis for this idea but the Scriptures, of course? Spiritual equality among all people is a doctrine firmly established in the Bible (cf. Gal. 3; Col. 3; 1 Pet. 2). But this is only the beginning of what it means to be Christian. Simply because priests and ploughboys share equal privilege to read the Bible and follow the Spirit into truth, it does not mean they will do so error free. As Mauro goes on to point out, equality before Christ is not the same thing as spiritual maturity. Neither priest nor



Rev. Dr. James P. Nichols is pastor at First Congregational Church in Stanton, Michigan. He and wife Michelle have raised their three children in Stanton since coming to pastor FCC in 2002.

ploughboy are self-ruled individualists with carte blanche rights to live above correction. Enter the historic creeds.

Separatist creeds, while never compliance mandates, nonetheless existed and were broadly affirmed standards. It is difficult to imagine a 17th century religious group seeking to be numbered among the ranks of Puritans while publicly denying tenets of the Savoy Declaration. "Yes," one modern Congregationalist might be swift to point out, "but, even the Savoy Declaration is never above scrutiny." Granted, but scrutiny by what standard? Without pumping the brakes via front-and-center declarations of the Scriptures as our final authority, the NACCC could easily become a syncretized smorgasbord of religious ideology and more a doppelganger to contemporary mainline religion than to our Puritan ancestors.

Freedom is a blessed two-sided reality. The NACCC's publicized persona is clear that all congregations enjoy it, and our corporate understanding is relatively monolithic on the question "freedom from what?" Now that we are fully free from that which burdened original

Separatists, we must seek to answer the question, "freedom to what?" Unless we come to close agreement our corporate identity will remain based in polity. Jesus died for more than that. If our association is more about Pilgrim history and less about shared Christology, how can we hope to come close to the "one faith" or "one Lord" unity of Ephesians 4:1-5?

Could heresies ever leak in and corrode churches of the NACCC? Consider Israel. Did she not lose her way without the objective written law to guide her? It wasn't until the teachings of the sacred scrolls were restored under the leadership of King Josiah that Israel regained a measure of favor in God's sight (2 Kings 22). Declaring ourselves an association of Christian Churches without sufficiently defining either "Christian" or "Church" is a grave risk to our future. While the first C in our abbreviated name serves to define our history, the latter two Cs will define our future. Loyalty to Scripture is the only epistemological safeguard and it is entirely consistent with our heritage. Mauro also observes that early Pilgrims

and Puritans "relied upon the Bible as the 'ultimate source and authority for Christian truth'" (p.29).

It is an indisputable fact that Christianity by any definition is understood first and foremost from the sacred pages of Scripture. For the NACCC to more clearly define "Christian" and "Churches" we would be wise to follow suit. May we open God's Word together and search for His definition on these matters? May we prayerfully study within the shadow of the Savoy Declaration, affirming that which our forebearers affirmed and straying only when compelled by biblical evidence? May we engage in thoughtful and respectful conversation about the meaning of the Gospel as taught by Bible writers? May we lovingly call to repentance those who have strayed far afield? Local churches may vary slightly in the final analysis on non-essentials but never in the basic, non-negotiable and foundational commitment that God's Word always has the final word. Historical Congregationalists would hasten to agree.



Monarch Pass along U.S. 50 is considered one of Colorado's most scenic views.



Common Sense Guide to a

Romantic Relationship

by Len Capobianco

I originally developed suggestions for determining compatibility for a singles group in my congregation. The concept seemed to snowball and evolved into advice that divorced people found helpful when assessing their past marriage to avoid similar mistakes in their next relationship. You are welcome to use all or any part of it if you find it useful.

Even God wants us to make good choices when we seek a relationship:

Do not be yoked together with unbelievers. For what do righteousness and wickedness have in common? Or what fellowship can light have with darkness? (2 Corinthians 6:14)

It's absolutely amazing how many people become romantically involved only to later find severe problems with their new partner. So much heartache can be avoided by simply asking questions of a potential partner. How best can we tell the difference between what could be a loving relationship or a hurtful one? The answer is found in these time-proven words of wisdom: Never fall in love with someone before you truly know them.

"But I want love to be spontaneous, not scientific!"

Being careful before you let a stranger into your life does not take romance away. It's just plain common sense to protect yourself and find out who this person is. For example, you'd be surprised how many people never ask basic questions such as: "Why did your previous relationships end?" "Were you ever in trouble with the law?" "Have you had any serious physical or emotional problems?"

Unfortunately, some people will give dishonest answers by lying or telling you what they think you want to hear. To help avoid such deception, first try to get their opinions on various subjects. Talk about yourself later. This shouldn't be a problem because any reasonable person would think you're just interested in knowing about them. If someone objects to your polite curiosities or gives half-answers, then a big red flag should go up in your mind.

"But I don't want to question everyone I date."

That's fine if it's only a casual date. Bear in mind, if it's True Love you seek, casual dating is counter productive. Why waste time on someone who isn't

a potential true partner? Why take the emotional and physical risk of becoming involved with someone who looks good on the surface only to wake up one day and realize you're not really compatible, or, there was never any intention on the other's part of making a real commitment.

"Isn't a partial relationship better than being alone?"

The answer to that age-old question is to understand the difference between being 'alone' and being 'lonely'. Millions of people through the ages have learned to live alone and still lead satisfying lives. Ask yourself if you'd rather live alone in peace, or, live with someone who is continually causing you emotional or physical harm?

If money made people happy, then everyone with money would be happy, and that is simply not true. If good looks made people happy, then all beautiful people would be happy, and that also isn't true. A handsome or wealthy man may be a strong attraction at the start of a relationship yet will become repulsive if he suddenly begins to abuse you mentally or physically. A beautiful woman will quickly turn ugly in your eyes if she's unfaithful or uninterested.

The sentiment 'love is enough' has caused many a heartbreak. The truth is, love isn't enough. Good relationships have love of course, but that's only one ingredient. Successful marriages also have compatibility, communication, patience, forgiveness, compromise, and a healthy sense of humor. But by far, the most important elements are shared values, and mutual commitment.



Reverend L. J. Capobianco is an ordained Christian Minister. He previously held positions as an Assistant Director for the United Cerebral Palsy Association, pre-school teacher to minority children, ski tour guide, and is a U.S. Air Force veteran. In his mid-thirties he felt the call to enter the ministry and earned degrees from Temple University and Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary then served as a church pastor until his retirement. He currently lives in Wisconsin and volunteers as chaplain for the county sheriff's office. He has authored two novels.

The attached Compatibility Comparison is intended as a guideline. You may add your own questions to this list. Score the answers with a 1-10-point system. For example, let's say you're not a sports fan but your partner has a casual interest. The score would be a -1. However, if you don't care for sports and he's a sports fanatic spending much of his time watching sports on TV or going to games, the score would be -10. If both of you love sports the score would be +10.

Be most careful to prioritize the answers. For example, a score of -10 on wanting pets is far, far less significant than -10 on wanting children. Make every effort to score as objectively as possible. Absolutely avoid skewing the results because you're infatuated by some superficial characteristics. You would only be cheating yourself, and honestly, just where do you think that will get you?

“No perfect person exists so how can two imperfect people make a perfect relationship?”

We must be realistic in our pursuits. There are no 'perfect' relationships but there are many wonderful, loving ones. The attached Compatibility Comparison will help you weed out the 'far less than perfect' and increase your probability of finding someone 'close to perfect.' After you total the plus and minus columns your decision on whether to pursue a potential relationship will become so much clearer.

Compatibility Comparison

Questions	- 1 to 10	+ 1 to 10
1. What kind of music do you listen to?		
2. What kind of TV programs do you watch?		
3. What are your favorite films?		
4. What do you do for fun? (Sports, other activities)		
5. What friends do you associate with & how often?		
6. How close are you to your family?		
7. What obligations do you have to your family?		
9. What are your personal & professional goals in life?		
10. How do you plan to reach your goals?		
11. Were you ever in trouble with the law?		
12. Do you take drink or drugs – if so, how much?		
13. Do you gamble – if so, how much?		
14. How do you handle finances?		
15. What are your political views?		
16. What are your religious beliefs?		
17. What do you think about marriage?		
18. What do you think about owning pets?		
19. What do you think about having children?		
20. Have you had any serious physical or emotional problems?		
21. What upsets you the most and why?		
22. How do you handle things when you get angry?		
23. Why did your previous relationships end?		
24. What is your real opinion of yourself?		
25. Why do you want to date me?		
TOTALS:		
	-	+

A HEALTHY *Interfaith Study*

by Daniel J. Kidder-McQuown



David Frank, Rev. Jerry Turner, Rev. Kidder-McQuown, the facilitators. Display in back is of the Ten Commandments at Temple Beth Israel in Jackson, Michigan

In February 2018, Arbor Grove Congregational Church engaged in a study with Temple Beth Israel (Reform Judaism) on the theme of health. Both our congregations are located in Jackson, Michigan, and have shared a friendship for decades. Over four different weeknights in February, we looked at what the Bible and our two traditions have to say about healthy families, heart, finances, and mind. We alternated locations, meeting twice at Arbor Grove (facilitated by me) and twice at Temple Beth Israel (facilitated by David Frank).

Our discussions covered some familiar themes. With family, we looked at Deuteronomy 6:1-9, Luke 9:46-48, and the Creation stories from Genesis. We talked about the importance of our religious traditions at home, and the

role of church or temple in supporting the home. We shared stories about how healthy family life has been central to Jewish and Congregational histories. When discussing heart health, we looked again at Deuteronomy 6:1-9, as well as Leviticus 19 and Luke 6:43-45. Rabbi Norman Roman showed us how heart health is built into the Hebrew language, and its centrality in Jewish tradition. With finances, we looked at Ecclesiastes 7:12, Matthew 25:14-30, and Proverbs 13:25. We discussed the question of motivation to give, including duty, charity, and supporting one's congregation. We talked about an individual's attitude towards money and poverty. In our last session (on "healthy mind") we looked again at Deuteronomy 6:1-9, as well as Mark 5:1-20 and a number of excerpts from Jewish scholars. We discussed how love (the heart) is connected with learning (the mind) for well-being. We shared how moderation and balance are essential for mental health in both our traditions.

There were many great insights. For those of us from Arbor Grove, we learned a great deal of appreciation about how Jewish teaching is passed down, including the discussions (and debate) between Jewish scholars over the centuries. For example, in talking about healthy finances, we discussed the

maxim from Rabbi Elazer ben Azariah from the Pirkei Avot: "If there is no flour, there is no Torah; if there is no Torah, there is no flour." This deepened our conversation about poverty and the role of religion. We were also impressed that the members of Temple Beth Israel really wanted to know about the Congregational tradition and teachings. For example, they saw a lot of common ground when we shared about freedom as an inherent Congregational value and key to "health."

Over the course of our four studies, we heard from a cardiologist, sampled some wine from Israel, grew as friends and colleagues, and laughed a lot.

In preparing for the study, Rev. Jerry Turner (Arbor Grove) and I investigated whether there is a body of resources within the NACCC for historical and current reference on Congregational traditions of health. While we did not do extensive research, it seemed to us this is an area for further scholarship and discussion in Congregational tradition.



The Rev. Daniel Kidder-McQuown has been senior minister of Arbor Grove Congregational Church in Jackson, Michigan since 2015. He was ordained in 2000, and has served as church pastor, hospital chaplain, and college chaplain in the past. His Master of Divinity is from Princeton Theological Seminary. Daniel is originally from Springfield, Illinois.

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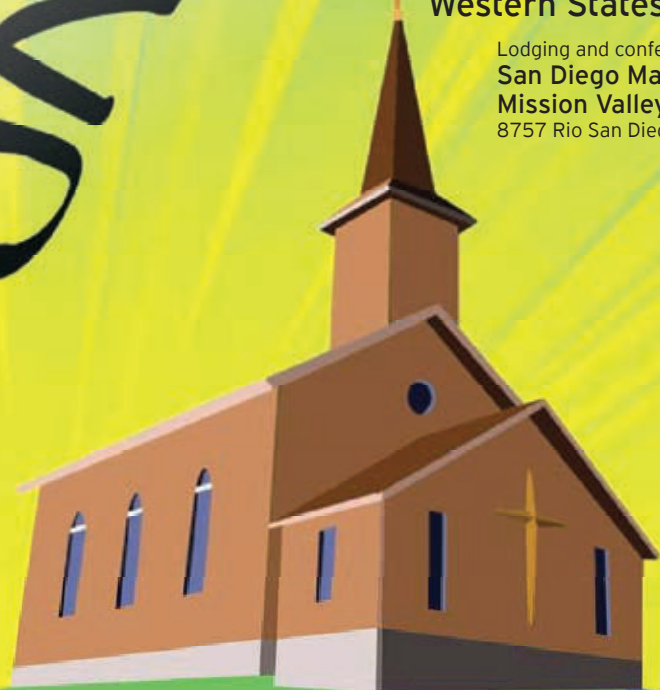
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...and you
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Acts 1:8



UNIQUELY POSITIONED

(Opportunities for the Small Town/Rural Congregation)

by Lawrence H. Balleine

"We're just a stepping stone for young ministers."

"We just can't seem to hang on to our young people. If we are lucky enough to keep them after confirmation, we are certain to lose them after their high school graduation."

These two laments are spoken often by members of small town/rural congregations. The comments may be well-founded. For two conditions frequently exist that give rise to them:

First, small town/rural congregations often have fewer than two hundred members and, sometimes, much less than that. Their financial resources are frequently limited. And, if they are fortunate to call a full-time pastor, he or she is often fresh out of seminary or divinity school and commonly serves only a few years before moving on to what is usually a more lucrative position. Thus, it is not surprising that when this is the repeated experience of a small town/rural congregation it will consider itself a "stepping stone."

Second, young people from small town/rural churches often leave their

hometowns shortly after they graduate from high school. Job opportunities are frequently limited in small town/rural settings forcing young people to seek employment elsewhere. Some leave for college and do not return after receiving their degrees. So too, young people from small towns/rural areas are regularly attracted by the mystique of the big city, and they will follow through on a statement they may have uttered in their mid-teens: "I'm going to get out of this town and go where the action is."

These two conditions have existed for several decades. And yes, they have often resulted in the above-mentioned laments: the inability of small town/rural congregations to keep pastors for an extended period and to retain their young people beyond high school. A further result is a disparaging self-assessment wherein many small town/rural congregations view themselves as inferior to larger congregations in larger communities or suburbs. And frequently, this self-appraisal can lead small town/rural congregations to embrace a maintenance or survival mode, and a failure to recognize their unique mission opportunities.

Is there any way that small town/rural congregations can cease to view these two realities as limitations, but see them as unique opportunities, and thus transform these perceived negatives into

positives? I believe there is....

When the pastor of the small town/rural congregation is serving his/her first congregation after completion of seminary or divinity school and is "out in the real world for the first time" following seven or eight years in higher education, that novice pastor may be like a tender shoot who needs further nutrition and maturation. Such an environment where he or she can continue to grow and develop can be provided by members of the congregation he or she serves. Moreover, theological seminary or divinity school training doesn't teach all there is to know about ministry. Certainly, internship and field education placements required by many seminaries are extremely beneficial to the development of any pastor, yet they commonly do not prepare one for everything that one encounters upon becoming a full time or resident pastor. Small town/rural congregations may be uniquely positioned to engage in this important "growth process" by being the crucible where these "first call" pastors become better pastors. How? By being a place where "rookie" pastors can make mistakes and learn from them; a place where they can discover what approaches are helpful and useful and which are not; a place where they can hone their skills and discover their unique strengths, gifts, and talents as well as limitations



Lawrence H. Balleine is a 1975 CFTS graduate who has served as Congregational and UCC pastor for forty-three years. The majority of his ministry has been with small town/rural congregations.

and areas that need improvement; and a place where they can learn much about human nature and relationships and how to bring God into those relationships.

However, it takes patience on the part of the congregation to bear with its pastor as he/she makes plenty of rookie mistakes. And it takes willingness on the part of these pastors to receive the gentle guidance of the congregation. It is often said that the first congregation a pastor serves can either “make” or “break” that pastor. Therefore, it is important that when those in a pastor’s first congregation have complaints about the pastor, they render their criticism in a constructive manner. And when that pastor errs, he or she should be the recipient of both patience and forgiveness. (Unless the gravity of the offense merits expulsion.) For if this first pastor is treated with respect, he or she will generally accept such constructive criticism and address the problem area, seeking to remedy it. Such caring and fair treatment of that pastor will be beneficial to both the pastor and the congregation, for the “short run” as well as the “long haul.” And such caring of the pastor will be that small town/rural congregation’s gift to the wider church after that pastor leaves, for it will have helped to “make” that pastor.

On the contrary, there have also been “first” congregations who have treated

their beginning pastors so poorly and disrespectfully that they have left the ministry after serving only this first congregation.

In some cases, these pastors may not have been cut out to withstand the rigors of pastoral ministry; but in others, the pastors (and/or their families) have simply been the subject of too much unkindness and unfair criticism. These are instances in which the small town/rural congregation does a great disservice to both itself and the wider church.

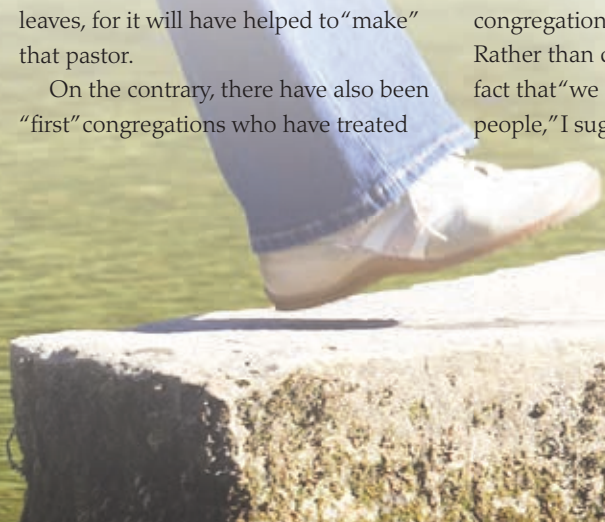
Thus, the first congregation a pastor serves can help to further educate, strengthen, and shape that pastor, further equipping him or her for ministry. And so, when he or she leaves that situation, it’s as a more capable pastor. Accordingly, his or her second call or position and any subsequent congregation he or she serves benefits from the input, training and nurturing provided by that first congregation. And the first congregation (often rural and/or small town and still apt to call itself a “stepping stone”) can provide a great service not only to the novice pastor, but to any future congregation that pastor serves.

What about the second dilemma often faced by many small town/rural congregations: losing their young people. Rather than continually bemoaning the fact that “we are losing all our young people,” I suggest that members of

small town/rural congregations see this mobility as their unique opportunity to “send out” their young people. That the small town/rural congregation embrace its responsibility to nurture and prepare its young people so well that when they do leave – assuming their departure is inevitable -- these young people not only carry with them a solid faith foundation upon which they will continue to grow, but will also possess a willingness to share their gifts and talents in their new locations.

Recently I saw a Facebook post that included a photo of Sarah, a young woman who grew up in our small town congregation in rural Wisconsin. Sarah is now in her mid 30’s and lives with her spouse and five children in Illinois. There she has become active in a local congregation. The photo shows her at the pulpit of her “new” congregation where she was coordinating the church’s Vacation Bible School. It was at that moment I realized: “We didn’t lose her! We sent her! We equipped her and sent her out with a solid faith foundation such that she now shares her gifts in another place.” Certainly, this is an important role small town/rural congregations can embrace and celebrate.

And so, while small town/rural congregations have the opportunity to refine and send out their pastors who are often serving their first parish to serve in subsequent congregations, they also have the chance to send out their young people to enrich the lives of other congregations. It is the small town/rural congregation that is uniquely positioned to fulfill this important mission.



What is a CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH?

by Robert Hellam

If you have attended any of our Annual Meetings, you know that each year the delegates are given a list of new churches that have been accepted into the National Association of Congregational Christian Churches. There is never any information given about those churches, beyond their addresses and the fact that they have been recommended for membership by the Leadership Council.

Whatever criteria that are followed by the Council in making their decisions are not shared with the membership at the Annual Meeting. Our task, which we routinely and obediently perform, is merely to rubber-stamp the Council's decision.

Has anyone else found this routine to be unsatisfying? If so, surely your reaction, like mine, stems from the lack of definition of what exactly it means to be a Congregational church as "Congregational church" is understood by our National Association. It can't be true that polity is the only issue involved, because there are other denominations with a congregational form of church government (like Baptists, for example), and we don't see them as Congregationalist organizations. Is there anything beyond polity that unites us as Congregationalists, anything essential to a recognition that a congregation is a true Congregational church?

Recently I had a very pleasant visit with Dr. Doug Gray of the Vitality Ministry Council. When I told him that I had sent an e-mail addressing this issue to the leadership of our regional association, he suggested that my message might be the basis for an article in *The Congregationalist*. In hope that this is so, I am quoting the e-mail below:

I have been challenged to identify what my vision is as the new moderator of the Northern California Fellowship of Congregational Christian Churches. One of my goals is that we all have a better understanding of what unites us as Congregationalists. What beliefs and practices do we have in common that are uniquely embodied in a Congregationalist association?

*Robert Hellam lives in Seaside, California, with his wife, Constance. A retired Federal employee, Bob taught for 15 years at Monterey Bay Christian School in Seaside. He is now senior pastor at Church of the Oaks in Del Rey Oaks, California. Bob also served as a chaplain (captain) with the California State Military Reserve from 2011 through 2015 (with prior active duty as an enlisted man in the U.S. Navy). Bob earned his BA in English and his teaching credential from San José State University, his Master of Divinity degree from Western Seminary, and the Doctor of Ministry degree from Trinity Theological Seminary. Bob is a member of the Monterey Bay Colony of the Society of Mayflower Descendants. He has published a number of books, including *The Congregational Minute*, and is an accomplished poet.*



To that end, I offer for discussion certain statements of what Congregationalism is, or should be, that are either what I have heard or read from fellow Congregationalists or are reasonable facsimiles thereof. Do we agree with any one of them, or do we combine two or more, or do we reject them all as either false or insufficient?

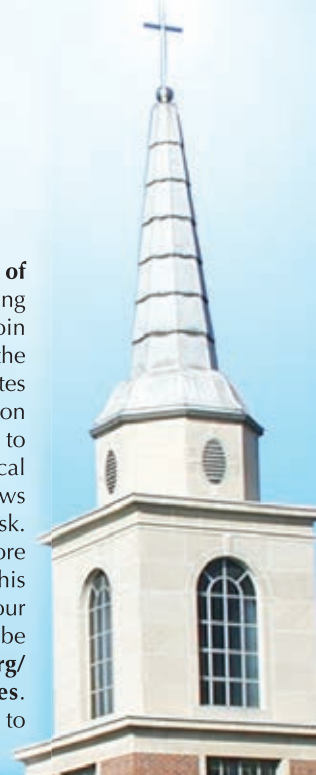
- 1) "We are all about the Social Gospel—nothing more, nothing less."
- 2) "As Congregationalists, we do not have to believe anything; we can even believe nothing at all, if that is our preference."
- 3) "We don't care what the Bible says. We think for ourselves."
- 4) "We care only about what the Bible says. Christian tradition is not important."
- 5) "The Reformed tradition is all we need. We don't care what the Church said before the year 1517."
- 6) "We are a non-creedal association. There is no place for creeds and other liturgy in our worship."
- 7) "We are not the church of the Pilgrims and Puritans anymore. We prefer a completely liturgical service, including creeds, rejecting long sermons and extemporaneous prayers."
- 8) "Our churches are autonomous. We are free to be whatever we want, without limits or qualifications. What we believe and what we do might include teachings and practices from non-Christian religions, if we so choose."

Most of you have recognized the satiric intent of the above "definitions" of Congregationalism. If "Congregational" can mean virtually everything, does it mean anything? Can we survive as an association without more clarity? The default position often is that we are distinguished by our polity, but churches that are dually affiliated--UCC and NACCC--believe even that desperate attempt to elucidate what it means to be united as Congregationalists.

Seeking a Minister



First Congregational Church of Royal Oak (Michigan) is seeking a **full-time Senior Minister** to join us on a journey to discover the meaning of the Gospel as it relates to our daily lives. This person may not have all the answers to life's theological, philosophical and moral questions, but knows the important questions to ask. A vacancy notice with more detailed information about this position opportunity and our 300-member church can be found at <http://www.fccro.org/welcome-to-fcc/opportunities>. Inquiries may also be directed to FCCROSearch@gmail.com.





Redeeming the American Dream: The Gilded Age

by Norm Erlandson

The Social Gospel movement of the late 19th century was an attempt to preserve the promise of the American Dream for "the least of those who lived among us" during America's Gilded age. Its leaders, including Washington Gladden and Walter Rauschenbusch, shined a light on the grim faces of millions of working poor for whom the American Dream was truly becoming an impossible dream.

In the 1930s James Truslow Adams coined the phrase "American Dream." He defined the Dream as "the vision of a better, deeper, richer life for every individual, regardless of the position in society which he or she may occupy by the accident of birth. It has been a dream of a chance to rise in the economic scale... unhampered by unjust restrictions... and the hope of bettering the physical conditions of living, and of lessening the toil and anxieties of daily life."¹

Adam's catchphrase was new, but the idea was not. The concept of an American Dream has been traced all the way back to John Winthrop's Puritan dream of making New England a "shining city upon a hill."²

The Social Gospel movement began as a Christian response to the political and economic forces that drastically transformed America in the decades between 1860 and 1900. This was an era that saw the rise of big business and big cities. America underwent the greatest changes in its history. In a mere 40 years, the nation of small towns and small farms became the world's greatest industrial power. The percentage of people living in cities increased from 25% to 40%. The nation's population doubled, its Gross National Product quadrupled, and the size of its cities exploded.

By 1895 the American agrarian economy was transformed by giant industrial corporations that only came into being after the Civil War. They were run by moguls whose personal fortunes approached the billion-dollar mark and whose lifestyles rivaled or exceeded those of the fabled royal families of old Europe. These Captains of American Industry and Finance lived in the spotlight of the press and were regarded as national heroes. But their fortunes were built on the sweat and blood of the millions of men, women, and children whom they employed to work in their mines and factories 12 to 14 hours a day, six or seven days a week, for a mere three to five dollars per week.

In his book, *The Good Old Days*, Otto Bettmann wrote: "Profits were enormous against meager wages—never before had the rich been so rich and the poor so poor—an imbalance that, by 1890, helped one percent of the population own as much as the remaining 99 percent put together."³

ed Age Gospel of Social Salvation

A REDEMPTIVE VISION FOR SOCIETY

Washington Gladden (1836-1918) and Walter Rauschenbusch (1861-1918) were leading voices who addressed the desperate plight of a rapidly growing underclass of wage earning industrial workers and their families.

Gladden wrote *Working Men and Their Employers* in 1876. Thirty years later Rauschenbusch wrote, *Christianity and the Social Crisis*, the single most influential book produced by the Social Gospel movement. It was the product of ten years of ministering to the poor in the Hell's Kitchen section of New York City, followed by ten years of theological reflection on the social implications of Jesus' teaching about the kingdom of God. Rauschenbusch came to believe that America was facing its greatest social crisis. He argued persuasively that the well-being of laboring families and democracy itself were put at risk by the new industrial order because it denied them a living wage and the opportunity for social advancement.

The Social Gospel reformers were motivated to action by a redemptive vision for America. The singular contribution of the Social Gospel to Christian thought was its insight that sin has a corporate dimension that corrupts social institutions just as thoroughly as it corrupts and hardens the hearts of sinful individuals.

Evangelical revivalists denounced as sins the popular pastimes of the working class, such as smoking, gambling, and dancing. Social Gospel preachers did, too, but they also condemned the systemic

injustices that allowed for monopolistic business practices and price fixing by giant corporations. They warned that the concentration of immense wealth in the hands of a few would subvert the democratic process. They protested when business made profit maximization its Iron Rule at the expense of the Golden Rule, which seeks the good of all. They denounced the boom and bust economy that created unstable social conditions in which unemployment, crime, disease, alcoholism, and prostitution flourished. They were troubled by the powerlessness of workers to improve their circumstances. Most disturbing was their realization that the traditional American values of thrift and honest hard work, leading to a better, richer life could no longer be relied on as it had been in previous generations.

THE WAY WE ONCE WERE

The celebration of free labor and the American work ethic was a popular theme in early America. In an 1855 address, Henry Ward Beecher said with pride:

Among us, and from the beginning, work has been honorable. It has been honorable to dig, to hew, to build, to reap, to wield the hammer at the forge, and the saw at the bench. It has been honorable because our people have been taught that each man is set to make the most of himself. The crown for every victory gained in a struggle of skill or industry over matter is placed upon the soul; and thus, among a free people industry becomes education. Go where you will a Yankee is a working creature. He is the honeybee of mankind. But with all this



Walter Rauschenbusch

Redeeming the American Dream: The Gilded

*industry, you shall find nowhere on earth so little drudging work as in the North.*⁴

In 1850 the American Dream loomed large on the American landscape. By the 1870s dark clouds had gathered on the horizon in the land of opportunity. From the beginning of the 19th century to the Civil War the American Dream for the working man was steady advancement toward "self-sufficiency" through his labor.

After the Civil War, when the factory system rapidly replaced small artisan producers, there was a sharp increase in drudging, dead end work, and a steep decline in opportunities for social advancement by workers. As the promise of the Dream faded for millions of these new industrial workers, the Dream lived on in the popular imagination undiminished. There was no great outcry by the general public. The prosperity of the nation as a whole increased at an astonishing rate. Factory produced goods became plentiful and cheap, even as wages remained oppressively low. The generation that witnessed great leaps in technological innovation and mass production marveled at what had been done in their lifetime. They were transfixed by an optimistic expectation of a bright future that held the promise of

even greater prosperity and spectacular achievements, while the wretched working poor and people of color among them remained largely invisible.

THE DREAM IN DECLINE

Wealth disparity, social injustice and widespread want among the lower working classes contributed to the "present crisis" which Walter Rauschenbusch described in *Christianity and the Social Crisis*. He believed the chief cause of the crisis was income inequality between capital and labor, a disparity that was also subversive to American democracy:

*If a class arrives at economic wealth, it will gain political influence and some form of representation. If therefore we have a class that owns a large part of the national wealth...it is idle to suppose that this class will not see to it that the vast power exerted by the machinery of government serves its interests. And, if we have a class which is economically dependent and helpless, it is idle to suppose that it will be allowed an equal voice in swaying political power.*⁵

Washington Gladden was another whose eyes were not blind to the plight of the laboring classes. He grew to adulthood in the years leading up to the Civil War and witnessed the

changes to American society in the decades following.

*It is not very many years since society in this country was quite homogeneous; the economical distinction between capitalist and laborer was not clearly marked, for most capitalists were laborers and most laborers were capitalists; the social distinction was not emphasized; there was really but one social class. But our material progress has given full scope to the principle of differentiation; the wage workers are now distinctly marked off from employers and capitalists; labor itself has become highly specialized, and even the old mechanical trades are split into fractional parts through the use of machinery; industrial groups are numerous, separate, disparate; the lines of social distinction are sharply drawn.*⁶

The leaders of the Social Gospel movement saw the American Dream as something that made America great in a Christian sense. Belief in the Dream affirmed the fundamental Christian values of opportunity for personal redemption and betterment, as well as advancing a greater social good and the kingdom of God. The purpose of the dream was to "lift up the lowly and fill the hungry with good things."⁷ Christian social reformers like Rauschenbusch embodied the communitarian ideals of John Winthrop, "we must delight in each other, make others' condition our own, rejoice together, mourn together, labor and suffer together. . ."⁸ In the Gilded age, when it was every man for himself, too many were trapped in their miserable lowly estate. Too many remained hungry sick, and tired with no one to sympathize with them and lift them up.

In the 1870s and '80s the American

ed Age Gospel of Social Salvation

CONTINUED

Labor Movement began to gain momentum on a national scale around a dream to improve the lives of the millions of wage earning men, women and children across all trades and industries. Unionization was their response to cutthroat business practices which kept wages at rock bottom levels. They worked long hours at repetitive, strenuous tasks, in factories where working conditions were unsafe and unsanitary. The specialization of factory labor robbed the free laborer of his opportunity to become an independent craftsman and capitalist. The factory system reduced labor to many small steps in a manufacturing process.

Workers had absolutely no bargaining power because businesses pitted their employees against the steady stream of unemployed immigrants who flooded into American cities by the millions eager to do any work at any wage. In fact, working men, women and children were caught in a perfect storm of stubborn social forces that held them in the firm grip of subsistence-level living. Their plight was made worse by severe fluctuations in the business cycle that threw millions out of work for months or years at a time, and downturns were seized upon by employers as opportunities to reduce the hours and wages of the laborers they continued to employ.

The Knights of Labor was founded in 1869 to give workers a united and more powerful voice. A general assembly convened by the Knights in 1878 adopted a vision statement calling for uniting of working people regardless of trade, race or gender into one national labor union, and the creation of a just society in which



moral worth, not wealth was the measure of greatness, and where labor and capital cooperated for a common national good that served the interests of all. Added to this proclamation was a list of short term goals:

- The abrogation of all laws that do not bear equally upon capital and labor.
- The enactment of laws to compel chartered corporations to pay their employees weekly, in full, for labor performed during the preceding week.
- The prohibition of the employment of children in workshops, mines, and factories before attaining their fourteenth year.
- To secure for both sexes equal pay for equal work.
- The reduction of the hours of labor to eight per day.⁹

WHOSE DREAM IS IT?

In the 1880s and '90s, these reform measures were loudly criticized as radically contrary to the traditional American values of free labor and *individual initiative*. The popular attitude toward labor lagged far behind new workplace realities.

Another cultural headwind that blew back against the demands of organized labor was the rising influence of the Horatio Alger dime novels that cultivated a "rags to riches" narrative. Alger's storyline held that any young white man by sheer determination and personal initiative could achieve the American Dream. Social Darwinism also flourished. Its proponents applied the principle of survival of the fittest to the competition between nations, races, and businesses. Consequently, the titans of capital, who were of Western European descent, were lionized in the press and celebrated as the fittest and noblest specimens of Anglo-Saxon humanity. They created



Redeeming the American Dream: The Gilded

monopolies that enabled them to corner their markets and close the path of success to any rivals who tried to follow in their steps. There was no level playing field on which to compete. Their workers were paid a market wage rather than a living wage, and were treated as just another natural resource to be exploited. While the newspapers were burnishing the All-American image of the giants of capital, the steady tide of immigration was changing the face of labor. By the 1870s one-third of the work force consisted of immigrants, most of whom were neither of Western European descent nor Protestant.

A CONFLICTED CHURCH

Proponents of the Social Gospel saw the church as having a large stake in this clash of values between rich and poor classes. They realized that the Labor Question was one of its main spiritual battlefields. Rauschenbusch believed that "the Church is to be the incarnation of the Christ-spirit on earth, the organized conscience of Christendom. It should be the swiftest to awaken to every undeserved suffering, bravest to speak against every wrong, and the strongest to rally the moral forces of the community against everything that threatens the better life among men."¹⁰

However, many clergymen chose to remain silent on the controversial Labor Question. Historians report that "published sermons of the period suggest that universals replaced specifics in most Sunday morning services. They estimate that less than five percent mentioned social or economic problems. Many ministers of the era were so committed to

the ideal of personal regeneration that they expressed little concern for society in general."¹¹

Washington Gladden worried that the Christian clergy might lack the conviction and courage to stand against the prevailing winds of the political and economic status quo.

*There is imminent danger that our churches, instead of shaping society, will be shaped by society; that the laws of nature, working themselves out in the world of finance and exchanges, will domineer the Christian law, that the fissure now running through the social world, and threatening to become a great gulf fixed between the employing and laboring classes, will divide the religious world as well.*¹²

Gladden's fears of a coming religious divide were well founded. The churches of the Gilded Age became passionately polarized on the Labor Question. The majority by far came down on the side of capital, against organized labor. *The Congregationalist*, in an opinion piece in the May 13, 1887, issue "suggested the Gatling gun as the best way to deal with a mob of workers." In another issue "The Congregationalist" characterized the unemployed as profane, licentious, filthy, vermin-swarmed thieves, petty robbers and sometimes murderers, social pests and perambulatory nuisances."¹³

These disparaging remarks were characteristic of religious publications. Typically their voice was that of white Protestant America which was frightened by the steady stream of Italian, Polish, Slavic and Jewish strangers into America's cities. Upon their arrival they were viewed as foreign invaders who held subversive ideologies. Campaigns

were organized to Christianize and Americanize them. Their squalid living conditions were seen as due, not to widespread discrimination and systemic social injustice, but to their personal moral depravity and general godlessness.

The Social Gospel movement battled the popular mindset that blamed the victims of poverty for their misery, and which distinguished between the "deserving poor" and all the rest. Eventually, government agencies began publishing reports that indicated workers were more often unemployed due to injuries on the job than to drink or indolence. Realizations such as this brought the unique insights of Gladden and other like-minded social reformers into play in the discussions about the sources of social problems.

LEGACY OF THE SOCIAL GOSPEL

The Social Gospel movement planted seeds that bore fruit in the Progressive Era and beyond. Most notably four amendments to the United States Constitution ratified between 1913 and 1920 addressed social justice issues. A graduated income tax, the popular election of senators, the prohibition of the manufacture and sale of intoxicating liquors, and granting women the vote were adopted to strengthen democracy and create a more equitable and just society. Other political reforms such as the initiative and referendum, were adopted by many states. In 1935 the National Labor Relations Act, affirming the right of employees to organize into trade unions and to bargain collectively with their employers was passed by

ed Age Gospel of Social Salvation

CONTINUED



The Rev. Norm Erlendson is Pastor of Third Congregational Church, Middletown, Connecticut. He has been a member of the Washington Gladden Society for many years and is currently its president. He also has served as Moderator of the Fellowship of Northeast Congregational Christian Churches. Norm earned a master's degree in Early Christian History from the University of Washington and a master's degree in Christian Theology and Ethics from the New College, Berkeley, California.



Congress. These Progressive era and New Deal reforms created new social conditions in which the American Dream was able to flourish for more millions of citizens than ever before.

Proponents of the Social Gospel shared in the prejudices of their age.

Yet, for all their faults, false turns, and failures, they were a school of prophetic voices that pricked the conscience of a nation and its churches. They were inspired by the prayer that Jesus gave the church, "Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven." The Social Gospel

was a movement of American dreamers, informed by the teaching of Jesus, and committed to their dream of making America a just and good commonwealth for all. A shining city upon a hill.

1 Lawrence R. Samuel, *The American Dream: A Cultural History*, Syracuse, Syracuse University Press, 2012, 13.

2 Jim Cullen, *The American Dream: The Short History of an Idea That Shaped a Nation*, New York, Oxford University Press, 2003.

3 Otto L. Bettmann, *The Good Old Days—They Were Terrible!*, New York, Random House, 1974, 67.

4 Henry Ward Beecher, *Conflict of Northern and Southern Theories of Man and Society*, Rochester, Steam Press of A. Strong and Co., 1855, 39.

5 Rauschenbusch, *Christianity and the Social Crisis*, New York, Macmillan Company, 1907, 253-254.

6 Washington Gladden, *Social Facts and Forces*, New York, Macmillan, 1897, 194-195.

7 Luke 1:52-53

8 John Winthrop, "A Model of Christian Charity" in *American Puritans*, Perry Miller, ed., Garden City, Anchor Books, 1956, 83.

9 Janette Thomas Greenwood, *The Gilded Age: A History in Documents*, New York, Oxford Press, 2000, 52-53.

10 Rauschenbusch, 287.

11 William Bos and Clyde Faries, "The Social Gospel: Preaching Reform 1875-1915", in *Preaching in American History*, Dewitt Holland, editor, Nashville, Abingdon Press, 1969, 225-226.

12 Washington Gladden, *Working People and their Employers*, New York, Funk and Wagnalls, 1894, 187-188.

13 William Bos and Clyde Faries, 228-229.

Necrology 2018



Barbara Janikowsky
Barbara Janikowsky

passed away February 4, 2018, at age 94. A member of North Shore Congregational Church in Fox Point,

Wisconsin, Barbara Janikowsky contributed years of service to the National Association of Congregational Christian Churches, culminating in the NACCC Executive Citation in 1990.

Between 1975 and 1991, she served on various committees and chaired the Executive Women's Commission, and Personnel and Administration and NACCC Office Renovation committees. She also co-chaired the 21st Century Fund drive in Wisconsin. She was a member of the Nominating and Program Committees, as well as four Executive Search Committees and three Annual Meeting Planning Committees. She was 1987-1988 NACCC National Moderator.

Barbara was a graduate of the University of Wisconsin Madison and did her post-graduate study at Northwestern University Music School. She was past president of both the Whitefish Bay Woman's Club, and Milwaukee Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution. She was also past Wisconsin State Regent of the DAR and a member of the National Speaker's Bureau and the National Officer's Club, Washington, D.C.; past senior State President of the Children of the

American Revolution, and awarded the Medal of Appreciation and the Martha Washington Medal by the Wisconsin Society, Sons of the American Revolution and a Member of the College Endowment Association. She was also Life member and former board member of the Junior Achievement Women's Association founding member of Shelomoth Temple, Daughter of the Nile. Pi Beta Phi Sorority, and appointed by Wisconsin Governor Lucey to the Wisconsin Bicentennial Commission.

Barbara Janikowsky was preceded in death by her husband, Earl E. Janikowsky. She is survived by a son, a daughter and two grandchildren.

Memorials to North Shore Congregational Church or New Castle Memory Care would be appreciated.

Lois A. Heilmann of Glenshaw

Lois A. Heilmann of Glenshaw, of Glenshaw, Pennsylvania, died peacefully on February 22, 2018. Lois spent most of her career as a legal secretary and executive secretary. She worked at Consolidated Coal Company and retired from Doepken Keevican & Weiss law firm. She was a loyal member and former secretary of First Congregational Church of Etna. Lois served in various leadership positions in the National Association of Congregational Christian Churches, including: Women's Commission (1983-1987), Congregational Christian Church Development (1988-1992), Secretary (1992-2002), Program Committee (2002-2004), and Nominating Committee (2004-2006). She is survived by numerous family members and her friend and caretaker, Sharon Hannan. Memorials may be made to Animal Friends, 562 Camp Home Road, Pittsburgh, PA 15237.



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CONGREGATIONALIST READER SURVEY 2018

NACCC is committed to *The Congregationalist*. As we plan for the future, we want to ensure that the magazine serves the needs and interests of our readers, while meeting budgetary goals. Your input is vital to our planning. Thank you for taking the time to share your opinions.

Please mail your completed survey to Tracy Bernhardt, NACCC, 8473 South Howell Avenue, Oak Creek, WI 53154.
Or fax it to 414-764-0319.

1. Do you belong to an NACCC member church?

- Yes No Not sure

2. Where do you get the magazine?

- Personal copy Church copy Library copy
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-

3. How often do you read *The Congregationalist*?

- Four times a year Occasionally
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4. How much of the magazine do you typically read?

- All of it Some of it None of it

5. What do you look forward to reading

(Rank 1-8 with 1 being your favorite)?

- Editorials and opinion pieces
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6. How do you prefer to read magazines?

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- Every issue Occasionally Never

8. How likely would you be to read *The Congregationalist* online if it were provided in a more readable format?

- Very likely Somewhat likely Not at all likely

9. How disappointed would you be if *The Congregationalist* were no longer available as a print copy?

- Very disappointed
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 Not at all disappointed
 Would no longer read the magazine

10. Would you be willing to make an annual contribution to the magazine if it helped ensure *The Congregationalist* continued to be available in print?

- Yes, I would be comfortable with at least a \$15 donation each year.
 No, I would not want to make an annual contribution
 Other (please explain)

11. Would you be more likely to make an annual contribution to the magazine if you received a yearly solicitation from NACCC?

- Yes, I would be more likely to donate
 No, it wouldn't make a difference
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-

12. Thank you for completing the survey.

We invite you to share your thoughts and comments regarding *The Congregationalist*

13. Your input is greatly appreciated! You can submit your responses anonymously. For more information about *The Congregationalist*, subscribing, donating and more, you are invited to provide us with your name and contact information.

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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

The NACCC reserves the right to refuse any advertisement.

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