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*The Lord Your God is With You Wherever You Go*

# The CONGREGATIONALIST

Magazine of the Congregational Way

Vol. 165/No. 3 Congregationalist.org September 2013

## NA at Orlando: FEELING OUR WAY FORWARD

## INTERNATIONAL CONGREGATIONALISTS GATHER IN LONDON

## “LESS OF ME— MORE OF HIM”

LISA RAMBO'S JOURNEY OF FAITH



*and more ...*



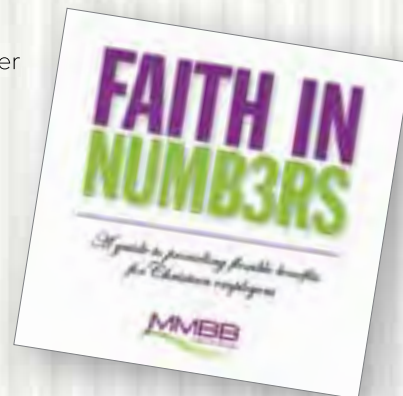
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## FEATURES



- 7 HONOR ROLL**  
*of Distinguished Individual Donors*



- 18 HAPPIEST PLACE ON EARTH**  
*NACCC Meets in Orlando*



- 26 SERVANTS IN THE MOUNTAINS**  
*Misión Mazahua Transforms Lives*



- 28 HEWN FROM A ROCK**  
*The ICF in London*

- 31 BRITISH SEMINAR TOUR 2013**

- 33 RAPID RIVER'S 125TH!**



Barry Szymanski

### ON THE COVER:

Epcot's geodesic "Spaceship Earth" looms large in Orlando, like the glittering future that beckons our National Association—if we can somehow get past the intervening obstructions.

## BOOKS OF INTEREST

- 36 A Congregationalist's Journey**  
*reviewed by Larry Sommers*

- 37 The New England Soul**  
*reviewed by Arlin Larson*

## DEPARTMENTS

- 5 By the Way of Mutual Care**  
*A continued journey of caring*

- 6 Strangers and Pilgrims...**  
*Native Americans*

- 11 Netmending**  
*The Right Tool for the Job*

- 12 Along the Way**

- 17 Letters**

- 34 Missionary News and Needs**

- 38 Necrology**

- 39 Pastorates and Pulpits**

- 39 Calendar**

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

## A continued journey of caring

I take as my title for these contributions to our magazine a line from the Cambridge Platform. As you may know, the Cambridge Platform was a foundational document for American Congregationalism. Written in 1648 and adopted by representative clergy of Connecticut and Massachusetts, it outlined the shared beliefs of those early Congregationalists—beliefs about the proper function of church.

The 15th chapter deals with the ways individual churches are called to be in communion with one another, while remaining autonomous and complete under the headship of Christ. Section 2 is titled, “The communion of churches is exercised sundry ways,” and the first way is, “By way of mutual care in taking thought for one another’s welfare.” I can think of no better reason for churches to join together in fellowship and, likewise, I can think of no greater responsibility than to exercise that care for you in my current calling.

Mutual care can be reactive, as when we respond to the expressed needs of another or when we recognize in their situation an opportunity, perhaps even obligation, to reach out and offer aid. Mutual care can and must also be proactive. We can care for another by providing resources, services, guidance, presence, a Christ-like model, or by sharing with them a desire to be a part of their life. Churches in fellowship with one another recognize, in our Congregational Way, the necessity of honoring the individuality of the other, while being present to their needs. In sharing our experiences with one another, we are all blessed. New ideas take hold, fresh perspectives are achieved, and what one alone might be unable to accomplish can often

be successfully endeavored by the group. We are, truly, greater than the sum of our parts.

The churches of our Way were slow to enter into national communion, waiting until late in the 19th century to gather. We have, from time to time, chafed against a model of national association, fearing perhaps the diminution of our churches’ autonomy and many struggling to feel a fit with other churches that don’t, in some ways, look very much like us. Yet something about this idea of mutual care, of fellowship, leads us to continue to strive for those connections; seeking unity in Christ even in the midst of our diversity. I find it a particular blessing to be associated with folks who think and worship and serve differently than I do. I find it a cause for celebration that, in joining together, we choose to allow the Spirit of the Lord to help us overcome our discomfiture in favor of the shared experience of mutual care, offered and received in the name of Christ.

We have much to offer this world. We have much to offer one another. I look forward to this continued journey of caring, with you as my companions. May God bless you and your churches.



CASEY VANDERBENT  
*Executive Secretary*

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Let us add you to our *CONGREGATIONALIST* e-mail list. Each quarter, you’ll receive a message previewing our new issue—and occasionally, we may send an urgent announcement of major news that *just won’t keep*.

E-mail Courtney Schultz at the NACCC office, [cschultz@nacc.org](mailto:cschultz@nacc.org), from the e-mail account you want us to use, and put “Congregationalist E-blast” in the subject line.

*Thanks and blessings,*

Larry Sommers, *Editor*

# Strangers and Pilgrims ...

## Native Americans

Concern for the salvation of the Indians was present from the very beginning among the Congregationalists of New England. Massachusetts Bay Colony had an official seal with the picture of an American Indian calling out, “Come over and help us.” This slogan is from Acts 16:9, Paul’s vision of the man of Macedonia that led to the Christian Church’s spread from Asia to Europe. Now it seemed to these modern Christians that the Church was being called to spread from Europe to America by evangelizing the Native Americans.

Thomas Mayhew, one of the founders of the settlement at Martha’s Vineyard, traveled to the various islands along the Massachusetts coast to preach in the Indian villages, and he won many of them to the Christian faith. His first convert, Hiacoomes, became an ordained Congregational minister and preached to his people in their own language. By the 1660s, there were two Congregational meetinghouses, serving Indians and led by Indians, and there were several more congregations without their own buildings. By this time there were ten American Indian preachers to serve these various congregations. Other members of the Mayhew family continued this mission for several decades.

In his history of the Christian Church, Justo González says that John Eliot had an even greater impact among American Indians than the Mayhew family had. Eliot, pastor of the Congregational church in Roxbury,

Massachusetts, became convinced that the Indians were the ten lost tribes of Israel and began his work among the Mohicans in 1646. González reports that

**ELIOT INVENTED AN ALPHABET FOR THE INDIAN LANGUAGE, AND HE FOUNDED 14 TOWNS, COMPOSED OF—AND LED BY—WHAT CAME TO BE CALLED “PRAYING INDIANS.”**

Eliot “gathered his converts in villages that were ruled according to the law of Moses. There he taught them European agricultural methods and mechanical arts, so that they could sustain themselves. Great stress was also laid on the reading and study of the Bible, which Eliot translated into Mohican.”<sup>1</sup>

Eliot invented an alphabet for the Indian language, and he founded 14 towns, composed of—and led by—what came to be called “Praying Indians.” Many more were founded after Eliot’s time. His American Indian Bible was the first to be published in America, before any Bible in the English language or in any other European tongue.

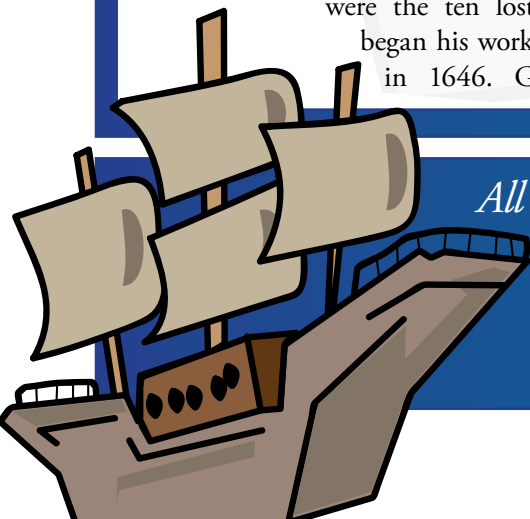
Historian Sydney Ahlstrom tells us that “Eliot and his colleagues . . . contributed to the interest that led Parliament in 1649 to incorporate the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in New England—an organization that was still able to support Jonathan Edwards in his work among the Indians over a century later.”<sup>2</sup>

1 Justo González, *The Story of Christianity* (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1985), vol. 2, pp. 223-224. Eliot’s translation is said by most historians to have been written in Algonquian, not in Mohican, but the names of Indian tribes and languages are given differently by different writers.

2 Sydney E. Ahlstrom, *A Religious History of the American People* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1972), 157.

*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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## The Right Tool for the Job

It all started with an experiment. What if I used Twitter to track those invisible moments that make up so much of ministry? Maybe Twitter's all-public format could bring a little visibility and accountability to my work without spamming my Facebook profile with ministry minutiae. Maybe its 140-character limit and geeky appeal would make me more likely to follow through. Assuming it worked, I'd also gain an accurate record of how I really spend my time, which I could use to prep a more accurate monthly report for our Prudential Board.

It started out well. Mostly mundane updates, but it gave a good picture of an average day, and it did provide a little social pressure to stay on task. I was set to call it a win. Then I got a call. After walking one of our families through the worst night of their lives, I got back in my car and realized there was absolutely nothing I could write about this night in a tweet.

To repeat anything they said would be a violation. To tweet anything I felt would publicly (and inappropriately) turn the spotlight on me. Even if I managed to write something completely innocuous, the very thought of compressing someone's worst moment into 140 permanently public characters turned my stomach. I ended the experiment, citing the result (amply proven in my mind) that there are parts of this job that are not meant to be visible. Social media is good for many things. This isn't one of them.

It's easy to forget we are playing with very new tools. We don't really know where all the sharp edges are yet. Does that mean we stop using them? No way! I didn't learn anything about Twitter that day. I already knew it was overly public and prone to triteness. All that means is it's good for something. A net can drown a person just as fast as it can catch a fish. It is the very usefulness of a tool that gives it the potential for harm.

I learned something about ministry.

Twitter taught me something about ministry. (I can't believe I just wrote that sentence.) Its public nature taught me the necessity of a pastor's secrets. Its brevity taught me the weight of a pastor's words. I didn't learn Twitter's sharp edges. I learned two of mine.



**THE REV. ROBERT J. BRINK** is senior minister at First Congregational Church, Saugatuck, Mich. If you have a technology-related question for "Net Mending," e-mail [Rob@RevSmilez.com](mailto:Rob@RevSmilez.com) or write Rev. Rob Brink, P.O. Box 633, Saugatuck, MI 49453.

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# Along the Way

News from the fellowship of churches

## FOURTH TIME'S THE CHARM



First Congregational Church of Anaheim, Calif., presented its Fourth Annual Multicultural Music Fest Saturday, Aug. 17, bringing together musicians and music appreciators from across the local spectrum of racial and ethnic groups. More than 800 people attended, including a larger number of children than in the past, according to **Rev. Jim Schibsted**. **Mayor Tom Tait**, referring to Anaheim's "City of Kindness" initiative, praised the festival as an opportunity to "get to know your neighbor." Fourteen local groups performed, as church members and volunteers also provided children's games, a caricature artist, bounce houses, face painting, crafts, vendors, and a variety of food. And in the loaves-and-fishes department, some 200 people were fed with the leftovers.

**FROM DIVERSE ROOTS**—**Dr. Richard J. Boles** spoke on "Faith Divided: Church Life in the North from 1730 to 1850," May 11 at *Plymouth Church, Brooklyn, N.Y.*

At the beginning of the period, Boles said, most Northern churches—from Pennsylvania to the coast of New Hampshire—were interracial in membership. Nonwhite members included Native Americans and blacks, both slave and free. The vast majority of these interracial churches were Congregational, but there was also a significant number of interracial Anglican churches. The number of nonwhites in interracial churches was not trivial. At a time when Boston was 6-7% black, known baptisms of blacks amounted to 2.75% of baptisms.

Over time, however, the number of interracial churches decreased, because of the founding of ethnic churches, reduced educational opportunities for nonwhites, and an increase in racism among the white members. Racism was not part of formal theology, which taught that members of all races were equal before God; many ministers, however, were slaveholders, using slaves to till the land they received as part of their clerical compensation.

Boles is an assistant visiting professor at the City College of New York. His talk was based on original research he did for his doctoral dissertation.

Watch for an article on this topic by *Richard Boles* in our December issue.

**NEW FACEBOOK PAGE**—The NACCC Meetinghouse Facebook page is meant especially for wide-ranging and freewheeling discussion of important matters by all interested parties, clergy and lay. The page grew out of a perception that the existing NACCC Clergy page, restricted to clergy membership, was a great place to air clergy concerns in a collegial atmosphere



among fellow pastors, but the wrong place for topics of general concern, which ought to be discussed in a more open forum, available to anyone interested in the affairs of the National Association of Congregational Christian Churches.

It was an obvious need, once it occurred to somebody. So the **Rev. Rob Brink** made it happen. Check it out at [facebook.com/groups/511656932240842/](https://facebook.com/groups/511656932240842/).

## 'CHUTE THE WORKS!



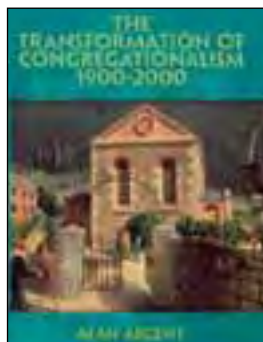
Stacey Holcombe

### FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH OF NAPLES, FLA.

has initiated a Wednesday Family Night for the purpose of connecting youth, adults, and families with the church. A dinner each week is followed by intergenerational activities. Pitting the youth against the adults in Bible Trivia was a big hit. Another favorite is the parachute game, shown here. The Wednesday night dinner immediately drew a number of new families to the church.

**DEVOTE YOURSELF TO WRITING**—Calling all Devotional writers! Advent 2013 Devotions theme is “Christ, the Messiah.” Lent 2014 Devotions theme is “The Way to the Cross Leads Home.” The deadline for Advent 2013 is September 30; and because the Lenten Devotional consists of 50 entries and must be ready soon after Christmas, the deadline for it is also September 30, to allow for editing, layout, and printing. “Please feel free to submit your Devotional even if you feel it does not exactly fit into either of these seasons,” says co-editor **Helen Cunningham**. “We will gladly receive what God has put on your heart. Thank you, sincerely, for being a part of this ministry that connects our hearts with so many of our Congregational Churches.” Send entries either to Helen, [hc6645@gmail.com](mailto:hc6645@gmail.com) or **Lori Wiley**, [loriwiley7@gmail.com](mailto:loriwiley7@gmail.com).

**THAT TROUBLESOME CENTURY**—The Rev. **Alan Argent, Ph.D.**, a stalwart of the Congregational Federation in the United Kingdom, has written *The Transformation of Congregationalism 1900-2000*, a detailed history of the passage of British Congregationalism through the turbulent 20th century. Not surprisingly, there are parallels to the travails through which U.S. Congregationalism passed in the same period. Rev. Argent is minister of *Trinity Congregational Church, Brixton, U.K.*, and Baxter Research Fellow at Dr. Williams’s Library, London. The book is available for £35 from its publisher, the Congregational Federation, at [congregational.org.uk](http://congregational.org.uk).



### LAY MINISTRY PIONEER RETIRES

—The Rev. **Dave Welcome**, first graduate of the NACCC’s Lay Ministry Training Program, has retired after 15 years as senior pastor at *Britton Congregational Christian Church, Britton, Mich.* Dave, a teacher and coach in Bloomfield Hills, graduated from the program in



Welcome

1997, mentored by the **Rev. Art Ritter**, and was ordained by the Britton church Sept. 19, 1998. He continued his coaching career alongside his pastoral duties and will be inducted this fall into the Michigan High School Coaches’ Hall of Fame. He is also a singer, songwriter, and guitar and bass player. He plans to continue coaching, making music, and serving as a volunteer pastor at *Pine Hill Congregational Church* in West Bloomfield.

**MAINERS AID OKLAHOMA**—On Monday, May 20, a giant EF5 tornado smashed Moore, Okla., killing 25, injuring 377, and doing \$2 billion in damage to houses, schools, businesses, and public infrastructure. On Tuesday, *West Gorham Union Church, Gorham, Maine*, started passing the hat.

The **Rev. Matt McDonald**, recently-called pastor of the Gorham church, made contact with a Baptist church in Moore that had 100 storm victims sheltering in its sanctuary. Establishing clearly that all donations would go directly to First Baptist Church in Moore, to aid that group of storm victims, he posted an appeal on the church’s Web

Continued on p. 14



West Gorham Union Church

page, and checks began to roll in. “I want to make it clear that this is not about our church or about me. It’s about people of faith coming together to help the victims,” McDonald told a local reporter. To date, the Maine church has raised \$3,207 from as far south as Williamsburg, Va., and as far north as Millinocket, Maine, and sent it to Moore.

**BRIDGING THE GAP**—Communicating across generational lines is a perennial challenge in today’s America—one which the **Rev. John Mabry**, pastor of *Grace North Church, Berkeley, Calif.*, addresses forthrightly in *Faithful Generations: Effective Ministry Across Generational Lines*. Mabry reviews the generational cultures of the five adult generations living today and examines the spirituality of these different cultures. His insights may give any of us the tools we need to bridge the gap more effectively. Published by Morehouse



Publishing, the book is available in paperback at \$26.00 via [churchpublishing.org/faithfulgenerations](http://churchpublishing.org/faithfulgenerations).



Larry Sommers

Arthur Rouner in his office at the Pilgrim Center, May 2010.

**PLANS FOR A FUTURE WITH HOPE**—In the July issue of *The Journey Out* newsletter of the *Pilgrim Center for Reconciliation*, the **Rev. Kristen Rouner Jeide** announced the appointment of **Todd Bertelson** as president of the center, succeeding the **Rev. Dr. Arthur Rouner**, who plans to continue focusing on ministry aspects of the center’s work. Bertelson has been a faithful member of the center’s board of directors, has worked closely with Arthur and **Molly Rouner** in leading retreats in the U.S. and Africa, and has had a growing sense of call to the ministry of the Pilgrim

## YOUTH ADVENTURES

Living in south Florida has unique advantages when it comes to outdoor ministry. *First Congregational Church of Naples*, located on the Gulf Shore, has developed an Outdoor Adventures Ministry for youth, which is proving successful as the young people love both the outdoor setting and the opportunities to explore. In early August the group got a closer look at nature and the Gulf Coast ecosystem with a kayak excursion through the mangrove forest and estuaries near the gulf. Seventeen kayakers took part—11 youths and six adults. It was not only a great adventure, but also an opportunity to grow the youth group. The next trip will be to the Canyons Zip Line near Ocala, another eco-adventure.



Stacey Holcombe

Exploring the coastal ecosystem by kayak are Naples church youths, from front to back: Samantha Berko, Kaylea Evans, and Kelsey Zikursh.

## A TRANS-GLOBAL MESSAGE

**The Rev. Elvis Sa Do** of the *Congregational Church of Myanmar* touched base at *First Congregational Church, Maywood, Ill.*, July 29 en route to the International Congregational Fellowship meeting in London. It was Missionary Sunday at the Maywood church, reports **Karen Skinner**, and Sa Do preached the morning message and told of his work, especially with ministry to children, in primarily Buddhist Myanmar (Burma). Later that day, he embarked at Chicago for the London conference.



Karen Skinner

Center. The Center was started by Rouner 18 years ago in response to the need for reconciliation after mass violence in the African states of Rwanda and Burundi. The transition of executive leadership at the center from Rouner to Bertelson was effective May 15.

**OFFICIALLY GREEN**—*Congregational Church of Soquel, Calif.*, is now a Certified Green Church. On Jan. 13, the church received the Green Business Certification Award for exceeding environmental regulatory requirements, preventing pollution, and conserving natural resources. **Ana Maria Rebelo**, Monterey Bay Area Green Business Program Coordinator for Santa Cruz County, presented the award at a special worship service planned around the event. The spirit of the day was captured in Scripture read from the Book of Isaiah, Chapter 65: “For I am about to create new heavens and new earth; the former things shall not be remembered or come to mind. But be glad and rejoice in what I am creating.”

“Throughout the process leading to certification,” blogged the **Rev. Mark Fountain**, “I learned new ways of making peace with the earth from fellow Green Team members as we combined our efforts around the enthusiastic leadership of two leading environmentalists in our church, **Steve and Jeannie Land**. More exciting green projects are yet to come.”



Cheri O'Neil

*Congregational Church of Soquel members celebrate the church's certification as an officially green business.*

**LEARNING FROM SCRIPTURE**—The prolific **Rev. Robert Hellam** of Seaside, Calif., has done it again. In his new book, *Leadership: Basic Principles from the Book of Proverbs*, he does one of his favorite things—bringing new life to Biblical

*Continued on p. 16*

## First Congregational Church Marshalltown, Iowa

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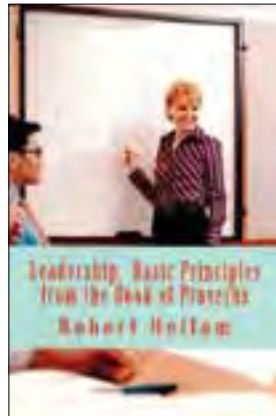
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[www.nacc.org/Ministries/MinisterialOpportunities.aspx](http://www.nacc.org/Ministries/MinisterialOpportunities.aspx)

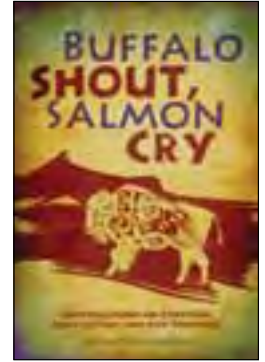
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ideas by relating them to the times we live in. The book is a study guide with 12 short chapters, each expounding a verse from Proverbs, followed by a set of study questions suitable for group discussion. Ministers and adult discussion group leaders, take note! Bob's self-published, 105-page book is available through Amazon at \$8.99 for paperback/\$5.00 Kindle.



one of the book's essays, "Broken Covenants and Restoration: A Personal Journey." Book editor Steve Heinrichs comments: "Steve Berry (chapter 16) grabs our hand and invites us to see discipleship as a journey of rooting one's story in place. Describing key moments of consciousness raising and conversion in his life, we find Berry purposefully learning the Indigenous histories of the lands in which he settled, and cultivating friendships with those who help him rethink his theology to make it more attuned to creation's harmony. The outcome is a living commitment to struggle against the earth's destruction." The essay is accompanied by an "opening and response" by **Anita Keith**, a Mohawk.



**THOUGHTS ON CULTURE CLASH**—How can North Americans come to terms with the clash between indigenous and settler cultures, faiths, and attitudes toward creation? A new book, *Buffalo Shout, Salmon Cry: Conversations on Creation, Land Justice, and Life Together*, offers perspectives on history, theology, and personal memories from a variety of voices—both traditional and Christian, native and non-native. The **Rev. Dr. Steven Berry**, Manchester, Vt., wrote

The book is available in paperback for \$21.99 at [store.mennomedia.org](http://store.mennomedia.org).

## Cathedral Woodworking

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"Paul created the Chancel Screen in our church in memory of my father. We were delighted with his sensitivity when working with us during the planning and design process and with his attention to detail in building a screen that the whole congregation appreciates but which has special meaning to our family." - Brian Harden / Rockland, Maine

[www.cathedralwoodworking.com](http://www.cathedralwoodworking.com)  /cathedralwoodworking

## FORMER EXECUTIVE SECRETARY SENDS THANKS

To Our Dear Friends,

Thank you so much for the wonderful e-mails, cards, and messages in the book of remembrance that were written by so many of you! We were glad to see so many of you at the reception in Tom's honor. The crystal vase engraved with the theme of this year's Annual Meeting and Conference is a real treasure! But the honor is all yours, for allowing us to be so much a part of your lives and the life of our Association. Thank you!

We look forward to the next stage of our lives with all of you.

With love,

**TOM AND LEEANNE RICHARD**

*Sherman Oaks, Calif.*

## EMPLOYEE EVALUATIONS KEY

Barry Szymanski's article "How (and Why) to Do Employee Evaluations" (June 2013, pp. 13-15) deserved to be carefully read. My experience was with city workers rather than those in a church, but the same principles apply.

1. Our task was service to all citizens, so no clash between [ethnic or racial] groups was acceptable.
2. Our intent was to retain the employee if at all possible
3. We examined ourselves in each case, because supervision also needed review. Close listening was most often the solution.
4. Political problems needed to be met head on.
5. We had to constantly insist that any difficulty be brought to our attention. The old saying that a bad apple spoils the barrel is very true when employees are involved, so we attempted to keep ahead of problems.

One key to our effectiveness was the yearly employee evaluations that allowed us to see how and whether we were serving our citizens in the best way.

**BILL GARBER**

*Playa Del Rey, Calif.*

## NOT AN UNCARING HOMOPHOBE

Rev. Laska's letter of June 2013, "Time to Accept the Gay Community," shows the preconception that those of us who hold to the traditional view of marriage are homophobes who are less than caring. I cannot accept homosexual behavior as normative, nor can I accept same-sex marriage. The Bible is clear on both these issues.

However, yes, I do have gay friends, and I have done many funerals for AIDS victims over the years.

**REV. JACK SWANSON**

*Wollaston, Mass.*

## CHARACTERIZE WITH CAUTION

In response to Rev. Laska's letter:

I am confused with the example you used in your letter of the dead baby girl and the gay community. The baby was not gay. It's highly probable that the mother was not either. More likely she contracted AIDS through drug use, or her husband or boyfriend passed it on to her. The minister who refused to do the funeral was atypical of most ministers, regardless of their beliefs of homosexuality. Most ministers I know would have lovingly ministered to the mother and any other family or friends of the family.

Homosexuality is a very emotionally charged issue, but it's important not to characterize people with whom you disagree in such broad and negative terms.

**JEANNE VELLINGA**

*Wayne, Mich.*



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See NACCC website  
for position details.

A night view of a theme park, likely Disney's Magic Kingdom, with fireworks exploding in the sky and a hot air balloon floating in the air. The scene is illuminated by the lights of the park buildings and the fireworks. The title "The Happiest Place on Earth?" is written in a white, cursive font, with "Earth?" in a larger, orange font.

# The Happiest Place on Earth?

✓o—not Disney’s Magic Kingdom (per a recurring publicity meme), but the 59th Annual Meeting and Conference of the National Association of Congregational Christian Churches! More than 250 adults and 125 youth attendees converged on Orlando for four days of meetings, worship, lectures, workshops, mission projects, social events, and casual fellowship as the National Association held its yearly family reunion.

Happy delegates and attendees, despite subdued adult attendance, high food and beverage prices, and a government-caused hiccup in the association’s restructuring plan. Adversities were to be weathered, like Florida’s afternoon showers, with expectation of future sunshine. Calm resolve flowed from the conference theme, from Isaiah 43:5a—“Do not fear, for I am with you.”

The Rev. Neil Hunt, moderator of the Association, aided by parliamentarian Sherry Glab and association secretary Judy Campbell, led delegates smoothly through motions, resolutions, and reports, with business often completed ahead of schedule (a welcome break with tradition).

The biggest action was more like a non-action: An anticlimactic continuation of interim implementation of the new Ministry Councils structure and two-year terms for moderator and vice-moderator, with formal changes to Articles of Association and bylaws awaiting an Internal Revenue Service ruling on the status of the NA’s tax-exempt corporation. In other words—hold in place and continue to implement the parts of the plan that do not require IRS approval.



*In a spontaneous outburst of technical creativity and reportorial acumen, a team of live-bloggers reported events of the 59th Annual Meeting and Conference of the National Association of Congregational Christian Churches, held in Orlando, Fla., as they were happening. From left, Revs., Rob Brink, Saugatuck, Mich.; Seth Jones, Rockland, Maine; Chris Meirose, Waseca, Minn.; and John Miller, Royal Oak, Mich.*

The only item of business that sparked controversy was a resolution presented by the Rev. Phil Jackson of Yarmouth Port, Mass., on behalf of several Northeastern associations, calling for reinstatement of term limits for NA executives, with an initial five-year term to be renewable for another five years. The motion was defeated on a voice vote after brisk discussion, with opponents stating it would introduce uncertainty into the current search for a new association executive.



Casey vanderBent

Delegates ratified the appointment of the Rev. Casey vanderBent as interim executive secretary for one year with a one-year extension if necessary; filled needed elective positions; welcomed a new church into membership; approved a plan for the orderly renewal of lapsed memberships; and passed a Shared Ministries Fund budget with a deficit of about \$98,000—low by standards of recent years.

There's much more to an Annual Meeting and Conference than business, however. Worship experiences included a Quiet Day sponsored by the Society of Classical Retreat Guides, a 24/7 chapel, early morning and late evening devotions each day, a healing prayer service, and full worship services on Sunday morning and Tuesday evening.

Saturday, the opening day of the Conference, was blessed by a lively and uplifting evening concert by the Piedmont College Singers.

*Continued on p. 20*



Barry Szymanski

*Barbara Erlendson presents "Vitality Ministry Council 101—A Primer," one of three such offerings meant to explain the functioning and early implementation phases of the three new Ministry Councils created in the NACCC's restructuring plan. The other two Ministry Councils, which also presented "101" workshops, are the Growth Ministry Council and the Mission and Outreach Ministry Council.*



Larry Sommers

*The Piedmont College Singers perform.*



Barry Szymanski

*Baritone Skylier Ross uncorks a full-throated version of "Ain't That Good News".*



Barry Szymanski

Rob Brink, shares info with delegate Jane Boyd of Wauwatosa, Wis.

Sunday morning worship included communion and this year's award-winning sermon, "Two or Three Together," by the Rev. Seth Jones of Rockland, Maine. After tracing the early development of Congregationalism, Jones suggested that Jesus' advice on conflict in the church, given in Matthew 18:15-17, needs to be learned anew as "the currency of forgiveness in the transactions of human relationships."

*"If we are going to say that wherever two or three or more assemble, Christ is present, then it seems imperative that we seek to act and be like Christ the Shepherd in our relationships with one another,"* he said.

A choir of volunteers, this year directed by the Rev. Cindy Bacon Hammer and accompanied by the Rev. Ric Reed, sang "You Raise Me Up" as an anthem and "Amazing Grace/My Chains Are Gone" for the offertory.



Barry Szymanski

The Rev. Kevin Roach and his wife, Cathie, chat with the Rev. Dr. Karl Schimpf, center.

The Rev. Dr. Mark Jensen delivered the Congregational Lecture on "Nonconformists, Dissenters and Heresiologists" (*see p. 22*). The Rev. Dr. Don Olsen gave a series of three Bible Lectures on the conference theme from Isaiah 43:5b—"Do not fear, for I am with you" (*pp. 23-24*). There was also a full slate of workshops on Sunday and Monday afternoons, including "Less of Me, More of Him: A Mind-Body-Spirit Journey of Gigantic Proportions!" by NBC-TV "Biggest Loser" contestant Lisa Rambo (*pp. 24-25*).

The Rev. Phil Jackson received the Executive Committee Citation for his many years of service as a pastor and associate executive secretary. In addition, Varn Philbrook received a Certificate of Appreciation for his two years of arduous service at the helm of the Executive Committee.

The Rev. Dr. Tom Richard, now interim pastor at Congregational Church of the Chimes, Sherman Oaks, Calif., after 11 years as executive secretary of the National Association, received a crystal vase inscribed with this year's biblical theme and a book of remembrances from his many NACCC friends.

The Florida Association was also honored for hosting this year's conference.



Barry Szymanski

Rev. Julio Santana receives blankets for the needy.

Youth and adult participants took part in a blanket-making project to benefit the area's impoverished and sometimes homeless people. The blankets were presented to the Rev. Julio Santana of Bread of Life Mission, Plant City, Fla., for distribution.

Between conference events, most delegates also seized opportunities to dine, shop, or be entertained at the stores, restaurants, and theaters of Downtown Disney, just across the street from our hotel.

## A Quiet Day

By Connie Hellam

When I read the Bible, it seems to me that right before any event noteworthy to the people, Jesus left his companions and went to a quiet place to pray. Even the last evening before the most important ordeal of His life, He went to the garden to be alone with His Father.

It has become for me a welcome tradition to spend a quiet day in the presence of the Lord and to be in silence with other like-minded people before the hustle and bustle of the NACCC Annual Meeting and Conference. The quiet, the refreshing, and the communion with Jesus stay with me through the following days of interaction and conversations.

This year's quiet day was organized by the Rev. Dr. Charles Packer, chaplain-director of the Congregational Society of Classical Retreat Guides, and the Rev. Randy Kohls, president of the organization. The venue they chose was the San Pedro Center in Winter Park, about an hour's drive from Orlando. Situated by a lake, in an area covered with trees and home to cattle and wildlife, it is conducive to meditation and reflection.

Twelve of us gathered there at nine in the morning. We began with a worship service and a schedule of the day to come. We were told to refrain from talking even during our lunch together. Silence is a discipline that does not come easy for most of us, but it needs to be developed if we are to hear God's still, small voice in our lives.

Our silence was broken three times during the day with meditations led by Dr. Packer and a reading by Rev. Kohls during lunch. Our meditations centered on our fears and the different aspects of fear, with the realization that "fear" can be a tremendous blessing if we come to know that "the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom."

We were encouraged to read Scripture, pray, journal, and meditate. The retreat center was large enough that we could roam to our hearts' content and meet God in this natural creation of His. We were not required to share our experience but were encouraged to focus on one of our particular fears, write it on a stone, and then cast the stone into the lake.

The twelve of us left San Pedro Center at 3:30 p.m., having had silent fellowship with one another and communion with God. The words of the hymns spoken during worship lingered in our minds—"There is a place of quiet rest, near to the heart of God."

We left refreshed and ready to do the work of the Lord.



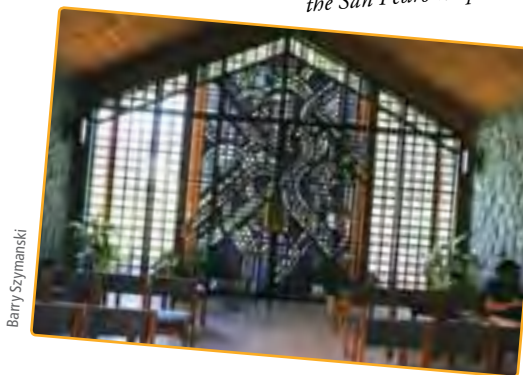
**CONNIE HELLAM** is on the Executive Council and the Women's Guild at Church of the Oaks in Del Rey Oaks, Calif., where she also teaches Sunday School and leads church women in annual retreats. She has taught third grade teacher at Monterey Bay Christian School for the last 11 years.



Sandhill cranes wander the peaceful grounds of the San Pedro Center.



The Rev. Charles Packer meditates in the San Pedro chapel.



Stones representing the fears of quiet day participants.

## The Congregational Lecture, 2013

# “Nonconformists, Dissenters and Heresiologists”

*He drew a circle that shut me out—  
Heretic, rebel, a thing to flout.  
But Love and I had the wit to win:  
We drew a circle that took him in!*

Quoting this verse from the poem “Outwitted” by Edwin Markham (1852-1940), the Rev. Dr. Mark P. Jensen offered the Congregational Lecture. Drawing upon his life-long involvements with Congregational churches and over 40 years of experience in the NACCC, including service as moderator and Executive Committee chair, Jensen explored the way in which radical, even distressing, ideas and theological assertions have paved the way for social and theological change in the name of God.

The first Christians presented enormous challenges to the established religious and social orders of their times to create the church; the forms they developed responded to the reality of their times and their world, circumstances that differ greatly from our own times. The Protestant Reformation, with its goal to elevate Scripture and thoughtful reading and response to God’s Word, was seen as heretical by the established orders of the 16th and 17th centuries. Even in the Protestant world, early Congregationalists were persecuted, jailed, and put to death for their commitment to the idea of covenant relationships and autonomous congregations, which they had discerned in the New Testament.

From this basis, Jensen addressed some of the modern circumstances of our churches, with new theological and moral challenges unanticipated by those who have gone before. While it’s tempting to withdraw into the comforting structures of the past, he suggested that church formation is an ongoing, constant process of change that happens because thoughtful people have come together to talk, disagree, and consider new theological responses to new circumstances in their own times. In this process, we need not be ashamed of our tradition, or feel obliged to conform



*The Rev. Dr. Mark Jensen delivers  
the Congregational Lecture.*

*by Mimi Biedron*

to the practices and norms of other churches and religious groups. Instead, Rev. Jensen called for our churches and our National Association to claim Congregationalism as a strength which binds us together and allows us to disagree, to celebrate our differences, and to be open to new ideas and practices—even those which may initially seem heretical.

Jensen’s concluding point is a challenge and a call to action: “Christian and Congregational history has shown us that our faith is not to be seen as one with fossilized beliefs, values, and understandings of God or humanity. It is an evolutionary faith, wherein we know that there is one God, and that we are not gods. It is one that cannot accept the call to love one another as optional, recognizing that in our day and time we are still, and always, called to care for ‘the least of these.’”



**THE REV. MARY E. (“MIMI”) BIEDRON** is the senior minister of North Congregational Church, Farmington Hills, Mich. She is a graduate of the Congregational Foundation for Theological Studies and serves on the Advisory Team of the Center for Congregational Leadership.

# SQUEAKING the Right Squeak

## 2013 BIBLE LECTURES

by Michael Chittum



Berry Szjymanski

Rev. Dr. Don Olsen



The Book of Isaiah is a rich repository of theological teachings and spiritual writings for both Jews and Christians. The theme text for this year's meeting, "Do not fear for I am with you," was taken from this book (Isaiah 43:5b). The prophetic book also served as the jumping-off point for the Bible Lectures given by the Rev. Dr. Don Olsen, senior minister of the Plymouth Congregational Church, Wichita, Kan.

The text we have as a single book is likely a composite of three different sections, written at different times by different people, addressing different situations facing the Jewish people. The first part of the book, chapters 1-39, was composed by one person before the Babylonian invasion and the subsequent exile of the Jewish people. The second section, Isaiah 40-55, was written by a single individual during the Babylonian Exile, though likely toward its end. The last section, chapters 56-66, was written after the Jewish people returned home; several different writers wrote in this section. Dr. Olsen indicated that he would deal with three different texts, both academically and practically.

Beginning with Isaiah 1:1-20, where the prophet set his agenda to speak of the difficulties that were ahead, Dr. Olsen called attention to 1:18a, in which the prophet proclaims a word from the Lord, "Come now, let us argue it out, says the Lord"; and he used that text to begin a consideration of "Conflict Encounter Styles," based on the work of church consultant Speed Leas. He mentioned the six different styles typically used to deal with conflictual situations or with the people with whom we have conflict: persuading; compelling or forcing; avoidance, ignoring, or fleeing; bargaining or negotiating; collaborating; and supporting.

The second lecture centered on Isaiah 22:1-5, which, according to Olsen, sets up the material in the second section of the Book of Isaiah. Within this reading is the phrase, "in the valley of vision," (verse 5a). Olsen then launched into a discussion of "Consensus Building and Change." He asserted that there

are two types of change, technical and adaptive, within churches. Adaptive change is the more challenging to navigate, for it requires a change in people's behavior, standards, or norms. Church leaders must: understand the congregation as an emotional system; understand the sacredness of space; understand the value systems of the church; and understand the types of leaders within the church, whether true leaders or managers. Successfully negotiating adaptive change also mandates an awareness of two value systems that coexist within churches: "GI values" emphasizing a group mentality, deferred pleasure, the value of belonging and committees; and "consumer values" emphasizing diversity and individualism, immediate gratification, the value of journey and doing.

Olsen used Isaiah 65:1-10 as the basis for the third Bible Lecture. That text articulates a new vision of Judaism. It served as a basis for him to consider "Seven Skills or Principles of Change." These are: Are you Evaluative or Descriptive?; Reflection and Imagination; Identify Adaptive Challenge; Regulate Distress; Maintain Disciplined Attention; Give Work Back to the People; and Protect Leadership from the Voices from Below.

The material presented by Dr. Olsen was eminently practical advice for any church leader, but particularly apt for ministers to hear. The challenges facing churches and their leaders typically revolve around conflict and change. Understanding how we might better respond to such situations will lead to healthier churches, healthier leaders, and healthier relationships between congregations and their leaders. This is all a good thing for us to hear and hear again.

The material presented, though, did not really emerge from any text within Isaiah and could well have been shared within the

*Continued on p. 24*



**THE REV. DR. MICHAEL CHITTUM** is senior minister of First Congregational Church of Salt Lake. He has served the National Association as a member of the Nominating Committee, Transition Team, and Implementation Team; a member and chairman of the Division for Ministry; and the Congregational Lecturer at the 2011 meeting in Scottsdale. He and Vicki have been married for 39 years and have two adult sons, who, with their spouses, live in the Midwest.





Continued from p. 23

context of a workshop entitled “How to Have a Healthier Church.” In his three lectures, it seemed that Dr. Olsen was functioning more in his former role as an Association executive intervening in a conflicted congregation than as a Bible Lecturer. I wished he had brought to life the words of hope within deuter-Isaiah (chapters 40-55 in the book) given to a people much in need of them. For example, the power and majesty of Isaiah 40:1, “Comfort ye, Comfort ye, my people, says the Lord,” could well have been a message linked to the theme passage that the NACCC Annual Meeting needed to hear.

During his first lecture, Olsen related a story of his miniature Dachshund’s squeaky toy. One day, he noticed that if he squeaked the toy in just the right way, every dog in the neighborhood would soon bark. He concluded from this that if you squeak the right squeak all the dogs will respond; and if you speak the right speak, all God’s people will respond. In these lectures, Dr. Olsen sought to “speak the right speak” for God’s Congregationalist people gathered in Orlando.

# NAPF & HOPE

by Kristin Lewis

## YOUTH ATTENDEES

# Seek THEIR Pull

Nearly 120 high school and college-aged youths from around the United States gathered to share in the annual tradition of NAPF-HOPE. This year’s conference focused on the theme of “What’s Your Pull?”—asking participants, “What keeps you faithfully grounded in your life?” The speaker was the Rev. Abel Sisco of First Congregational Church, Ashland, Neb.

Morning watch and evening vespers were led by different church groups and touched on the topics of uplifting each other, ways to stay inspired in your faith, and more.

As in past conferences, the schedule included five sessions of program, small group time, and worship; however, there were many new experiences for the youth, since the conference was held jointly with the NACCC Annual Meeting and Conference. Youth participants attended Sunday morning worship with the adults, went to some of their afternoon workshops, and even worked on a mission project with them. The

# Losing It With Lisa—



## OUR OWN NETWORK STAR WOWS US IN ORLANDO

*From the moment she stepped foot on the ranch she was like, “I’m going to give you 150 percent of what I am and what I want to be.” That said, she went home, unfortunately, but her husband lost 75 pounds. Her mom lost 40 pounds. Her kids lost weight. She was dialed in. So it wasn’t about being co-dependent on Dolvett, The Biggest Loser, the television, the screen. She was dependent on herself. And she was an inspiration to her entire family.*

—Dolvett Quince, *Trainer, NBC’s The Biggest Loser*



mission work was a favorite activity for young people and adults alike, making tie fleece blankets for local Orlando missions.

Another new thing was the opportunity to speak directly with the adults about better communication with the NACCC, what teens and 20somethings like about their churches, and what they would like to see in their churches. Approximately 20 youths took part in various panels throughout the week.

The youth conference wasn't all work and business, however. Attendees also visited a few of the Disney theme parks, which not only allowed for fun and magic, but it provided great time to bond with both new and old friends.

The conference was led by the Commission on Youth Ministries and its two co-presidents, Katy Newton of Pomona, Calif., and Ryan Prendergast of Lynn, Mass. Looking ahead to next year, NAPF-HOPE will be held in Nashville, Tenn., in late June, led by newly elected co-presidents Mary Brooks of Pomona and Peter Merkel of Franklin, Wis.

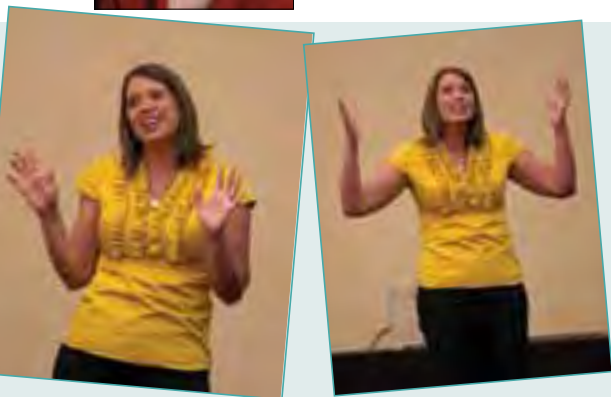


Kristin Lewis

Mary Brooks and Peter Merkel light a candle during their installation ceremony as co-presidents of HOPE.



**KRISTIN LEWIS** lives in Waukesha, Wis., and is youth director at Faith Community Church in nearby Franklin. She is involved in youth events both locally and nationally and makes a living working as a professional photographer.



Barry Szymanski

Lisa Rambo shares her transformational experience.

**L**isa Rambo—wife, partner, and co-church planter with Tony Rambo at The River Community Church, Hudson, Wis.—was selected as a contestant for season 14 of NBC's *The Biggest Loser*, after previous unsuccessful attempts to get on the show.

To a spellbound NACCC crowd at her “Less of Me—More of Him” workshop, Lisa told how she went to the Lord in prayer, and he “made it a big personal timeout” for her, a period of transformation.

She prayed a poetic prayer and got a poetic response: “God leaned in and said, ‘Just do the best you can with what you’ve got, and what you’ve got will get better and better.’”

Every day during her five weeks on the *Biggest Loser* training ranch, Lisa read Paul’s Letter to the Philippians. “It takes about 20 minutes to read the entire book of Philippians.” She read it over and over. After being sent home at the end of the season’s fifth episode, she continued to lose weight, inspiring her family and friends to do the same and narrowly missing the show’s \$100,000 “At-Home” prize. But she feels she got something even better.

“I lost 108 pounds in five-and-a-half months, and I gained my life back,” she said.

Pacing the stage with barely pent-up energy, Lisa challenged her listeners with gems like these:

- “God has crazy plans and they’re always bigger than ours.”
- “In order to really change, that true life change comes from time spent with Jesus.”
- “If you will go all in for a season ... discipline equals control in all areas of your life.”

And the line that became her personal mantra as she sweated and strained at the ranch, reading Philippians and praying daily: “I didn’t come here to get skinny, I came here to get strong!”

# God's Gifts, Special Friends, Servants in the Mountains

Each June, the Rev. Jack Brown, pastor of the Olivet Congregational Church, Olivet, Mich., leads a group of volunteers (under the rubric of the Missionary Assistance Corps) on a one-week mission trip to Misión Mazahua—an outpost of “wholistic transformation” on a mountainous plateau north of Mexico City.

*Photos by Chuck Fales*

This year's short-term mission experience is shared here, as reflected in the words of two participants, Joy Matos and Shannon Graham.

## EXPERIENCING GOD ON THE MISSION FIELD

*by Joy Matos*

What do you think when you hear “short-term missions”?  
Physical labor? Discomfort? Cost-benefit?

Or ... Personal development! New friends! Spiritual growth!

Our team of 41, from different generations and locales, landed in Mexico for one week at Misión Mazahua. Yes, there was the physical labor: We built cisterns, painted, pulled weeds, sanded chairs, and dug ditches; brought needed supplies and manpower—even staffed a “Special Friends Camp” for local people with disabilities, which could not have happened without our presence. We brought encouragement, and we made new friends.



*Joy Matos worships with the Special Friends.*

But there was more. In daily chapel times we were challenged and encouraged in our walk with the Lord. We learned it's not just about “doing,” but about bearing fruit that flows from the Holy Spirit at work within us.

God's presence and empowerment was shown in the people He brought together and the needs that were met. When one of us suddenly became ill, a nurse flew into action. When our Special Friends needed overnight assistance, a team came together. When we visited a local greenhouse—a recipient of one of the mission's micro-loans—one of our members shared valuable information

from her experience in growing tomatoes. When we had the opportunity to hold chapel with our Special Friends, an iPod with Sunday School songs in Spanish and a director were there; we prepared a message, and actors portrayed Christ's sacrifice on the cross with only minutes' preparation.

We were reminded, too, that just as the Father sent Jesus, endued with power from above (Luke 3:21,22; 4:1), so has He sent us (Luke 24:49; Acts 1:8). May we be continually open to His Spirit so that Christ may be glorified through us ... wherever He may lead!



**THE REV. JOY MATOS** is passionate about Jesus and is committed to the Lordship of Christ, the spiritual growth of believers, and to outreach. She is a member of First Congregational Church in Hanson, MA, and a bi-vocational minister,

working as a financial analyst at a major university, as well as leading Bible studies, serving in missions, and providing pulpit supply.



*Left: Paden Graham portrays Jesus in an improvised passion play supervised by a Mexican pastor during the Special Friends camp at Misión Mazahua.*

*Above: This year's team.*

*Right: Volunteers build a cistern for a rural Mazahuan village.*



## BECOMING A SERVANT

*by Shannon Graham*

Life is full of opportunities; they come in ways we never expect and at times we cannot imagine possible.

Each morning at Misión Mazahua began with chapel, led by various pastors and lay pastors. Sermons given in both English and Spanish provided inspiration for each day. It was beautiful to see different cultures come together as children of God and praise our Heavenly Father through personal testimonies and music.

The physical labor was exhausting, and we all slept comfortably each night. Yet, as short-term volunteers, we were reminded that the tasks assigned each morning were not nearly as important as the relationships built in the course of the day. Along with the jobs there were trips to town to meet the Mazahuan people who receive training and assistance from the mission and its supporters.

I watched my teenaged daughter, Paden, work and play with the Special Friends. She crafted a toddler-sized diaper out of an adult diaper and tape (no small ones were available) and with gentle hands washed and fed her new friend Feli. We cried together as Paden struggled to understand the poverty some of the campers endured, and the permanent effects of fetal alcohol syndrome. We thanked God for the Special Friends' lives and for their beautiful spirits. We prayed for them and their families.

I saw my daughter transform into a servant of God, ready to face challenges and share with the world that her strength comes from the Lord.



*Jack Brown, left, and Paden Graham, right, assist a local girl named Te Te during the Special Friends camp at Misión Mazahua.*

The three-day, two-night Special Friends Camp was the highlight of our short-term mission. Campers ranged in age from 5 to 55 and required varying degrees of assistance. Games, crafts, piñatas, hot showers, shared meals, a zip-line and equine therapy were available to the campers.



*SHANNON GRAHAM is a member of First Congregational Church of Laingsburg, Mich., and a first-time Missionary Assistance Corps volunteer.*



# Hewn from a Rock and On Our



## Pilgrims at the 2013 ICF Meeting

**C**ongregationalists of many lands came together July 29-Aug. 2 in London, England, for the Tenth Quadrennial Conference of the International Congregational Fellowship.

The theme was, “A Pilgrim People: We Are On the Way.”

The largest contingents were from the United States, England, and Wales; but Argentina, Australia, Burma, Canada, Greece, Kenya, Lebanon, Mexico, and South Africa were also represented.

**The conference began Monday evening, July 29**, with a barbecue, introductions, and opening worship. ICF co-moderator **Phaedon Cambouropoulos** preached on the paradoxes of time, change, and constancy. Our job, he said, is to update our practices while cleaving to timeless spiritual truths that “are not negotiable.” We need to keep God at the center of things and try to fulfill God’s aims rather than preserve structures. “We must walk into the future with vision,” he said.

The **Rev. Dr. Janet Wootton** delivered a keynote address on Tuesday. Taking her text from Isaiah 51:1b—“Consider the rock from which you were hewn”—she called forth memories great events and heroes of faith from the Congregational tradition.



Janet Wootton



Issa Diab

The **Rev. Dr. Issa Diab**, a Lebanese Christian scholar, delivered another keynote address—a brief summary of the complex historical relationship between Christianity and Islam in the Middle East, from antiquity to the present day. Diab warned his hearers of the “highly ideologized” narrative available from the media.

The **Rev. Dr. Collin Cowan**, general secretary of the Council for World Missions, gave the third and final keynote. He spoke on “The Missional Congregation”—one that lives out a spirituality of engagement rooted in worship, is attuned to the context in which it is set, and works in partnership with others.



Collin Cowan

The **Rev. Dr. Richard Cleaves** led a series of three Bible studies. In each, he isolated an important phrase from a Bible passage and examined the historical circumstances in which it was set, casting light on the power-based realities of the early Christian period: An expansionary Roman empire seeking to achieve peace and stability through military means, even as Paul and the early Christians offered an alternative plan of developing peace through grace.



Richard Cleaves



Left: Congregationalists from around the world worship at the Bunyan Meeting House, Bedford.

Above: The Rev. Alan Argent, right, leads a workshop on church meetings.

# Way

Additional highlights of the five-day program included a communion service in Bedford's Bunyan Meeting House, home church of *Pilgrim's Progress* author John Bunyan; reports on Congregationalism in various parts of the world; workshops on practicalities of church life; and a special performance by the Piedmont College Singers (who also performed a month earlier for the NACCC Annual Meeting and Conference in Orlando, see p. 19).

Over the next four years, the **Rev. Dr. Geraint Tudur** of Wales will serve as ICF moderator, with the **Rev. Dr. Bruce Theron** of South Africa as vice-moderator. The **Rev. Tom Van Tassell**, Spencer, Iowa, was elected the new international secretary; the **Rev. Cindy Rice**, Detroit, international treasurer; and the **Rev. Mike Fales**, Olivet, international communications officer.

The 2017 ICF Conference is scheduled to be held in South Africa; and early planning for the 2021 conference envisions moving it up a year to 2020, and holding it in the United States, to celebrate the 400th anniversary of the *Mayflower's* voyage.



Geraint Tudur



Val Price



Phaedon Cambouroupoulos



**INKY WRETCHES IN COZY KLATSCH**—Regular readers know that this magazine has a British counterpart, also called *The Congregationalist*. The two editors came face-to-face, supervised by their wives, over mugs of coffee at Brunel University. *The Congregationalist* in the United Kingdom is a superb publication, edited by David Kinchin (with beard in photo). Like our own **CONGREGATIONALIST**, David's magazine appears quarterly, with spiritual, informational, and practical offerings on Christianity, Congregationalism, and the doings of its sponsor, the Congregational Federation of the United Kingdom. The coffee was good, but the fellowship was priceless.—LS



Kathryn Young

## ONE BODY IN CHRIST

by Wendy Van Tassell

The ICF Youth conference gathered together 22 young people from England, Wales, Greece, Brazil, and the U.S. Youths joined the adult contingent for morning worship and Bible study daily, then separated to pursue their own program on the theme of "One Body in Christ" (Romans 12:5). Revs. Stephen Haward, Lisa Bolton-Hunt, Phaedon Cambouroupoulos and Wendy Van Tassell helped unpack the theme through interactive exercises and discussion. Tuesday afternoon Denise Evans led an Expressive Workshop focused on movement, drama and art. About 20 youths from the Congregational church in Ipswich joined us on Wednesday, offering a special time of praise and worship. A visit to Oxford on Thursday, led by Rev. Mark Evans, gave attendees a taste of British culture, education and heritage. Throughout the week each youth was secretly paired with another attendee and asked to pray daily for that individual. At the end of the conference, each person's secret prayer partner was revealed through a foot-washing ceremony (John 13:3-17). Departing the conference all were comforted to know "so in Christ, we who are many form one body." It is Christ who unites His people all over the world.

**THE REV. WENDY VAN TASSELL**, at right in photo, is senior minister (with her husband, Tom) at First Congregational Church of Spencer, Iowa and a tireless youth worker in the NACCC and the ICF.

# AMCO and the ICF

North American attendees to the ICF Conference gathered Thursday evening, Aug. 1, under the rubric of AMCO, the American Committee for the International Congregational Fellowship.

Each of ICF's seven regions is served by a volunteer regional secretary. **Sharon Binger**, as North American regional secretary, is the *de facto* head of AMCO. American attendees at this summer's meeting unanimously elected her to continue serving in that position. **Tom Van Tassell**, **Cindy Rice**, and **Mike Fales** were also congratulated on becoming leaders of ICF.



Larry Sommers

Sharon Binger

The **Rev. Dr. Manfred Kohl** urged attendees to subscribe to the *International Congregational Journal*, and he joined the **Rev. Dr. Patrick Shelley** and the **Rev. David Gray** in providing a historical overview of the International Congregational Fellowship and the American participation in it.



Larry Sommers

Patrick Shelley

Shelley explained that in 1962, at its meeting in Rotterdam, the old International Congregational Council spurned the National Association of Congregational Christian Churches, preferring to take the new United Church of Christ as the embodiment of U.S. Congregationalism. A few years later, the ICC itself disappeared into the World Alliance of Reformed Churches<sup>1</sup>, a mainly presbyterian group—leaving the world without an international Congregational group.

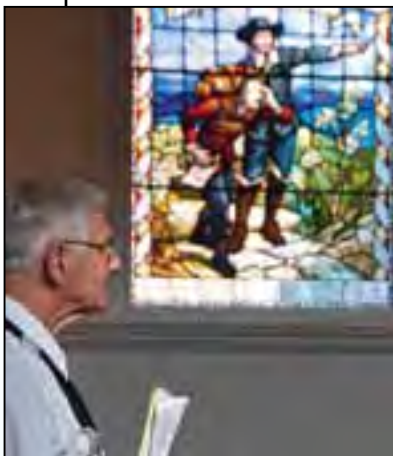
To meet this need, American church leaders affiliated with the NACCC combined with those from Congregational Federation of the United Kingdom, at a 1975 meeting in Chiselhurst, England, to organize the International Congregational Fellowship.

Two years later, in London, ICF held its first full quadrennial conference, with 400 attendees—300 of them Americans. The new group even managed to hold a communion service in Westminster Abbey—marking the first time since the days of Cromwell that the sacrament was observed “according to Congregational custom” in the old Anglican abbey<sup>2</sup>. David Gray recalled delivering the sermon in place of his father, the **Rev. Henry David Gray**, who was unable to attend.

The ICF was organized as a voluntary association of individuals, rather than a group of national church bodies as the old council had been. At its 2005 conference in Corfu, it changed its constitution to allow organizations as well as individuals to join. Four years later, at the quadrennial conference in Milwaukee, the NACCC formally joined the ICF.

1 The World Alliance in its turn was later merged into the World Communion of Reformed Churches.

2 “International Congregational Fellowship: An Historic Meeting in London,” by the Rev. John H. Alexander, in *THE CONGREGATIONALIST*, November 1977, pp. 11-13.



Larry Sommers

Thirty-six years after preaching in Westminster Abbey, the Rev. David Gray admires a window at Bunyan Meeting House, Bedford.

# Angels On Our Way

## A Pilgrimage

by Larry Sommers

Who were the Pilgrims?

What made them tick?

Why does their story matter?

After reading all the relevant books, **can you learn anything new by physically tracing the Pilgrims' journey?** Can you gain insight by walking in their footsteps?

**W**hen the ICF Conference in London ended, 11 American Congregationalists<sup>1</sup> went on a pilgrimage of discovery<sup>2</sup>. We traveled by motor coach to Canterbury, Babworth, Scrooby, Austerfield, Gainsborough, Boston, Norwich, Cambridge, Salisbury, Portsmouth, Southampton, Plymouth, Exeter, London; and by train to Hampton Court, Amsterdam, and Leiden.

The factual and pictorial results of this tour will inform all of us in our various ministries and will reverberate through future issues of *THE CONGREGATIONALIST*.



*Modern pilgrims stand for a "proofshot" at the Mayflower Steps, Plymouth, where the Pilgrims departed on the final leg of their voyage to America.*

At Scrooby and its environs, local historian Sue Allan brought the history of the Scrooby Separatists to life with an impassioned narrative as we enjoyed the shady garden of Scrooby Manor, once William Brewster's residence, where he gathered his illegal "conventicle" to worship apart from the Church of England. The landlord

For now, suffice it to note that not only did the bricks, stones, timbers, and soil of England and the Netherlands tell a vital story; but also, today's English and Dutch residents keep the memory of "the Pilgrim Fathers" as part of their own heritage and a valued commonality with Americans. At every stage of the journey, gracious Britons and Netherlanders welcomed us and smoothed our path.

### Dissenters welcomed

At Canterbury, a canon of the Anglican Church met us at the cathedral door and gave us a guided tour of the interior, reading a Psalm with us at each stop. She made us feel warmly welcomed, despite our history as Dissenters.



*Sue Allan speaks with tour members in the Great Hall of the well-preserved Gainsborough Old Hall, which may approximate what Scrooby Manor looked like in William Brewster's time.*

and staff of the nearby Pilgrim Fathers Pub served us a fine luncheon as well.

In Boston, museum director Luke Skerritt opened the old Guild Hall at an early morning hour and showed us everything, including the cells where Brewster, William Bradford, and others awaited trial after the failure of their first (1607) attempt to escape England.

At Norwich, retired pastor John Clements opened up the Old Meeting-house, where Congregationalists have worshiped regularly since 1693.

At Cambridge, our local guide, Jim, got us into the Parker Library of Corpus Christi College to view rare manuscripts including an Anglo-Saxon vernacular Bible from around AD 800.

<sup>1</sup> Betsey Mauro, Mike Fales, Tom and Wendy Van Tassell, Larry and Joelle Sommers, Debbie and Steve Rhinesmith, Lisa Bolton-Hunt, Phyllis Merritt, and Cindy Rice.

<sup>2</sup> Officially it was the British Seminar, sponsored periodically by the Congregational Foundation for Theological Studies, though one needn't be a CFTS fellow to sign on.

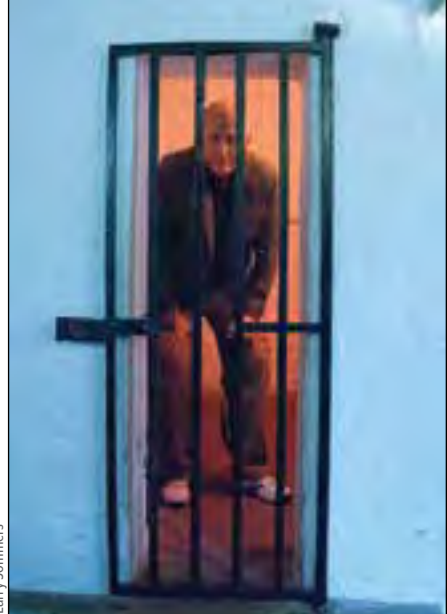




Leiden American Pilgrim Museum director Jeremy Bangs introduces us to the treasures of the small but special museum.



British Seminar participants, from left, Tom Van Tassell, Cindy Rice, Mike Fales, and Betsey Mauro, view the sole remaining building from the once extensive compound of Scrooby Manor, where Postmaster William Brewster lived and hosted his Separatist church in the early 1600s.



Mike Fales peers out from one of the cells in the Boston's old Guild Hall, where Brewster and Bradford were jailed in 1607.

Also at Cambridge, a caretaker of St. Edward's church invited us inside on the spur of the moment, showed us the pulpit from which Hugh Latimer (1487-1555) gave England's first Protestant sermon; and he (the caretaker) commented: "From here the golden thread of clear thought ran straight to Massachusetts."

At Salisbury, another Anglican canon, after meeting us and learning of our pilgrimage, mentioned us specially in the hourly public prayer given from the cathedral pulpit.

## Pilgrims Remembered

At St. Mary's Church, Rotherhithe, London, the rector, at the conclusion of the regularly-scheduled Anglo-Catholic<sup>3</sup> mass, welcomed us and showed us a silver communion vessel that was donated to the church in 1620, the year the Pilgrims sailed. He also accompanied us to the Thames waterfront and showed us the place where the *Mayflower* set sail.

And in Leiden, Jeremy Bangs, director of the Leiden American Pilgrims Museum, opened the museum at a special hour, showed us artifacts from Brewster and other members of the Scrooby company, and told us in detail of his ongoing research (alas, in need of further funding) into the history of the Plymouth Colony.

All of these accommodating people were to us as angels placed in our path to enrich and deepen our journey of discovery. Even more—they bore living testimony to the fact that our Congregational heritage is important to more people than just us.

<sup>3</sup> Anglo-Catholic churches belong organizationally to the Church of England, but they worship with "high," Roman-style ritual. The Pilgrims would not have worshipped at such a church; but *Mayflower's* captain, Christopher Jones, was a member of St. Mary's parish and is buried in its churchyard.

## First Congregational Church of Rochester, Massachusetts

ORGANIZED 1703



### SEEKING FULL-TIME SENIOR PASTOR

The Spirit is very much alive in our vibrant, active and growing church with deep roots in this small community.

We are seeking a Senior Pastor to lead and inspire our Biblically-focused and passionately Congregationalist church.

Please see our Church Information Form on the NACCC website and visit our church's website:  
[www.rochestercongregational.org](http://www.rochestercongregational.org)

**If God is calling you, please submit your information  
directly to [1stCCChurchPSC@comcast.net](mailto:1stCCChurchPSC@comcast.net)**

# Big Faith *in a* Small Town

Lori Hardwick



Members and friends of Rapid River Congregational Church gather for a Homecoming Dinner.

## RAPID RIVER CHURCH CELEBRATES 125 YEARS

The first church organized in Rapid River, Mich., was the little Congregational church gathered there after a series of revival meetings in 1888.

The little town in the Upper Peninsula had sprung up almost instantly when the Soo Line railroad was built in 1887, and “citizens expressed a unanimous desire for a church,” according to a history compiled for the church’s centennial.

In its first hundred years, there were 35 different pastors, four of them serving twice at different periods. The sixth pastor, the Rev. George E. Empson (served 1891-94), is said to have used a railroad velocipede to travel the six miles from his home in Gladstone to Rapid River on Sundays, stopping en route at Masonville to preach there as well. In the 25 years that have passed since its 100th anniversary, Rapid River Congregational Church has had only two ministers—the Rev. Gregg Swope (1984-96) and the Rev. Bill Rafuse (1996-present).

Having joined the United Church of Christ when that body was formed in 1957, the church changed its affiliation soon after the Rev. Larry Balliene (1975-81) became its pastor, joining the

Wisconsin Congregational Association and the National Association of Congregational Christian Churches.

To celebrate its 125th anniversary, the church has planned a series of special events, with August an especially busy time.

Rev. Balliene and his wife, Pansy, celebrated with the Congregation on Sunday, Aug. 4, and letters of remembrance from other living former pastors were read as well.

On Aug. 11, retired Methodist minister Devin Chisholm and his wife, Yvette, from Standish (Lower Peninsula), Mich., performed gospel music in the Sunday service and a picnic that followed, reminding the Rapid River church of its roots in an evangelical campaign.

Saturday, Aug. 17, saw a Homecoming Dinner including music from alumni



The Chisholms



Rapid River Junior Choir alumni (above) reprise their 1988 appearance (right) at the NACCC Meeting in Green Bay.



Lori Hardwick

of the Rapid River Junior Choir that performed at the 1988 NACCC Annual Meeting in Green Bay. The alumni also took part in the Sunday morning service as the congregation sang “We Walk By Faith,” a hymn by pianist and junior choir director Karen Pratt, composed for the church’s 100th anniversary and now included in *Hymns for a Pilgrim People*.

Sunday services on Aug. 25 and Sept. 1 included recognition of those called into ministry from the congregation, with the Rev. Susan Gaul preaching Aug. 25 and lay ministry student Brenda Eagle-Ransom preaching Sept. 1.

Additional events planned through Dec. 15 will give members continuing opportunities to reflect on their past, but Rev. Bill Rafuse is mainly focused on the present and the future.

“Because God—who has held the Rapid River Congregational Church in his loving hands for the past 125 years and has blessed her with His grace—is never changing and is all ways faithful, we believe that there are great things yet in store,” he said.

Lori Hardwick



## NEWS

### BREAD OF LIFE



*Rev. Julio and Elba Santana, center, pose with mission volunteers and members of the Bread of Life Children's Choir, led by Patricia Hinson, second from left.*

The Mission and Outreach Ministry Council, with a few Missionary Society Alumni, started the Annual Meeting this year with a visit to the **Bread of Life Mission (Florida)**, an hour southwest of Orlando. Visitors toured the thrift store and the mission's new space at the Methodist Church, where the after-school program is held. After lunch, the children's choir performed; and by popular demand they also sang for the General Assembly on Saturday.

### GOING TO ECHO

Right after the Annual Meeting, 11 people (MOMC, Alumni, and Missionaries) visited ECHO—Educational Concerns for Hunger Organization—an NACCC Recommended Mission. ECHO does research on sustainable food sources along the “10-40 window,” the regions located between 10 and 40 degrees north of the equator, where two-thirds of the world's people live.



*Matthew Oladele pumps water.*

They learned about types of stoves and fuel sources, composting, pumps, and super food plants like the moringa and neem trees, as well as making fences with plants like bamboo.

Thanks goes out to the Missionary Society Alumni Association that financed this trip to ECHO. It was especially beneficial to the missionaries, who will take this information home and use it to improve the lives of their communities.

### CLOSING AFTER 41 YEARS

The end of May marked the final days for the **Rebecca Mackish Mission (Kansas)**. Ruth Branch started this after-school mission in 1972. It was named after her mother, Rebecca Mackish. For 41 years, hundreds of children passed through its doors to hear about Jesus and his love for them. Barbara Branch continued the work after her mom, Ruth, died in 2010.



*Barbara and Ruth Branch*

The decision to close was made jointly by the mission's board and Barbara, after many prayers and tears. Barbara said it has been an honor to direct this mission. The three houses that made up the mission will be sold and Barbara will move into a place without stairs. Barbara plans to do volunteer work in her retirement days, after a much needed vacation.

### TYPHOONS SLAM INTO THE PHILIPPINES

Typhoon Utor hit the northern Philippines last week, flooding many areas and causing mud slides. About 20 typhoons pass through the Philippines and vicinity per season, from May to October. Only six to nine of these make landfall, but most of this typhoon activity is in the northern area. **The National Association of Congregational Churches (Philippines)** works with many pastors in this region. They are asking for your prayers.

**Christian Mission in the Far East (Philippines)** conducts missions in the southern region. They are still trying to recover from typhoons that hit their area earlier this season.

### HAITIAN MISSION SCRATCHED

**GAP/Canaan Ministries (Haiti)** has been removed from our list of Recommended Missions. The mission was recommended by the Congregational Christian Church of North Manchester, Ind., which no longer has a working relationship with GAP/Canaan and therefore no longer recommends it to our churches. The Mission and Outreach Ministry Council, likewise, has received no communication from this mission. May God bless this ministry, if it continues.

## NEEDS

### MISSION PROJECTS FOR YOUR CHURCH

Buy a goat for \$40 or mosquito nets for \$8 to support our missions. On the NACCC Web site click on Missions, then on Missionary Society. At the bottom of the page you will find a link to a list of mission projects your church can do for under \$200. Or enter in your browser: [nacc.org/CMSUploads/1310\\_Mission\\_Project\\_Under\\_200\\_July\\_2013\\_website.pdf](http://nacc.org/CMSUploads/1310_Mission_Project_Under_200_July_2013_website.pdf).

### CHRISTMAS TO MISSIONS

Now is the time to think about Christmas giving to the missions. To have your donations reach the missions by Christmas, please send them to the NACCC office by Nov. 15. For missions on a quarterly payment schedule—**Argentina, Bulgaria, Christ to the Villages, Word Alive, Maine Sea Coast Mission, Piney Woods, Seafarer's Friend, and Morgan Scott Project**—send your donations by October 15.

Here are some of the Christmas needs:

- **Christ to the Villages (Nigeria)** gives care packages to widows and pastors in the community and gifts to the school staff.
- **National Association of Congregational Churches (Philippines)** gives grocery packs for 44 pastors and workers and a \$70 Christmas bonus.
- **Panamerican Institute (Mexico)** does Christmas baskets for each of the families of their students.
- **Morgan Scott Project (Tennessee)** provides toys for children, gifts for teenagers, and money for holiday programs. Mittens and hats are also appreciated.
- **Seafarer's Friend (Massachusetts)** can use toiletries for ditty bags as well as caps and gloves for the seafarers.

A complete list of Christmas needs will soon be on the NACCC Web site at: [nacc.org/Missions/MissionarySociety.aspx](http://nacc.org/Missions/MissionarySociety.aspx)

### FRIENDS OF THE MISSIONS

To ensure that our Dollar-for-Dollar giving policy continues, the Mission and Outreach Ministry Council invites you to become a contributing member of the Missionary Society. You may become a Friend of the Missionary Society by making an annual contribution to the Missionary Society Administrative Fund.

The categories to become a Friend of Missions are:

\$100—Bronze Membership    \$250—Silver Membership    \$500—Gold Membership

### FISHERS OF MEN

Julie and Victor Zaragoza of **Fishers of Men Mission (Mexico)** have an adopted son named Danny. He was born with several heart and lung defects. On Aug. 12, at the National Pediatric Institute of Mexico City, he was operated on to correct some of these life-threatening defects. The surgery was a success; however Danny is still in need of prayer as he recovers. To read more about Danny, go to [fishersofmenmexico.org](http://fishersofmenmexico.org). Please keep him and the family in prayer.



### PRAYER REQUEST

Pray for Pastor Hezron, a pastor with the **Indian Community Fellowship**, near the India/Bhutan border, where there is tremendous political unrest.

### Thank you for your support!

For more information on any of these missions; or to make a donation to any of the above projects; or if you would like any of our missionaries to visit your church or your State and Regional Association meeting, or to do pulpit supply, please call Linda Miller at the NACCC office, 800-262-1620, ext. 1618.

**The Missionary Society, NACCC**  
PO Box 288, Oak Creek WI 53154

For a complete listing of NACCC Mission Projects, please go to our Web site, [www.nacc.org](http://www.nacc.org), and click on "Missions."

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## Barry's World

### Glimpses of England's past and present

by Larry Sommers

Review of *A Congregationalist's Journey:*

*Photographs of Sacred and Secular England*

by Barry W. Szymanski

blurb.com, \$112.21 Hardcover/\$16.98 Ebook, Apple iPad

The Rev. Barry Szymanski, J.D., is a man of many talents. A practicing lawyer and ordained minister in Wauwatosa, Wis., his frequent donation of useful photographs “for the good of the order” has earned him a spot as contributing photographer on the masthead of this magazine.

Now he has put together a book of beautiful and thought-provoking images from a British Seminar tour of England in 2007. Gathering a collection of such pictures, captured in the midst of a physically and intellectually strenuous “Pilgrim tour,” is no small feat.

Dedicated Congregationalists will be interested to see these photos, since some of them show people they may be acquainted with—companions on Barry's tour and British Congregationalists met en route—while many others show English sites relevant to our shared tradition, such as Austerfield, Babworth, Scrooby, and Norwich. His sumptuous images of interior details of St. Botolph's Church in Boston (home church of the Rev. John Cotton and other early settlers of that other Boston) were especially valuable to me, since the church was not open at the time we visited, when we only saw its imposing exterior.



But that's only half the story, for Barry also—surprisingly, to me—included a generous serving of his slice-of-life photos of present-day England (a sub-subtitle of his book's subtitle



explains nonchalantly, “Contrasts of the old and new”). And this is where he shines as a photographer. Images like the wide-angle shot of riders on the Tube, which spreads across pp. 10-11; the London coffee shop composition on p. 68, in which a cashier engrossed in her daily tabloid reigns magisterially over a shopful of customers with their own disparate agendas; and p. 84's magnificent Plymouth harborscape with a group of frolicsome swimmers in foreground silhouetted by the dying rays of “the golden hour”—these feast the eye and the mind, while calling us back from the bracing past to the enigmatic and challenging present. There are many other photographs in this book as well that will repay the more-than-casual browser.

I haven't been able to divine Barry's organizational plan or overall outlook for this book. If I may presume to offer advice, don't worry too much about that. Just look at the photos. For history buff and visual arts connoisseur alike, the images speak for themselves.



Norm Lennburg

**LARRY SOMMERS**, editor of *THE CONGREGATIONALIST*, has a long-standing interest in photography and always values visual evidence that a photographer was thinking about the final image, and not merely pushing the button.

## Shaping America's Consciousness

by Arlin Larson

Review of *The New England Soul: Preaching and Religious Culture in Colonial New England*, 25th Anniversary Edition  
by Harry S. Stout  
Oxford University Press, USA, 416 pages  
\$23.70 paperback/\$10.49 Kindle (Amazon)



Enjoying a virtual monopoly on public communications, the pre-Revolutionary Congregational minister fulfilled at once the roles of op-ed columnist, radio talk show host, self-help guru, network news anchor, university professor, government consultant, best-selling author, and internet blogger in addition to his formal functions of preacher, teacher, and spiritual guide. He (they were all men) delivered lengthy sermons twice on Sundays and on virtually every public occasion. These “occasional” sermons included those for fast days after natural disasters or military defeats, thanksgiving days after victories, election days, militia and artillery musters, funerals, ordinations, and lectures on doctrine. Not only were these sermons heard in every town and village, they dominated the printed media as many were expanded and published as pamphlets.

Sunday sermons throughout the period followed a consistent sin-salvation-service pattern. Occasional sermons articulated New England’s role as a “New Israel,” God’s chosen people, whose corporate success would depend in turn on their personal piety. Stout characterizes the collective sermonizing of this period, which he sees as culminating in the American Revolution’s call to liberty, as “America’s sermon to the world” (p. 320).

For all the underlying unity, however, colonial New England preaching was not static. Stout traces five generations

of Congregational ministers through five periods of colonial history—all of which required major and unsettling, modifications. The original biblical commonwealth, for instance, had to give way to religious tolerance and increasing Anglicization when Massachusetts’ original charter was revoked and a royal governor appointed. The French and Indian Wars raised the possibility of annihilation at the hands of the French (Roman Catholic) “Anti-Christ.” The revival fervor of the Great Awakening split the clergy and seemed to make irrelevant old methods of sermon delivery. At every point, the clergy bemoaned declining influence, loss of respect, inadequate salaries, and signs of declining piety. Indeed, the very success of New England preaching in instilling and institutionalizing the ideal of liberty, combined with a growing population, plentiful land on the frontier, and economic change did result in the clergy losing their pride of place as the recognized authorities on most matters both private and public.

*The New England Soul* is well worth reading just to see how, in great detail, ministers and Congregational churches did respond to challenges not so different from those we face today, albeit from a far less influential position in a far more pluralistic society. It is clear that Stout believes, as I do, that those old ideas of liberty, personal responsibility, and call to become God’s ambassadors or servants (there was a huge colonial dust-up over those terms) are relevant for humanity today as much as ever.

*The New England Soul* was originally written as a corrective to Perry Miller’s groundbreaking *The New England Mind* (Harvard University Press, 1939, 1953), which Stout believed had painted a somewhat inaccurate picture, based only on published sermons. After twenty-five years, *The New England Soul* remains the authoritative work on colonial New England preaching and has been re-issued without change except for a new foreword. The availability of this new edition is a welcome event for all who love the Congregational Way.



**THE REV. DR. ARLIN T. LARSON** is minister of First Congregational Church, Searsport, Maine, and is historian of the NACCC.

## Bernice Gamage

**B**ernice Rae Gamage, 94, died in Puyallup, Wash., April 22.

Bernice was born in Arlington, Mass., but grew up in Maine and her speech was pure "Down East." She called herself a small-town girl who saw the world, visiting more than 35 countries, all 50 states, and every province in Canada. Valedictorian of her high school class, she went to business school in Boston and worked for several years on IBM card sorting machines until she met and married Russell Gamage in 1941. She had two children, Cherry and Rusty, and two grandchildren, Lynelle and David.

Bernice loved the Congregational church. She was a member of the Church of the Messiah in Los Angeles for over 50 years, 40 of them as the church secretary. She was active at all levels: in the local church, the Cal-West Association, the National Association, and the International Congregational Fellowship. She served the National Association on the Spiritual Resources Commission 1967-1974, the Missionary Society 1976-1979, and the Nominating Committee 1987-1989 and 1996-1998.

She was very proud of having attended over 50 annual meetings of the National Association in a row.



## Marguerite Porter

**A**nna Marguerite Porter, 95, died April 15 in Sebring, Fla. Born in Kankakee, Ill., in 1917, she joined Sudan Interior Mission in 1947 and faithfully served 40 years as a nurse specializing in leprosy care in Nigeria. She and her husband, Derek, in their retirement years headed a ministry of cutting and trimming stamps for resale to raise funds for missionary work.

Linda Miller, NACCC administrator of missions and outreach, learned in a letter from Mrs. Porter's children that she and her husband in the 1950s were Christian mentors in Nigeria to the then-young Solomon and Margaret Oladele,

founders of Christ to the Villages mission in Shao, Nigeria. Solomon himself has passed away, but his son Matthew continues to lead the missionary effort that descends from the pioneering work of Mr. and Mrs. Porter. Memorial gifts in their honor may be sent to Christ to the Villages, c/o Mission and Outreach Ministry Council, NACCC, P.O. Box 288, Oak Creek WI 53154.

## Jennifer Henderson

**T**he Rev. Jennifer Gloria Henderson, 58, died Sunday, May 26, 2013 at home, surrounded by her husband and children.

Jennifer was born on Martha's Vineyard and grew up in Scituate, Mass. with her four siblings. She graduated from Scituate High School and earned a bachelor's degree in Early Childhood Education from Westfield State College and a master's in Education from Lesley University.

On August 7, 1977, she married Peter Henderson at the First Trinitarian Congregational Church in Scituate. The couple moved to the Berkshires in 1978, where Jennifer worked as a nursery school teacher and then opened her own school, Barrington Bear Care, in 1986.

She was an active member of Berkshire Community Church in Richmond, Mass., for many years. She sang in the choir, taught Sunday school to adults and children, and devoted herself to lay ministry.

In 1998 Jennifer discerned a call to become an ordained minister. In 2004, after six years of weekly commuting to Andover Newton Theological School, she received her M.Div. degree and was ordained by Berkshire Community Church, where she served as associate pastor until January 2010 and as pastor until July 2011. After her cancer diagnosis in 2008, she continued to live fully with remarkable courage, kindness and faith until the end of her life.

Jennifer is survived by her husband, Peter, by three children and four grandchildren, and by her mother, two brothers, and her twin sister.



# Pastorates and Pulpits

## RECENT CALLS

Central Congregational Church of La Mesa, Calif., has called the Rev. Gary “Scott” Archer as senior minister.

First Union Congregational Church of Quincy, Ill., has called the Rev. Dr. Charles Hetzler as senior minister.

Britton Congregational Christian Church of Britton, Mich. has called the Rev. Jim Schenck as pastor.

Stuart Congregational Church, Stuart, Fla., has called the Rev. Timothy Roberts as pastor.

First Congregational Community Church of Roscoe, Ill., has called the Rev. Lisa Abb as senior minister.

## ORDINATIONS

First Congregational Church of Hudson, Mich., ordained the Rev. James Backing with concurrence of a vicinage council, June 8, 2013.

First Congregational Church of Millinocket, Maine, ordained the Rev. Terry Given, July 27, 2013.

## IN SEARCH

### SENIOR MINISTERS

Baleville Congregational Christian Church  
*Newton, N.J.*

Bethany Union Church  
*Chicago, Ill.*

Church of Christ Congregational  
*Stony Creek, Conn.*

Community of Faith and Fellowship  
*Limerick, Maine*

First Congregational Church  
*Albany, N.Y.*

First Congregational Church  
*Durand, Mich.*

First Congregational Church  
*Marshalltown, Iowa*

First Congregational Church  
*Porterville, Calif.*

First Congregational Church  
*Rochester, Mass.*

First Congregational Church  
*Searsport, Maine*

First Congregational Church of Ceredo  
*Ceredo, W.V.*

Hampshire Colony Congregational Church  
*Princeton, Ill.*

Ingle Chapel Congregational Church  
*Milton-Freewater, Ore.*

Little Stone Church  
*Mackinac Island, Mich.*

LaMoille Congregational Community Church  
*Marshalltown, Iowa*

Oneonta Congregational Church  
*South Pasadena, Calif.*

Plymouth Congregational Church  
*San Diego, Calif.*

Riverpoint Congregational Church  
*West Warwick, R.I.*

St. Luke’s Reformed Church  
*Salisbury, N.C.*

United Church of Beloit  
*Beloit, Wis.*

United Church of Marco Island  
*Marco Island, Fla.*

## NON-NACCC MINISTERS

Pilgrim Congregational Church  
*Billings, Mont.*

## PART-TIME MINISTERS

Congregational Christian Fellowship Church  
*Winchester, Va.*

Second Congregational Church  
*Jewett City, Conn.*

## ASSOCIATE MINISTER FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

First Congregational Church  
*Nantucket, Mass.*

## CHRISTIAN EDUCATION DIRECTOR

First Congregational Church  
*Kingston, N.H.*

# Calendar

Oct. 18-19

Mather Redux: New Perspectives on Cotton Mather—*Boston, Mass.*  
*Congregational Library Symposium and walking tour, \$50 registration*  
*Contact Kate Parsons, kparsons@14beacon.org or 617-523-0470, ext. 230*

Oct. 21

General copy deadline for *THE CONGREGATIONALIST* December 2013 issue  
*Contact Larry Sommers, larrysommers@gmail.com or 608-238-7731.*

Oct. 29-31

Congregational History and Polity Intensive Seminar—*Olivet, Mich.*  
*Contact Marie Steele, msteele@nacc.org or 800-262-1620, ext. 1614.*

## SAVE THE DATE

Feb. 7-9, 2014

Word & Note, with Amy-Jill Levine and  
Mainstreet Brass Quintet—*Wichita, Kansas*  
*Contact Don Olsen, dolsen@plymouth-church.net*

June 19-26, 2014

Short-term Mission Experience—*Misión Mazahua, Mexico.*  
*Contact Jack Brown, pilgrim\_pastor@hotmail.com or 269-749-2631*

June 28-July 1, 2014

NACCC 60th Annual Meeting and Conference  
—*Omaha, Nebraska*