



"Today and Tomorrow" stained-glass window by Richard Marks, North Congregational Church, Farmington Hills, Mich. Photo by Mary Bledron

WHO IS MY NEIGHBOR?

Jesus responded to the question with a powerful answer: Every one of God's children is my neighbor.

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Next June we, as Congregationalists from across the country, will meet in Detroit/Dearborn for our annual National Meeting and Conference, hosted by the Southeastern Michigan Association.

We will see a great American city rising from the ashes to be reborn and renewed. We will discover the beauty and importance of inter-faith cooperation, love, and respect. We will have the opportunity to enjoy the many attractions of Southeast Michigan like the amazing Greenfield Village, Motown Hitsville USA, First Congregational's Underground Railroad, and so much more.

2016 NACCC Annual Meeting & Conference

June 25-28 at the DoubleTree by Hilton Detroit/Dearborn

Bible Lecturer: The Rev. Dr. Stephen Butler Murray,
President of Detroit's Ecumenical Theological Seminary.
The Congregational Lecturer: The Rev. William C. Lange

The CONGREGATIONALIST

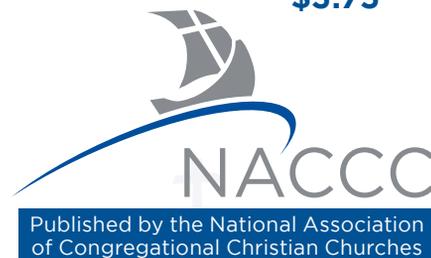
Magazine of the Congregational Way since 1849

VOL. 167/NO. 4

CONGREGATIONALIST.ORG

DECEMBER 2015

\$3.75



**REJOICING
SPIRITS**
IN TERRE HAUTE

CALLING PASTOR
RIGHT

INTERNATIONAL
MISSIONS
EXPERIENCE

**A NEW
NATURAL
THEOLOGY**

**PASTORS
AS COACHES?**

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Henry Opukaha'ia (1792-1818)

Henry Opukaha'ia (also known as Obookiah) was probably born on the Big Island [of Hawaii] in 1792, and when he was somewhere between 10 and 13 years old both his parents were killed in an intertribal war. ... In about 1807, Henry talked his way aboard an American ship called the *Triumph*. After a long time at sea ... Henry found himself in New York in 1809. The ship's captain then took Henry to live with him and his family in New Haven, Connecticut.

Tutored by a Yale student named Edwin Dwight (son of Yale's president), Henry learned quickly to read English. Henry began to read enthusiastically, and he began to see that the "gods" of Hawaii were like the idols ridiculed by the prophet Isaiah. They were made of wood, the same wood that people used to warm their homes and cook their food. People created the Hawaiian "gods," but the true God had created people. ...

This boy, who had trained for Hawaii's *kahuna* priesthood, now spoke to the [New England] farmers about his new faith in Jesus. And in his spare time, he was always studying. Churches in the Litchfield, Connecticut, area often asked him to speak in their worship services. Henry began translating the Bible into Hawaiian and also began writing a dictionary and grammar of the Hawaiian language. He attended classes at Yale, studying Latin, Hebrew, geometry, and geography, and he finished writing his autobiography in 1815.

By 1817, Henry was enrolled in the [Congregational] Foreign Mission School. ... The school's stated aim was to provide "education in our country of heathen youths, in such a manner as, with subsequent professional instruction, will qualify them to become missionaries, physicians, schoolmasters or interpreters, and to communicate with heathen nations such knowledge in agriculture and the arts as may prove the means of promoting Christianity and civilization."

A year later, Henry was ready to return to Hawaii. But he fell ill ... [and he] died on February 17, 1818. ... Henry greatly impressed a seminary student named Hiram Bingham ... [who] decided to go to Hawaii in Henry's place; and on October 23, 1819, Rev. and Mrs. Hiram Bingham and 12 other missionaries sailed on the ship *Thaddeus* for Hawaii. Their arrival in 1820 was the beginning of the conversion of the Hawaiian Islands. Missionaries would finish Henry's work on the Bible, dictionary, and grammar.

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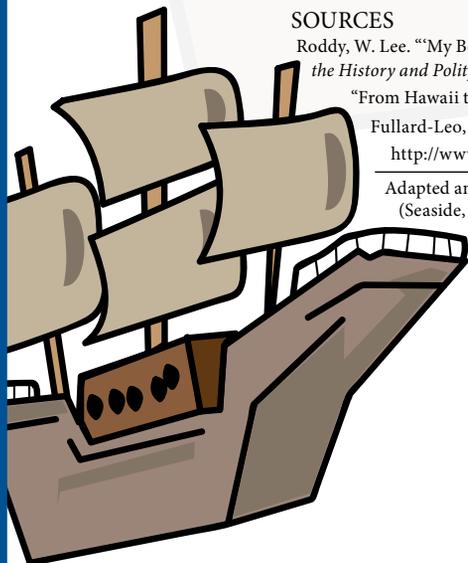
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All these died in faith, and received not the promises, but saw them afar off, and believed them, and received them thankfully, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth.

—**HEBREWS 11:13 (Geneva Bible)**



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EDITORIAL STATEMENT

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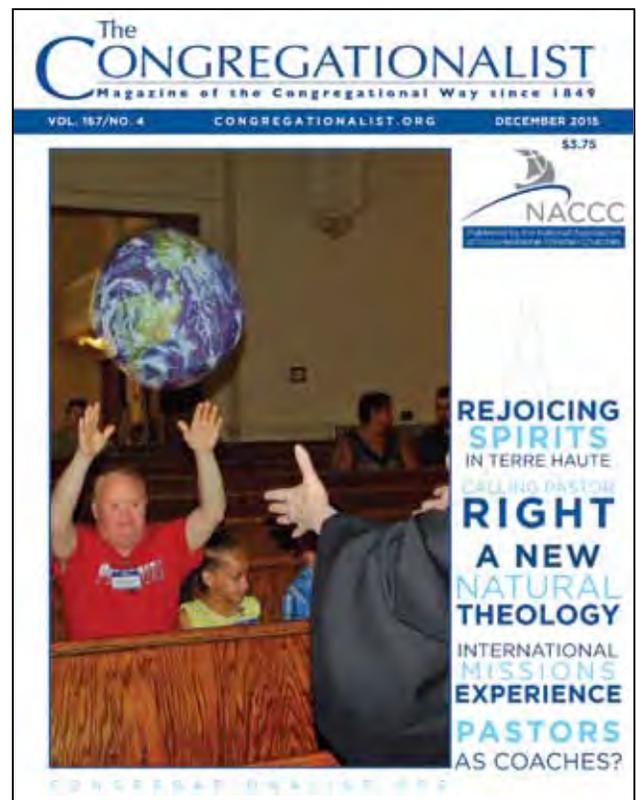
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ON THE COVER:

Vincent Pfister tosses planet Earth into the waiting hands of the Rev. Dawn Carlson during a Rejoicing Spirits worship service at First Congregational Church of Terre Haute, Ind. See pp. 16-17.

Yet to Come...

by Michael Chittum

One of my favorite old movies is the 1952 film, *Plymouth Adventure*, starring Spencer Tracy and Gene Tierney, which aired recently on a cable channel specializing in old movies. From the title, you can guess the story. It depicts the journey of the Pilgrims from Southampton to New England in 1620. While the film engages in some speculation about what might have happened before and during the voyage, the director and the screenwriter portrayed the group of Pilgrims with respect.

The title of the movie was spot on. That band of Pilgrims and the others who traveled with them were on an adventure, which is defined as “an unusual and exciting, typically hazardous, experience or activity.” Obviously, the entire company of travelers on the *Mayflower* faced the reality of losing their lives on the journey.

There was certainly, also, a sense of spiritual adventure for the Pilgrims. They felt God called them to make the journey; yet, none could know with certainty how their faith in God would be affected by their new life. Would their faith in God’s call and providence be shaken by the hardships of a wilderness environment?

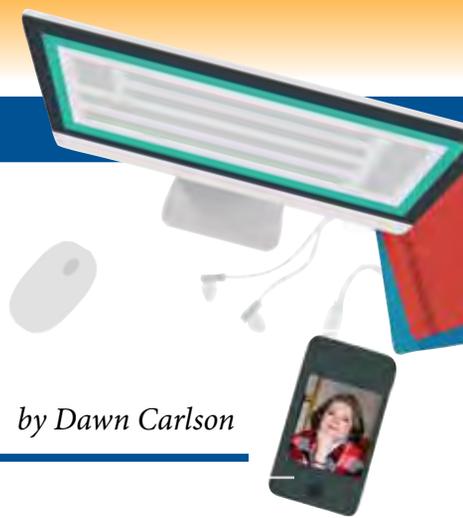
As a people of God, we are currently in the Season of Advent. Interestingly, “adventure” and “Advent” share a common origin. Both words point to something that is “to come.” In Advent, the Christian celebrates in hope, but also in faith, of what is to come in our spiritual journey. As we consider the Scriptural passages that are read on these Sundays, we are reminded of the prophetic words looking at the first and the second coming of the Messiah. We are reminded of our need for repentance and for turning our lives to walk in the light of God. We rejoice in the promise of God to Mary.

In Advent, we know how the story ends. Yet, each Advent should also be an adventurous journey of faith for us. Not in the hazardous sense, but in the sense of an exciting encounter with the presence of God.

Dear people of God, may this Season of Advent be a Season of Adventure in your spiritual journey as you encounter the presence of God in a new and fresh way!



MICHAEL CHITTUM
Executive Secretary



Not If, but When

by Dawn Carlson

It's never a matter of if. It's simply a matter of *when*: Your computer crashes, files are lost, and your work and personal world comes to a screeching halt.

Sometimes, a brilliant geek can recover those files, but that's an iffy prospect at best and can take days or weeks.

What's a better alternative? Back it up! You know you should.

Now's the time to consider your options and make a commitment, so you'll always have access to those nativity pageant photos from 2009, your favorite sermon from two years ago and those pics from Christmas at Aunt Flo's house.

There are three good options.

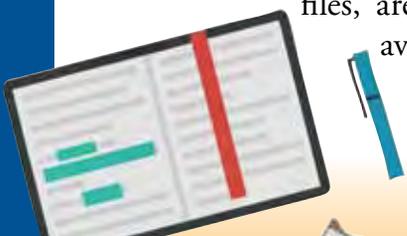
The first is an external hard drive where you can store any files that you "drag and drop" or copy from your computer. Of course, you must copy and save your files to the external hard drive. Such drives can fail, but they typically last years before needing to be replaced and are easily portable.

Your second option is a flash drive (sometimes called a "jump" or "thumb" drive). These are very portable and small—about the size of your thumb—and attach to your computer by its USB port. The largest such drives have 256 GB of storage space, but smaller ones, suitable for backing up small numbers of files, are inexpensive and readily available.

Your third option is "cloud storage," where your files are backed up to a server in a data center far, far away. (In the cloud!) You upload your files through an application on your computer. Many cloud storage sites offer limited free space, with fees for larger amounts of storage. Check out Google Drive, iDrive, Microsoft OneDrive and Dropbox for ideas and further information.

These storage methods are great for most of us and relatively inexpensive. If you need more, or if you want backup to happen automatically, try programs such as CrashPlan or Carbonite. For about \$5 a month, your hard drive is continuously backed up without your having to do a thing. (Apple's built-in Time Machine does the same thing with no monthly charge, but you'll need to use an external hard drive.) These methods allow you to resurrect your files from any other computer and reinstall on a new system.

Whichever option you choose, "Just do it." Or Aunt Flo's photos could be gone forever!



THE REV. DAWN CARLSON pastors First Congregational Church of Terre Haute, Ind. Like many in ministry today, she finds herself having to grasp as much tech stuff as possible. If you have technology questions, you can e-mail her, dawncarl@aol.com, or write to Dawn Carlson, 630 Ohio, Terre Haute IN 47807.

A scientist/theologian asks how an appreciation of nature can inform our relationship with God.

Toward a New

Natural Theology

by Lisanne Winslow

The day was warm and moist as I stood at the edge of the sea with 11 college students. As a biologist and professor at the University of Northwestern, a Christian liberal arts institution in St. Paul, Minn., I have the privilege of teaching students about the biological world through the lens of the Christian faith. That day in wading boots in the intertidal zone, we studied the rigors of the marine environment, marveling at the diversity and beauty of the species we discovered.

In our *biological* studies, we saw a deep and beautiful *spiritual* principle emerge: The bright blue sea stars, orange sponges, spotted limpets, striped snails, and spiky sea urchins co-existed in peace with one another, camouflaging against predators, occupying a very special and important purpose in the small “kingdom” of their ecological niche. Not only did the study of each organism’s anatomy, physiology, behavior, and ecology stimulate our intellect, but the vast array of colors, textures, sizes, and shapes of the animals captured our spirits as we snapped pictures with our cell phones.

We found ourselves caught up in a moment of worship, deeply moved by the creativity of the Creator. We commented on how this community of sea creatures was so very similar to the Body of Christ, each one with a unique function as Paul outlines in 1 Corinthians 12:12-27. *We saw a spiritual principle reflected in the natural world*, and it became a deeply meaningful moment in my students’ journey of faith. Several said, “*We wish we could show this to the people at our church. They would truly believe in the magnificence of God.*” As



associate pastor at People’s Congregational Church in Bayport, Minnesota, my pastor’s heart was moved to share this with my congregation; and I did.

New dimensions of faith take place, in my congregation or my classroom, when we turn our focus to the Creator God *who is there*, Jehova Shammah—powerful, all loving, and filled with grace and beauty. We can tune in to the messages embedded within the creation, and the deep spirituality that draws us in when we engage with nature. The Apostle Paul instructs us in Romans 1:20, “For since the creation of the world *God’s invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature*—have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that people are without excuse.” This scripture holds great meaning for our lives of faith. God’s qualities, God’s essence, God’s power are “clearly seen ... from what has been made.”

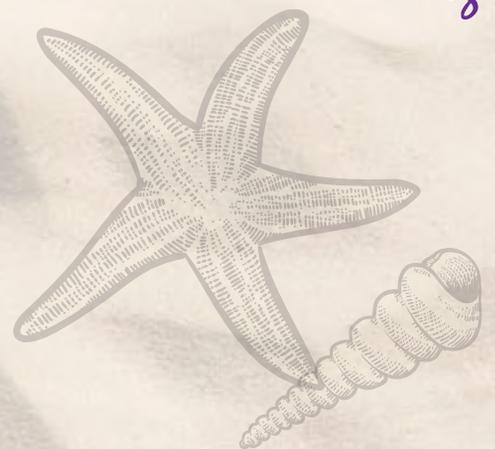
I wonder, could Christians—could we as Congregationalists—be drawn into a more meaningful contemporary faith through a dynamic experience of the Divine *in nature*? Could that experience emerge out of the natural feelings people have when they are immersed in the creation, through spiritual engagement with a Christocentric *Theology of Nature*?

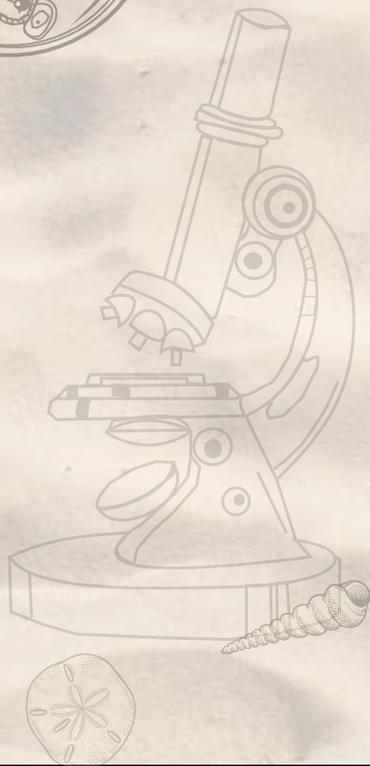
I have always marveled that a beautiful sunset or a day by the sea refreshes the soul, often making one feel closer to God. Perhaps nature has something to say to us, something that in our contemporary practice of faith we have missed or forgotten. It was the Psalmist who said in Psalm 19,

The heavens declare the glory of God;
the skies proclaim the work of his hands.
Day after day they pour forth speech;
night after night they reveal knowledge.
They have no speech, they use no words;
no sound is heard from them.
Yet their voice goes out into all the earth,
their words to the ends of the world.

What are the heavens declaring? What are the skies pouring forth? According to Scripture, as well as our personal experiences in nature, they are telling us of the knowledge of the Creator, the revelation of God’s eternal attributes, the communication of a God who loves us and who is calling out to us. God has something to say to us.

In our biological studies, we saw a deep and beautiful spiritual principle emerge.





Thus, the task of the “New Natural Theology” becomes the discovery of a *new species of knowing*. This new species of knowing, one that incorporates knowledge and care of the natural world with a desire to experience the Divine, will foster a meaningful, contemporary *faith* through a dynamic experience of the Divine; one that enhances the natural feelings people have when they are immersed in the creation. Alister McGrath, professor of Science and Religion at Oxford University, puts it this way in his book, *A Fine-Tuned Universe*:

Might nature be studded with emblazoned clues to its meanings, and human minds shaped so that these might be identified, and their significance grasped? Nature is here understood to have the capacity to represent and to speak. ... [I]t might be “instressed” with the signs and symbols that point to its wise meaning.

Thus, in light of McGrath’s assertion, how exciting it is to tune in and discover the revelations, embedded in the natural world, that the Creator put there to lead us into a deeper union with Himself, an experience of the full Trinitarian essence, in the revelation of Christ.

But this understanding of the Creator in and through the creation reaches much farther back into historical theology. Jonathan Edwards, Congregationalist minister and theologian, is well-known for the intense images in his early Puritan-era sermons leading to the Great Awakening. However, searching deeper into Edwards’ corpus, we find an extraordinary theologian with a heart deeply connected to a God who seeks to communicate to the beloved creatures. Edwards’ God was a God whose primary reason for creating this world was singularly this: To communicate the fullness of all of God’s attributes, love, and compassion to creatures who not only had the *capacity* to receive these divine gifts, but who could delight in them.

In Edwards’ magnum opus, *The End for which God Created the World* (published posthumously around 1765) we see a developed theology of an intentional God who created in order to have full union with the creatures created out of love. One way that God communicated divine love to the creatures, according to Edwards, was in and through the natural world. Edwards draws on scriptures such as Colossians 1:16, “For in him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things have been created through him and for him”; and John 1:3, “Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made.” These scriptures indicate that all of the creation was made by Christ, for Christ and in Christ.



Congregationalist minister Jonathan Edwards, best known for stern sermons that inspired the Great Awakening, also developed a theology of an intentional God who created in order to have full union with the creatures created out of love. Painting by Henry Augustus Loop, 1831–1895, after Joseph Badger, 1708 - 1765.

Edwards emerged from extended experiences in nature with the revelation that *images of divine things* are embedded in the creation by God to communicate

spiritually sweet divine truths to the human heart. Edwards sought to recover our birthright as creatures loved by God who revel in being part of a grand and beautiful creation. He explored this idea of a Christology of Nature (although he did not call it such at that time) in a delightful and beautiful little book called *Shadows and Images of Divine Things* (ca. 1725). In this book Edwards is given a revelation of God's character, essence, and redemptive plan in Christ, in and through nature. He states,

The works of God are but a kind of voice or language of God, to instruct intelligent beings in things pertaining to himself. And why should we not think that he would teach and instruct by his works in this way as well as others, viz. by representing divine things by his works, and so pointing them forth, especially since we know that God hath so much delighted in this way of instruction?

According to Jonathan Edwards, why should we not think that God would teach us this way? It is such a beautiful spiritual entrance into the goodness of God, and an understanding of the immensity of who God is. To think that as God created this world, the trees and the Rocky Mountain Range, glaciers and butterflies, even molecules and cellular structures, that in infinite wisdom the Creator embedded messages for the creatures to discover, over the course of time and evolution of exploration and discovery. There are messages everywhere for us to discover, once our awareness is tuned in to what to look for.

Once the Holy Spirit opened the eyes of my students in the biology classroom and my congregation in the pews, messages of God speaking to their lives through the creation and Scripture became abundantly meaningful to their walk of faith. One student came to my office and asked what spiritual message could possibly be embedded in a virus, from a biological and spiritual perspective. We deliberated for a few moments and many deep spiritual truths began to emerge. For example, a virus cannot replicate on its own, but needs a host to carry out the infection. The student saw in that *biological process* a similarity with the process of sin, and how sin or evil on its own cannot carry out any *spiritual infection*. Instead, sin enters our lives, we become the host, and the damage is carried out: spiritual death. The scripture verse in James 1:5 supported this insight: "Then, after desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, gives birth to death." We pursued the viral lifecycle even further, seeing more and more spiritual parallels. It was fantastic.

Another time, a church member came to see me for pastoral counseling. This dear person felt as if she were being blown to and fro by very troubling and serious life events. As we prayed for God's guidance and direction, we looked out the window and saw a bed of tall prairie grasses in a neighbor's garden, blowing wildly in the wind. The Spirit spoke to us through that image in the natural world: Yes, the prairie grasses are being blown in this current wind, but

We see a developed
theology of an
intentional God
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out of love.



Can we understand the ontology of God's Trinitarian self-disclosure as Creator, Christ, and Comforter in and through the natural world?

look down near the earth at the base of the plant. The plant itself was grounded and unmoving, completely steady. Only the tops, the tassel of the grasses were being blown. In that moment, a deep, encouraging spiritual truth came alive. This dear, troubled person was feeling just like the tops of those grasses, her mind and emotions being blown wildly. But in fact, there was a renewed understanding that she was truly rooted in faith in Christ, grounded in the Ground of Being itself, “safe and secure from all alarms.” From this revelation in the natural world the Spirit brought to my mind the truth of being “rooted and grounded in love” as the Apostle Paul writes in Ephesians 3:14-21:

For this reason I bow my knees before the Father, from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named, that according to the riches of his glory he may grant you to be strengthened with power through his Spirit in your inner being, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith—that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may have strength to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.

Now to him who is able to do far more abundantly than all that we ask or think, according to the power at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, forever and ever. Amen.

This Scripture provided strength and great encouragement, but took on an even deeper meaning with the message in the grasses out the window. What a dynamic, present moment of faith emerged in my office that day! The ever-present God, the one who sees us and loves us infinitely, who cares about our needs, gave to us a message embedded in the natural world that aligned perfectly with the truth of Scripture, in order to do God's deep heart-changing work in the life of this troubled soul.

So, the question arises: Are we merely overlaying a Christian construct onto aspects of nature? Is this a projection of our imagination? Are we simply applying poetic metaphor or analogy? Or, can we align with Jonathan Edwards, Alister McGrath and those pursuing a *New Natural Theology* to seek to understand the ontology of God's Trinitarian self-disclosure as Creator, Christ, and Comforter *in and through* the natural world?

To put it another way: Can John Calvin's “Theater of Nature” augment the traditional Wesleyan, quadrilateral of ways to know God—by Scripture, Tradition, Reason, and Experience—to include *Nature* as well? As I am now

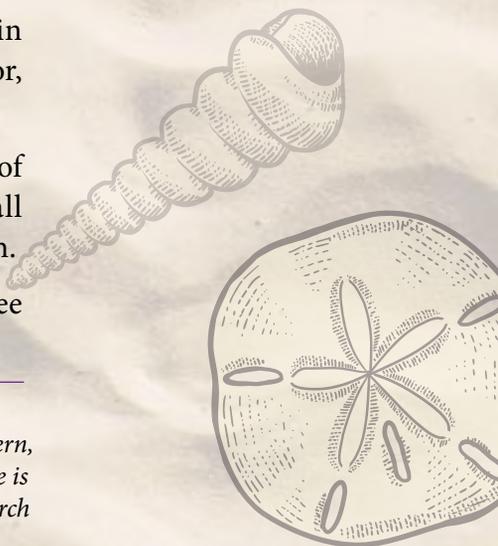
embarking on a new and exciting graduate program of study toward a Ph.D. in Systematic Theology at the University of Aberdeen, Scotland, my thesis advisor, Dr. Philip Ziegler, and I seem to think we can.

Our study is to explore this new theology of the natural world in light of Jehovah Shammah, the God *who is there*, in light of the Christ in whom all things were made and in the revelation of the Spirit who reveals to us all truth.

I invite you to ask God to begin to reveal to you messages in the creation. See how your faith will soar like the eagle!



THE REV. DR. LISANNE WINSLOW is a professor and the chair of the Department of Biology and Biochemistry at the University of Northwestern, St. Paul, Minn., where she teaches both biology and theology courses. She is the associate pastor of faith development at People's Congregational Church in Bayport, Minn., serving the congregation in the pulpit, Bible study, pastoral care and youth ministry. Dr. Winslow has just begun a second Ph.D. in Systematic Theology at the University of Aberdeen, Scotland, where she travels several times per year. She is also part of the Congregational Fellowship ministry team in Northern Scotland and serves in a variety of ministry capacities when she is there. Dr. Winslow lives in Bayport with her two daughters, Arianna and Sophia.



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you travel on a mission trip to serve others.*

Saviors, or, Savees?

THE INTERNATIONAL MISSION EXPERIENCE

by Kristen Schuyler

“I was overwhelmed,” said Paul Malloy; “there was nothing I could do. They were poor, they needed me, and I couldn’t do anything for them.”

His eyes shifted to the floor, his hands out on the table, seemingly devoid of hope—until he looked up.

“Then I realized,” he said, “ ‘Paul, don’t be a fool. They don’t need you, they’re fine. They were here when you got here and they’ll be here when you leave. You’ve been brought here for your own healing.’ ”

In the summer of 2014, my little church, the Congregational Church of Bound Brook, N.J., decided to start funding another mission. After I returned

from six months in Australia and Tahiti learning about the Lord and spreading the Word of God throughout the South Pacific (see “Lost and Found Through God’s Grace,” *THE CONGREGATIONALIST* December 2014, pp. 23-24, 38), my church agreed this was an idea we should invest in.

GO, BAPTIZE, TEACH

The Great Commission calls us to do three things: Go, baptize, and teach. We had become experts in doing the latter two, so the only thing left was the simplest but, surprisingly, more difficult command: Go.

Money is obviously always an issue, and availability is the second most common obstacle. These two things combined have paralyzed many; however, despite the obstacles, my church decided to take initiative.

Our pastor, Marisol Malloy, her husband, Paul Malloy, and her son, Corey Hernandez, all ventured into the mountainous region north of Mexico City for a week at Mission Mazahua, one of the NACCC’s International Mission Partners. Throughout that seven-day mission experience, they learned more about God and about themselves than they realized they would.

What Paul and I both discovered, through our separate journeys abroad, was this: God always asks us to go, and God always receives the glory. That seems obvious, but it was only realized through experience, humiliation, and reflection.



Kristen Schuyler

A missionary team in Tahiti prays for a local resident.



Larry Sommers

From left, Marisol Malloy, Paul Malloy, and Lisa Cortes compare notes on projects at Mission Mazahua.; Corey Hernandez, lower left, and Paul Malloy, in trailer bed, help move a load of gravel.

PROUD TO BE HUMBLE

When you have that first interaction with God where you feel led to leave your home for the sake of His name, your first instinct may be a strong sense of pride. God is calling you to go out, leaving your whole world behind, because obviously only you can do this. He has a precise plan set out so you can bring your mighty strength and honor and intelligence to these less fortunate peoples and share with them everything you know. Without you, their lives are hopeless.

Perhaps it's true that only you can do this specific job, or that these people really are in a poor state that somehow you can relieve them of. But more often, this isn't the case; in my story and in Paul's, it was not.

Paul's ego took a shot to the heart when he realized his lack of power.

"It's difficult when you realize that you're not the cavalry racing in to save them," he said. "It left me feeling so different than I expected. I expected to come back thinking, yes, I did my part. I helped these people. But really, I came back and turned into a better person because of that experience."

God called Paul to Mexico that difficult week in June not because the Mazahua people truly needed him, but because he needed the Mazahua. God used this experience to sow seeds in Paul so he could

come back home and better minister to people like him right in his own congregation. That's how most missions stay effective in the long run.

You go into it thinking you're the savior, but in the end you're the one who gets saved. By being saved you become a new savior, walking in humility like Jesus; but then you get saved all over again, because you're still human and still growing. It's a relationship and a process.

The "humble" mindset we get when we first feel called may be deceiving, but God works with us despite our flaws. His goal is to bring us to our knees in sincere humility, and therefore lead others to Him—not through our good deeds, but through the testimonies He gives to us through these experiences.

Missions benefit others, but first they benefit us, and that's the twist in God's story.



KRISTEN SCHUYLER has been an active member of the Congregational Church of Bound Brook for twelve years. She is currently studying at Raritan Valley Community College in Branchburg, N.J., and is an aspiring journalist.

*Where is it written that those with disabilities
can't share in the celebration of the Gospel?*

All God's Children

Rejoicing Spirits Ministry in Terre Haute

by Dawn Carlson

Close your eyes for just a minute. This isn't an invitation to nap, but a request to reflect and observe. Look around your congregation on any given Sunday morning. Who's there? Who's regularly there? Who's never there?

There is a population missing in many of our churches—those with developmental and intellectual disabilities.

Over the years, we've put in ramps, elevators and handicapped-accessible restrooms, and we've declared ourselves open to serving people with disabilities. We've looked at what we've done and declared it, "Good!"

And it is good. It's just not always good enough.

Brenda Tryon is an administrator with Mosaic, the disability service provider organization that serves my 30-year old son, Alex, who has autism. Some years ago, while I was visiting with Brenda, she made a comment that stuck with me for a long time: "I never get to worship with my whole family."

Brenda's own son, Jeshaiiah, has multiple disabilities. Brenda always said Jeshaiiah would become too excited (that's disability mom speech for "loud") during worship, especially during music. Brenda really missed something she had grown up with—a family worshipping together.

Our family worships together every Sunday and it broke my heart to hear those words from another mother.

We talked about "one of these days," and that conversation went on for a few years. Then one day Brenda introduced me to the minister who works with Mosaic's national office. We had a great conversation about "Rejoicing Spirits," a new program Mosaic was starting in partnership with churches around the country, but nothing came of it. We were all very busy. And then Brenda called again and asked me to come to her office to discuss the possibility of an occasional Rejoicing Spirits worship service.

On the drive over, it struck me that all I needed to say was, "Yes!" and trust the Holy Spirit to do the rest. I walked in her office, declared, "Let's just do it," and "Let's also admit that we'll make mistakes, but we'll back up and start over when we do."

We picked a start date—first Sunday of every month. Most folks worship on Sunday, so why not this ministry and congregation, too. We picked a start time, 2 p.m., and we were off and running—with

Jeff Morgan, displaying his worship bulletin, smiles for the camera. Visible in background, left to right, are Daniel Young, Linda Allis, and Geneva Brune.



Michelle Parker Weingart



Michelle Parker Wetnight

From left, Daniel Young, social worker Amy Love, Linda Allis, Geneva Brune, and Vincent Pfister participate in Rejoicing Spirits ministry.

no idea what we were doing or how we were going to do it. First Congregational Church's Rejoicing Spirits ministry was born, on a wing and a lot of prayer.

Rejoicing Spirits was begun in 2003 by a social worker and the mother of a child with Down Syndrome in a church in Pennsylvania. Together with their pastor, this team put together a program to serve adults and children in a worship service all their own. Using volunteers from their congregation, they conducted training, spent six months in planning, and then launched a service that often brought together more than 100 people. Over time, other churches began to seek out St. Paul's Lutheran Church in order to plan similar worship experiences in their communities.

Year by year, the program grew, eventually partnering with Mosaic, the largest faith-based provider of services to individuals with developmental and intellectual disabilities in the U.S.

I reconnected with the Rejoicing Spirits national office and received a manual on how to set up a program. It started with creating a ministry planning team and doing a church-wide assessment and feasibility survey. Once Brenda and I said our mutual "Yes!" we decided that we were the beginning of a ministry planning team and didn't have time for a survey. My church board was all for it and supportive. Our congregation welcomed Alex every Sunday.

Brenda and I were willing. That was all the feasibility study we needed.

Basically, we need only a couple of things: space (the sanctuary), a musician (a wonderful volunteer who jumped on board without even being asked) and a willingness to try. We had all we needed.

Every first Sunday, we gather with anywhere from 20-50 adults (and a few children) with physical, developmental and intellectual disabilities, along with their caregivers and family members, to sing, pray, worship, and fellowship in our "shush free" environment.

Partnering with an adult disability service provider with a passion for this ministry brings us a built-in congregation. Our order of worship is similar to any Sunday service, heavy on singing and easy on preaching and more into talking with the congregation. They are an interactive bunch, more than willing to participate. We plan a fellowship of cookies and punch about once a quarter, bringing in more church volunteers.

A few things stick out in my mind over the course of this first year. We have to be willing to go with the flow. It's not unusual to have someone who talks back to me throughout the service. It's a great way to get folks involved. Leadership has grown from within, with two of our congregants stepping up and taking care of usher duties and leading in prayer. Music can be anything that's easy to sing (and we use mostly the same music, mostly praise songs, each service), but everyone knows "Jesus Loves Me," so we now always sing that.

The most striking memory came in our first worship from a mom who said, "Thank you. We haven't been in church in about five years." Their son, an active 6-year-old with autism, quite often does laps around the sanctuary, throughout the service. I wish all congregants were as enthusiastic as Colton is! That mother's comment reminded both Brenda and me about the real reason for adding this service. There's your feasibility study!

In order to do this remarkable and rewarding ministry, you don't have to work with a national organization like Mosaic's Rejoicing Spirits, but it does come with a built-in support network of folks who have

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*A vibrant California church shares the things that worked
in its search for a new senior minister.*



Monte Struck

by John F. Berry

In May 2014, Senior Pastor Lowell Linden announced his retirement after 38 years serving the First Congregational Church of Redlands, Calif.

“I’m 76 years old—that’s why,” Linden later told a local newspaper. “It’s just time.”

Though Linden’s retirement was no surprise, the church, which had not conducted a pastoral search since the American Bicentennial, struggled over the next step.

By September, the church had elected a search committee, led by Zachary Tucker, with a dozen members representing a variety of viewpoints and ages. The committee sought guidance from the National Association of Congregational Christian Churches. The First Congregational Church in Redlands, one of the association’s larger churches, has about 550 total members, with about 250 in the pews on most Sundays.

“We did look to [the NACCC] for supporting materials,” said Ken Hendershot, the committee’s liaison to the National Association. “It was a good,

basic resource for us as we were getting our minds around moving forward.”

The National Association facilitates information sharing between its member churches and pastoral candidates without charge, said Executive Director Michael Chittum.

“We make church information available to ministers within our fellowship through the National Association Web site and *THE CONGREGATIONALIST* magazine,” Chittum said. He acknowledged finding pastors can be a hard process for Congregational churches because the NACCC has no seminary of its own. Instead, the association oversees education of its own ministry students in seminaries of other denominations, and many of the NA’s 351 Congregational churches call pastors from outside the Congregational tradition.

Today’s Congregationalists trace their roots from English Separatists, who were sometimes burned at the stake for smuggling English-language Bibles into the Catholic England of the 16th century. They



Monte Stuck

Left page: Members of the Redlands congregation vote to call the Rev. Dr. Steven Davis.

This page: The Rev. Lori Hovren, ministry associate, and other members count the ballots.

became known as Pilgrims and Puritans when they migrated into the New World on the *Mayflower* and later-arriving vessels in the 17th century. They were known as Congregationalists when they dominated colonial New England in the 18th century.

Congregationalism is today represented by at least three historical offshoots—the United Church of Christ (UCC), the Conservative Congregational Christian Conference (CCCC), and the National Association of Congregational Christian Churches (NACCC)—plus many independent local congregations.

While other churches belong and answer to a hierarchy outside the local congregation, Congregational churches of the NACCC are locally autonomous, with the pastor accountable to the congregation.

“It can be very intimidating for folks who are more accustomed to responsibility resting on a higher authority,” Chittum said. “It is all members of the local church working together to discern the direction God wants them to go.”

In the fall of 2014, the First Congregational Church of Redlands, after consulting the NACCC, decided to employ a search service to help them cast a wide net for pastoral candidates. The search committee interviewed three services, with fees ranging from \$30,000 to \$50,000, and settled on Houston-based Faith Search Partners, which tithed back a portion of the fees.

Faith Search Partners immediately held small group discussions to get a better idea of what the membership wanted. The rising tide of social concerns—ranging from gay marriage to abortion and the role of the church—was voiced in small group discussions.

“People had opinions. If people didn’t believe the process was fair and equitable, it wasn’t going to work,” Tucker said. “This wasn’t going to be a back-room deal.”

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KICKING OFF YOUR SEARCH

Whatever other resources your church may choose to employ, your first stop should be <http://www.naccc.org/pastoral-search-process.html> (or go to naccc.org, click on “Services—Member Churches,” and then click on “Pastoral Search Process”).

There you will find—

- A brief summary of necessary steps to take.
- Links to *Calling a Congregational Minister: A Handbook for Pastoral Search Committees* and other useful booklets to get you started.
- The NACCC’s Disclosure Protocol and Policy, which helps churches make fully-informed decisions while safeguarding church and candidate confidentiality.
- A Background Check Form, a Sample Church Information Form, and other forms and resources that will be useful in your process.

Of singular importance is the NACCC’s Church Information Form (CIF). This thorough description of your church and the pastoral opportunity it presents will be of great interest to ministerial candidates enrolled in the NA’s system. Submitting the CIF also gets your church on the list of “Pastorates and Pulpits” in each issue of

THE CONGREGATIONALIST.

Put the full resources of your National Association to work from the very beginning of your search!



Monte Stuck

Trustees chairman Tim Farris, left, reads the charge to the Rev. Dr. Steven Davis, second from left, as the Revs. Lowell Linden and Peter St. Don look on.

The church also solicited surveys and got 171 back, representing about 65 percent of active members. Surveys were collected anonymously, both on paper and online. Opinions were also collected via letters and small groups. The survey focused on the needs and preferences of the congregation.

Tucker said the surveys played a bigger role in the search process than first imagined.

“I wouldn’t do this without a survey, period,” he said. “You can’t let us loud-talking folks in the room be the only ones you hear.”

The survey revealed that the congregation wanted to follow in the footsteps of Lowell Linden by finding a biblically-steeped pastor who would deliver stirring sermons. Congregants wanted to maintain their traditional service. The Bible is the inspired or actual word of God, according to 82 percent of members, with fewer than 2 percent regarding the Bible as merely a valuable book written by good people, or primarily an ancient book of history and legends.

The survey also revealed that 80 percent of members were married, with 48 percent educated beyond the bachelor’s degree, 47 percent retired, and 75 percent resident in the Redlands area for at least 20 years.

Attitudes revealed in the survey strongly favored history and traditions over contemporary ideas. Only 1.3 percent of respondents said that “holding social justice issues before members” was an essential quality of a new pastor.

By the spring of 2015, the search committee had interviewed three candidates from among 40 who applied. The committee recommended Steven Davis, a Presbyterian and the first candidate they interviewed, who then preached before the congregation.

“Choosing the first guy was a hard decision,” Tucker said. “I know in my heart that Steve was the right candidate.”

Davis was highly qualified and matched membership priorities, Tucker said. Davis gave a Bible-based sermon that was inspiring and informative.

In a church vote, Davis received 95 percent approval.

Davis said he learned about the First Congregational Church opening through Jeff Jernigan of Faith Search Partners, whom he had met several years before.

“Jeff had a really good finger on the pulse of the church and me,” Davis said. He also said the survey told him what the church members wanted in a new pastor.

Davis—a graduate of Columbia University, Fuller Theological Seminary, and Seattle Pacific University, with an earned doctorate from San Francisco Theological Seminary—served for nine years as senior pastor and head of staff for the First Presbyterian Church in Manasquan, N.J.

In August 2015, Tucker reflected on the year-long pastoral search and said he was pleased with the hiring process—but recalled that it wasn’t pain-free. Tucker, a 47-year-old husband and father, said leading the search committee consumed 10 hours each week. He said lessons learned include the desirability of having a transition plan in place, collecting surveys from the congregation, hearing all opinions, and hiring a search firm.

“We can have strong opinions on some things,” Tucker reflected. “But on Sunday, we can all get into the same building and worship God.”



JOHN F. BERRY first attended the First Congregational Church of Redlands with his wife, Sharilyn, and son, Marshall, in 2007. He has served as a deacon and is the current church council publicity chairman. A former atheist, Berry came to Jesus in 2004 the moment his son was born. He was a journalist for 20 years and has served in the U.S. Army and the Army Reserve since 1983.

When it comes to congregational ministry, sports metaphors only tell part of the story—but it's an important part.

PASTORS AND COACHES, CONGREGATIONS AND TEAMS



by Lawrence H. Balleine

“A pastor should be treated like a college coach. If a coach does not produce in five years, he is usually fired.”

This is a statement I occasionally heard during my 40 years of pastoral ministry. So it's no surprise that I often find myself empathizing with college football coaches in December and with basketball coaches in April; for these months mark the ends of their respective seasons, when the most firings of coaches occur.

Whenever I have asked those who make this comment to elaborate, they have said that just as a coach may be given five years to develop a winning team, a pastor should be given five years to produce significant tangible and measurable results with his

or her congregation. The results desired are usually increased numerical membership and greater financial stability.

This may sound reasonable in a world that judges competency on wins and losses and on financial success, but are these statistics the true measure of a pastor's effectiveness?

There is certainly a similarity between the roles of coach and pastor: Both strive to develop the talents of each player or member and then try to elicit and blend these individual gifts for the purposes or mission of the team or the congregation.

However, the circumstances in which they meet this challenge have three significant differences:

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WHAT ABOUT THE PASTOR'S ABILITY TO BRIDGE GAPS BETWEEN DIVERSE POINTS OF VIEW, ALLOWING MEMBERS TO WORK COOPERATIVELY FOR THE COMMON GOOD?

1. College coaches largely recruit their own team. Pastors do not choose whom they wish to have on their team. They may accept or decline a call to serve in a particular ministry, but they do not choose the members of the congregation.
2. A coach decides who will be the team's "starters," who gets the most playing time, and what position a given player will assume. In our churches, with leadership positions most often elected by the congregation at large, pastors have very little input as to those who are chosen and what roles they will assume.
3. A coach has the authority to establish team rules and develop game plans. Most pastors however, work collaboratively with boards, councils, and the congregation. They may have plans and dreams for the congregations they serve, but setting goals and strategies is largely a cooperative effort, with significant input from the congregation.

Because of these crucial differences, judging coaches' and pastors' effectiveness by the same statistical analysis is extremely short-sighted and seldom helpful.

Instead, there are several more subjective, intangible areas that say much more about a pastor's effectiveness. For example, what about his or her ability to help individuals, couples, or families work through times of major crisis? What about the pastor's ability to take ancient texts in their historical contexts, presenting and applying them in ways by

which the congregation discerns that "God is still speaking" through them today? Or—in our system with its freedom of expression and the right of each believer to wrestle with matters of interpretation—what about the pastor's ability to bridge gaps between diverse points of view, allowing members to work cooperatively for the common good?

Though I would not judge pastors by the same criteria as coaches, I do think the word "team" can be both accurate and insightful to describe an effective and faithful congregation. If we take TEAM as an acronym, it can remind us of four characteristics common to both successful athletic teams and effective congregations:

T—Members of successful athletic teams must TRUST each other. They know they are all "in it" together; they count on one another to perform

assignments to the best of their ability. Members of a football team trust each other to execute their blocking assignments, run their pass routes, etc. Similarly, trust permeates the life of faithful and effective congregations. Their members trust one another; their committees trust one another. The members trust their staff and the staff trusts the members. Trust infiltrates every aspect of church life.

E—ENCOURAGEMENT is a second essential ingredient in successful athletic teams. Team members try to “fire up” their teammates with encouraging words, or pats on the back. *Likewise, encouragement permeates effective congregations.* Their members encourage one another. Members and staff encourage each other as they walk their individual and shared faith journeys.

A—The third attribute of a successful athletic team is ADVOCACY. A running back in football often has two or three teammates running in front, blocking the way for him. These blockers are advocating for him—trying to clear a path for him. *Effective congregations also demonstrate advocacy:* Their members speak well of one another; they pray for one another; and, like linemen who will defend their quarterback from on-rushing tacklers, church members staunchly defend and protect one another.

M—Successful athletic teams also share a common MISSION. Whatever they do is geared toward accomplishing that mission. For some the goal is winning the particular contest they are engaged in. For others it is a conference, state, or national championship. The coaching staff draws up a game plan geared toward accomplishing this mission. It

is a game plan appropriate for their team, based on the team’s unique strengths. *Effective and faithful churches also pursue a common mission.* The mission is often defined in the church’s constitution or in its mission or vision statement. So too, like an athletic team, accomplishing that mission involves the use of a congregation’s unique strengths.

Back to our initial consideration: Rather than “coaches” of their congregations, pastors might best be viewed as a “team captains”—full participants on teams we call congregations—whose words, deeds, and attitudes exemplify trust, encouragement, and advocacy among those entrusted to their care; and who, in partnership with members of their congregations, continually strive to fulfill the common mission of their congregations.

It is easy to lament: “There is too much emphasis upon athletics in our society.” And that judgment may be justified. Yet the world of team sports provides images that may help congregations more faithfully, effectively, and fully live out our common calling as members of the body of Christ. And for these, we can be grateful.



THE REV. LAWRENCE H. BALLEINE is a 1975 CFTS graduate. He is now retired after serving NACCC and UCC congregations.



OUT of BOUNDS!

Part 3

by Arlin T. Larson

AM I, IS HE/SHE BURNED OUT?

Reflection on the three aspects of burnout—emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and lessened sense of job achievement—can help us recognize the problem in ourselves and others. Often, burnout is recognized first by colleagues or clients; someone’s job performance and attitude has changed for the worse. Maslach tells us “the most visible impact of burnout is the change in people’s work performance. . . . Motivation is down, frustration is up, and an unsympathetic ‘don’t-give-a-damn attitude’ predominates.”¹ Familiarity with the Maslach Burnout Index (MBI) can help gauge the degree to which burnout has progressed.

Here are some of the questions it asks:²

“How often do you feel like. . .”

- **Emotional exhaustion:** “I feel emotionally drained from my work.” “Working with people all day is really a strain for me.”
- **Depersonalization:** “I have become more callous toward people since I took this job.” “I worry that this job is hardening me emotionally.”
- **Personal accomplishment:** “In my work, I deal with emotional problems very calmly.” “I feel I’m positively influencing other people’s lives through my work.”

A high frequency in the first two categories and low frequency in the third indicates a high degree of burnout. Conversely, a low frequency in the first two

¹ Christina Maslach, *Burnout: The Cost of Caring* (Los Altos, Calif.: Major Books, 2015), p. 130.

² *Burnout*, p. 12.



and high in the third indicates low burnout. It is a matter of degree. Everyone has the feelings from time to time. Human services oriented burnout self-tests are available from *Psychology Today* magazine³ and from the MBI's publisher, Mindgarden.⁴

WHEN BURNOUT EXISTS, WHAT IS TO BE DONE?

A. By our churches

Burnout results from the interplay of individual workers, those they serve, and the institutional framework in which the work is carried on. Their mutual interaction defines the nature of the work, the points of contact of the participants, and the limits of their relationships. However, there is a temptation to see struggles with them as primarily a personal problem. The worker is advised to go to counseling, or "just get with the program," or seek alternative employment. This is unfortunate because more often than not, the worker burning out is highly qualified and highly motivated. From a church's point of view as both employer and recipient of clergy's ministerial efforts, first thought should go, therefore, to modifying the work environment.

Being aware of the problem is the first step. As we saw in the previous article, boundaries for the clergy tend to be diffuse and often implied rather than articulated. Serving in a church is emotionally demanding work that can overwhelm the worker. Don't wait for that to happen; be proactive.

Attention should be given to the training that potential ministers receive. Does it include discussion of the emotional demands of serving as a pastor? Does it include training in interpersonal skills? Does

it include mentored practice so that a fledgling pastor has opportunities to reflect on their work? These things may have been provided through the seminary or an internship, but that shouldn't be taken for granted. Training prospective pastors in appropriate boundaries before they enter the field may prevent many problems down the road.

My own seminary training was primarily academic, but we were also required to spend full quarters volunteering in a social change agency and in Clinical Pastoral Education (basic counseling skills). Internships in my home church and in a campus ministry provided further opportunities for reflection and feedback.

Do the church's governing boards tend to micro-manage the minister's work? Lack of autonomy is a primary source of burnout, just as self-direction is a primary source of job satisfaction. Does your church give its minister the freedom to carry out the church's vision in his/her own way? We will explore intra-church boundaries in an upcoming issue.

There can also be a mismatch between a church's and a minister's goals and vision. Frustration can get high on both sides, contributing to burnout. In its hiring process, does the church make clear what sort of church it wants to be? Does it make an effort to find out what sort of church the candidate wants to lead?

Does your church encourage its minister to be in community with other ministers? Like everyone else, ministers need opportunities to compare notes with colleagues and let off steam. Sharing perspectives is critical in attaining a realistic perspective for oneself. Most communities have a local clergy association as well as a state or regional Congregational association.

3 http://psychologytoday.tests.psychtests.com/take_test.php?idRegTest=1302.

4 <http://www.mindgarden.com/117-maslach-burnout-inventory>.

CLERGY ARE CALLED TO LEAD OUR CHURCHES' MINISTRIES, NOT TO CARRY THEM OUT SINGLE-HANDEDLY.

Isolated pastors have effectively defined boundaries for themselves much too narrowly, overlooking both the rewards and responsibilities of being one in a succession of apostles represented by their ordination.

Does your church respect the minister's need for privacy and for family life? I hear complaints about ministers typically having a month's vacation. But how many professions require their workers to be on call 24/7 and also work many evenings and every weekend, often including Saturdays as well as Sundays? This takes a toll not only on the clergy but on their families as well, especially today when most clergy spouses also work full-time. The blurring of personal and professional boundaries is a common theme in discussions of clergy burnout.

Does your church provide the pastor sufficient professional or volunteer help to carry out the church's ministry? The phrase "I think you should ..." is stuck firmly in my mind. Clergy are called to lead our churches' ministries, not to carry them out single-handedly. The boundaries issue here is both the pastor's and the people's. Both need to see themselves as partners bounded by a common mission.

Lack of positive feedback is a leading contributor to burnout. What does your church do to show its appreciation? It is a pretty safe bet that the minister, like all helping professionals, hears more complaints than compliments, and this is wearing.

As important as emotional rewards are the financial ones. The minister has staked his/her present and future material well-being, and also that of his/her family, on the work of the church. One cannot help wondering whether the work is worth it, if one is not living up to one's financial responsibilities. This area is most difficult for our small churches, but it certainly is an important factor in the paucity of young people going into mainline ministry.

Often, it is considered inappropriate for the pastor to bring up the subject. "Don't worry, God will provide," is often heard.

B. By individual clergy

The steps an individual can take mirror those an institution can take to prevent or lessen burnout. Get training in interpersonal skills or other areas that might make the work easier. Be self-directed in all ways possible, even if they are small. Seek out the company of supportive colleagues. Develop a rich family and personal life—and don't let it all revolve around the church. Insist on boundaries that support the whole family. Be sure to have quiet time at work and at home. Only accept a position if you can wholeheartedly endorse its goals and values. Take note of and celebrate what successes and positive feedback there is. Be forthright about financial needs. See a counselor as a way of getting respite and perspective. Have realistic goals. Value the support of your spouse and family.

Be proactive in bringing issues to the fore; a team approach is needed to define the boundaries. I eventually came to the realization that it was better to tell my governing boards about every complaint I heard, whether about me or anything else. Issues then became ours, not just *mine*.

Also—don't take it all so personally. A helpful technique is to increase one's *intellectual* empathy while at the same time decreasing one's *emotional* empathy. In other words, try better to understand and sympathize with the plights of those needing help while not being overwhelmed by their emotions. Recognize and honor God's love as the only power strong enough to bear the world's sorrows. God calls us only to do a certain part in bringing it to bear.



TAKE IT TO THE LORD IN PRAYER

Both church and minister should reflect on their call to minister. What is it that God is asking for in this time and place? If discernment is true, then it is worth it to make every effort, at the same time knowing that the work should not take down or burn out those who serve. Every person's work should be engaging and enriching, but especially that of those who have heard Christ's call. Burned-out clergy or volunteers (and, therefore, the ministry itself) will not be at their best. To the heavy-laden, Christ has promised rest. Let Him lead you in making adjustments and reconfiguring the boundaries, so that those who

minister, those who are served, and the church as a whole may prosper.



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

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Copy deadline for each issue is noted in the previous issue's "Calendar" section.

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

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

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- One subscription to *THE CONGREGATIONALIST* is provided free of charge to each church in fellowship with the National Association of Congregational Christian Churches and one to each accredited theological seminary on the magazine's mailing list.

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

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

We seek and gratefully accept voluntary donations to help keep this magazine in print. Donations are tax-deductible except for the first \$15 of donation per subscription received by the taxpayer per year.

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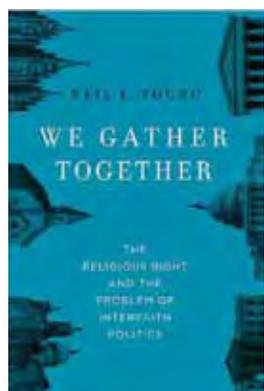
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Winter Reading Suggestions for God's Free People

by Steven Blackburn

Bumper stickers proclaim that mixing politics and religion ends up with burning believers at the stake. And, there's a suspicion that politicians are all too ready to exploit issues of faith for electoral gain. Still, religion and politics in America are not foreign to each other—especially in our Congregational tradition, which has been hospitable historically to political activism. Here are some readings that explore this, from the views of Thomas Jefferson concerning the sacred book of Islam to the controversial utterances of the Rev. Jeremiah Wright.

within their ranks. This nuanced, fascinating account is enlightening on many levels.



We Gather Together: The Religious Right and the Problem of Interfaith Politics, by Neil J. Young. New York: Oxford University Press, 2015. 432 pages; \$23.99 Kindle, \$27.96 hardcover (Amazon).

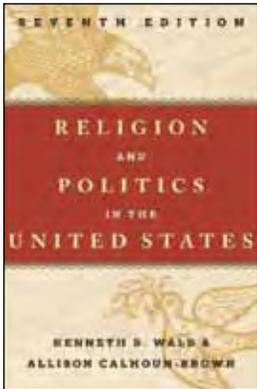
While some may see the rise of the Religious Right as part of a “vast right-wing conspiracy,” Young demonstrates that the formation of “moral majorities” and “Christian coalitions” was not driven by right-wing politics. Rather, these movements arose three or four decades ago almost in spite of themselves. The controlling *ethos* of American evangelicalism and fundamentalism had been largely hostile to political involvement since the Scopes Trial. Added to that, groups such as conservative Catholics, evangelical Protestants, and Mormons were not used to ecumenical cooperation; the fact that they came together at all still surprises, and disturbs, many



Religio-Political Narratives in the United States: From Martin Luther King, Jr. through Jeremiah Wright, by Angela D. Sims, et al. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014. 256 pages; \$85.50 Kindle, \$90.00 hardcover (Amazon).

African-American churches over the last 50 years have done a singular job of adjusting their rhetoric without damaging their prophetic voice as the circumstances of the community have evolved. Combining religion and politics in these churches does not carry the same dynamic as found in majority communities, since the African-American context is rarely one of sharing in, and participating with, national political power structures. Thus these churches have exerted considerable political influence in the community without jeopardizing their institutional standing. Although African-American churches are not exempt from the current decline in religious sentiment in the country, they have been able to limit that decline in comparison to others.

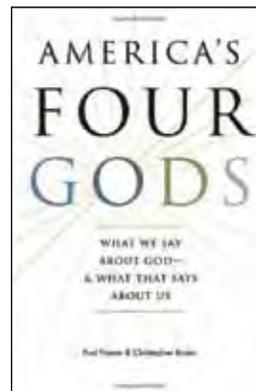
Religion and Politics in the United States, by Kenneth D. Wald and Allison Calhoun-Brown. 7th ed. Lanham, Md.: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, 2014. 496 pages, \$40.94 Kindle, \$105.00 hardcover, \$43.10 paperback (Amazon).



The author describes how our Congregational forebears, both Puritan and Separatist, influenced the development of religiosity in the American body politic. The role of covenant theology, the Calvinist doctrine of Total Depravity, and the role of Puritanism in the development of the American

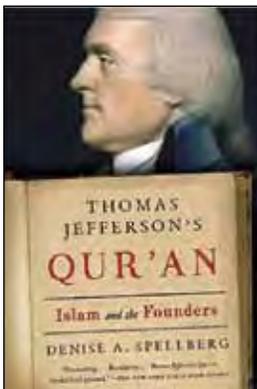
Civil Religion are all addressed. This book contains much more, including arguments for and against any role for religion in political discussion. It also looks at the development of church-state relations historically and assesses the unique vantage points of minorities—Catholics, Jews, African-American Protestants, Latinos (both Catholic and Protestant), Muslims, Mormons, and many others—in the religio-political landscape of the United States.

the new Republic who championed Muslim rights. Congregationalists, however, were generally not among them, enjoying as they did the status of an Established Church until 1818 in Connecticut and 1835 in Massachusetts.



America's Four Gods: What We Say about God—and What That Says About Us, by Paul Froese and Christopher Bader. Updated Edition. New York: Oxford University Press, 2015. 288 pages; \$24.95 paperback (Amazon).

The Four Gods of the title are not sectarian; this is not a discussion of the merits of Allah vs. Krishna, for example. Rather, the authors see four dominant views of God among Americans, regardless of denominational affiliation: the Authoritative God, the Benevolent God, the Critical God, and the Distant God—definitions that cut across the usual categories such as mainline Protestants, Evangelicals, etc. In this sense, Froese and Bader remind us of J. B. Phillips' *Your God is Too Small*, except that while Phillips focused on theological validity, arguing against *any* of the Four Gods of the title, Froese and Bader simply accept the Four Gods as a given, and use them to help us understand why various parts of the communities of belief have differing views on any of the hot-button political issues of the day.



Thomas Jefferson's Qur'an: Islam and the Founders, by Denise A. Spellberg. New York: Vintage, 2014. 416 pages; \$13.99 Kindle, \$22.60 hardcover, \$11.30 paperback (Amazon).

The author, a University of Texas professor who teaches courses in Islamic civilization as well as Islam in America, considers how President Thomas Jefferson, who waged war on a Muslim power in the Mediterranean, was able to separate military politics from religious sensibilities and affirm the rights of Muslim citizens of the United States under the Constitution. Not all the Founders shared Jefferson's views—his arch-rival John Adams, a Congregationalist, had a noticeably different approach—but there were even religious leaders in



THE REV. STEVEN BLACKBURN, PH.D., is Hartford Seminary's Library Director. He has served Congregational Christian Churches in Connecticut and Massachusetts, and was elected to three terms as executive secretary of the Connecticut (now Northeast) Fellowship. He has also chaired the NACCC's World Christian Relations Commission.

NEWS

ONE GREAT HOUR OF SHARING UPDATE

The Mission and Outreach Ministry Council has collected \$10,455 for Nepal earthquake relief. These funds were sent to the Rev. Philip Malakar of **Indian Community Fellowship (India)**, who was able to contact some of the affected villages close to the border.

MOMC is also collecting funds for those affected by flooding in South Carolina and for Syrian refugees. Donations in response to the South Carolina floods will be sent through the North Georgia Conference of the United Methodist Church. Read about their efforts at <http://www.ngumc.org/newsdetail/2413402>.

The First Congregational Church of Anaheim, Calif., has connections with the Greek Evangelical Church of Thessaloniki. They are working with Syrian refugees in northern Greece, distributing food, water, medicine, and clothing about three times a week. MOMC will send any donations for Syrian refugees there.

NEW GROWTH IN THE PHILIPPINES

National Association of Congregational Churches (Philippines) has a vision of building and operating a camp and retreat center. Land has been purchased in Tagaytay City, a much-loved tourist haven with a relatively cool climate.

The camp will be used for NACC and community events, will provide employment for the needy, and is to be the future site for a Bible and Leadership Training Center. There will be gardens for weddings, and other outside groups can rent space.

The first phase of construction will include a covered basketball court/multi-purpose hall, a kitchen/pantry block, and bathrooms.

The Rev. Symphony John Castillo, director, hopes to raise these funds by early December and begin construction. Funding will still be needed for the front gate and perimeter hedge, flooring and walkways, and furniture and fixtures.

NEWS FROM GHANA

Rev. Charles Nyane, **Word Alive (Ghana)**, is working to plant a church at Tamale, a predominantly Muslim city in the Northern Region of Ghana. Rev. Charles was there in July, with two members of his team, looking for a hall to rent for church services. They will also need to find housing for the Gospel teams.

These three men organized a three-day seminar, of which the attendance was very encouraging. Rev. Nyane asks for prayers in this endeavor.

The hospital project at Word Alive has also started. It is an exciting time of growth for this mission.

CEASE-FIRE IN MYANMAR

Rev. SaDo, **Congregational Church of Myanmar (Myanmar)**, reports, "The Myanmar government and eight rebel armies have signed a ceasefire agreement to end more than five years of conflict, but the largest insurgent forces were absent from the ceremony.

"The national ceasefire agreement is a historic gift to the generations of the future. Even though the agreement is not nationwide yet, they will try harder to gain the agreement with other groups."

GOOD NEWS FROM HONDURAS

Dr. Josue Hernandez, **Ministerio Vida Hospital (Honduras)**, has been ordained by Plantation Community Church in Plantation, Fla. God will use his ordination to further his ability to minister in Honduras.

NEWS FROM INDIA

Travancore Church Council (India) conducted a Missionary Vision Meeting in July for all of the London Mission Congregational believers. This was held at the Puthalam Church. Rev. Kenaz Solomon also participated as a chief guest. More than 600 people participated. In August, there was a Family Blessing Meeting at Maruthoorkurichi Church. All of the churches participated. TCC is doing ministry in

nine villages. They also operate a sewing school and an evening literacy program for adults.

MEMORIALS

Lisa and Norberto Cortez, directors of **Mission Mazahua (Mexico)**, wrote, "The Mission Mazahua team lost a member just this last week which has us reeling a bit. Our loss was Hermana (Sister) Esther Bernal, a retired nurse who had served as a volunteer here for almost 15 years. ...



Sister Esther Bernal

She suffered a major brain hemorrhage here at the mission and died in the hospital just a few hours later. The family asked to have the wake at the mission recognizing how much Mission Mazahua meant to her. She will be sorely missed, but certainly has been received in glory by the Savior she obviously served in many ways not only here but also in her surroundings near Toluca."

Other members of the NACCC Missions family lost recently include the Rev. Dr. Tom Gossett and the Rev. Art Rudman (see "Necrology," pp. 35-37), and Anne Butman (see our September 2015 issue, "Necrology," p. 45). All will be sorely missed.

NEEDS

PRAYERS NEEDED

Helen Palermo, sister of the Rev. Jaime Julian of **Christian Mission in the Far East (Philippines)**, is confined in the hospital with stage 4 cancer.

The Rev. Charles Nyane of **Word Alive (Ghana)** requests prayers for his daughter Lottie Ruth Nyane, admitted to the hospital with severe malaria. Please pray for speedy recovery. Also his aunt Grace Bonsu has breast cancer, spreading very fast. She is now at the hospital in Accra.

Thank you for your support!

For more information on any of these missions, or to make a donation to any of the above projects, please contact

Linda Miller at the NACCC office,
800-262-1620, ext. 1618 or lmiller@naccc.org.

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

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

ALL GOD'S CHILDREN CONTINUED FROM P.17

walked this path and know the way. That certainly helps. What you do need, however, is a willingness to try new things, an open heart that embraces the concept that we are all God's children, and a passion for letting the Spirit move where She will.

Go ahead and close your eyes one more time and imagine what a Rejoicing Spirits ministry would look like in your church. Now grab a piece of paper and starting planning. You will never regret it.

For assistance beginning such a ministry, feel free to contact Dawn Carlson at dawncarl@aol.com or Carrie Gubsch at carrie.gubsch@mosaicinfo.org, or visit www.rejoicingspirits.org.



THE REV. DAWN CARLSON is pastor of First Congregational Church of Terre Haute, Ind. She serves on the NACCC Growth Ministry Council, the Leadership Council, and wherever needed. Her experience as a special needs mom led her to begin the Growth Ministry Council's Special Needs Task Team. She lives in Terre Haute with her husband, John Kraft.

News from the fellowship of churches



MOVING HIS GROOVE

The Rev. John Doud has departed from the pulpit of *Arbor Grove Congregational Church, Jackson, Mich.*, but not from ministry. “[A] wonderful opportunity has recently presented itself which will locate me within a forty to fifty mile radius of my family in northern Michigan,” he told his congregation. “Not that the grass is necessarily any greener on the other side ... just that there comes a time and a season to pick oneself up and move to another groove.”

The Jackson church honored Doud’s 35 years of service with a reception Aug. 29. He has assumed a new pastorate at First Congregational Church UCC in Cadillac, Mich.

John Doud bids farewell to Arbor Grove Congregational Church, Jackson, Mich., Aug. 29, 2015.



Daniel Huggler gives Pastor Marilyn Danielson a big smile during the children’s sermon in the fellowship hall of First Congregational Church, Portland, Mich. Right: Workers begin pouring the new basement for the Portland church.



A TWIST FOR THE BETTER— Members of the *First Congregational Church of Portland, Mich.*, are finding blessings from the June 22 tornado that ripped their meetinghouse apart (see “An Unexpected Visitor Dropped In,” *September 2015*, pp. 42-43).

Pastor Marilyn Danielson reports the parsonage will get central air, a new electrical system, roof, insulation, and “a historic wrap-around porch with handicapped accessible ramp.” As to the meetinghouse itself, it will look similar to the old building but with a somewhat larger footprint and a full basement.

“We received a very generous check from the NACCC,” said Danielson. “Praise God, we had very good insurance coverage, [but without] the

gifts, we would be unable to update either of the buildings and [would] end up with maybe less than what we had prior to the tornado.”

The church’s 14-year-old fellowship hall, the only part of the 162-year-old building left relatively intact, hosts Sunday services and the church’s regular Monday Night Free Meals. Meanwhile, crews have begun rebuilding the parsonage and the sanctuary.

TRAILBLAZER—The Rev. **Julie Johnson Staples** is one of 12 University of Kansas alumni honored Sept. 26 with the KU Black Alumni Network's African-American Leaders and Innovators Award.



Julie Johnson Staples

The first African-American editor of the *University Daily Kansan*, Staples went on to a journalism career—including stints as White House correspondent for the *Baltimore Sun* and *The New York Times*—and later became a corporate media strategist for Hill and Knowlton, the global public relations company. She subsequently moved into the field of international investing at Warburg Pincus, a global private equity firm with more than \$35 billion in assets under management, and became the firm's first African-American partner, when promoted to managing director.

She left the partnership to pursue her M. Div. degree from Union Theological Seminary in 2011. The following year she graduated with a Th. M. degree in Religion, Literature, and Culture from Harvard University. For many years she served New York City's Riverside Church, as a seminarian and as its interim minister of education.

Now an ordained minister in both the Congregational and American Baptist churches, she is a member of the NACCC Board of Directors, sits on the Advisory Circle of the Congregational Library and Archives in Boston, and was recently selected to serve the historic *Flatbush-Tompkins Congregational Church, Brooklyn, N.Y.*, as interim senior minister.

GET IT FOR A SONG—An Opus 506 pipe organ, built in 1891 by **Hilborne and Frank Roosevelt** and now housed at First Congregational Church of Michigan City, Ind., must find a new home. The three-manual instrument, with more than 1,500 pipes, stands three stories high, weighs almost ten tons, and occupies a 12-foot square footprint. It is one of only an estimated 30 such organs still extant and is in playable condition.

Potential new locations may be a college chapel, a large church, or a large civic auditorium. The organ's sound will fill a hall of 600 to 800 seats. Those wishing further information may contact: **Ann and George Dobie**, 123 East Mechanic St., New Buffalo, Mich. 49117; 249-469-0051; annlouise39@yahoo.com.

PASSING THE BLUE PENCIL— The National Association's Editor Search Committee has chosen **Marianne King** as editor of *THE CONGREGATIONALIST*.

Prior to joining the NACCC, Marianne was vice-president of marketing for a full-service marketing communications firm. She has provided marketing, public relations and outreach services for diverse clients, including federal and state agencies, non-profit organizations and utilities. Marianne edited a national trade magazine for six years and has edited newsletters for internal and external audiences. She earned a bachelor's degree in English from Iowa State University.

A member of *First Congregational Church of Wauwatosa, Wis.*, Marianne has chaired its Fellowship Board and Communications Committee and is a member of its Board of Trustees.

She began working with retiring editor **Larry Sommers** Oct. 1 and will become sole editor after the current (December) issue of the magazine.



Marianne King

THE OTHER HOLY LAND—Although Israel is where Jesus walked and taught and did miracles and was



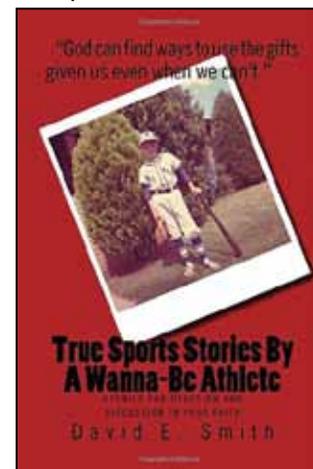
The Library of Celsus, in Ephesus, Turkey.

crucified and arose, it is not the only Holy Land. After the day of Pentecost, the apostles went into all the world with the Gospel; churches were established; the new faith began to take shape. Without this extended Holy Land, primarily in modern-day Turkey and Greece, the letters of Paul and John, outlining Christian belief and practice, would not have been written. The famous “seven churches of the Apocalypse” are all found there—churches who were hurting, churches with financial difficulties, churches struggling in the midst of a pagan culture, churches who were “lukewarm.”

Many Christians have toured Israel and have found it to be the trip of a lifetime. The second part of that trip is a tour of the journeys of John and Paul to Turkey and Greece. **Steve Schafer**, pastor of *Mt. Hope Congregational Church, Livonia, Mich.*, is arranging a tour of “The Other Holy Land” in October 2016.

For further information, e-mail Steve, sbschafer@gmail.com.

DOWN BUT NOT OUT—When the **Rev. Dr. David Smith** was sidelined with a life-threatening stroke that required 11½ days in intensive care and several weeks’ rehabilitation, he retired from more than 20 years of ministry as a pastor serving churches in Maine and Missouri. Now he has published a book, *True Sports Stories By A Wanna-Be Athlete*. Always the smallest and usually the last one chosen for teams, David nonetheless at different points in life surprised others and even himself through athletic endeavors. He has gathered these sports stories into a book for inspiration and motivation, each story complete with an accompanying scripture, a self-examination question, and discussion questions. The book is available in paperback for \$6.99 from Amazon.



DEPT. OF MISPLACED CHURCHES—We referred to a “*Pine Hill Congregational Church, Southgate, Mich.*” in our September issue (New Mentor for CFTS Students,” p. 43). **The Rev. Dr. Charles Packer** has very tactfully pointed out to us that his church, Pine Hill Congregational, is actually in *West Bloomfield*, not Southgate.

SEVENTH TASTE IS THE BEST—



Ryan Jordan pours wine for a guest at Taste of Soquel, Sept. 26, 2015.

The Congregational Church of Soquel, Calif., raised the means for 41,600 healthy meals for children and families of Santa Cruz County through its Seventh Annual “Taste of Soquel” event, held Sept. 26. Families and friends shared some of Soquel’s finest food, wine, and beer offerings donated by local restaurants, wineries, and breweries, and danced to the music of local bands, who also performed for free. The \$10,400 raised went to Second Harvest Food Bank, to purchase the aforementioned meals, validating the event’s billing as *Food and Music for the Common Good*. Over the seven-year history of The Taste of Soquel, some 208,800 meals have been generated, according to church member and NACCC vice-moderator **Laura Hamby**.

CECIL MCFARLAND

The Rev. Cecil Lloyd McFarland, born Dec. 25, 1930, died Oct. 15, 2014, at Hermitage, Tenn.

Mac grew up one of 11 siblings in Clinton, Tenn., and graduated from high school there, then served in the U.S. Air Force and afterwards entered Carson-Newman College. He earned an M.Div. degree from Drew University, was ordained by the Methodist Church, and was commissioned as a chaplain in the Air Force. Following his chaplaincy he pastored Ponckhockie Congregational Church, Kingston, N.Y., 1974-1985; First Congregational Church of Saugerties, N.Y., 1985-1992; and First Congregational Church of Crossville, Tenn., 1992-2005.



“Mac was a very important influence in my life,” wrote the Rev. Carole Hamm. “When God called me to his service I let Mac and [his wife] Ann Marie know right away, and I am [now] the minister at Ponckhockie Church, where I grew up. I loved him like he was my Dad, and ... was blessed to have his love of the Lord as a great influence in my life.”

He also taught learning-disabled students for 23 years in Briarcliff Manor, New York; taught Sociology at Ulster County Community College in Stone Ridge, New York; and served in many volunteer leadership roles both in New York and in Tennessee.

Mac was married to the former Ann Marie Karashay of Saugerties, N.Y., for 45 years. He had five children—four with Barbara Ann Tobey, Falmouth, Mass., and one son with Ann Marie—plus 14 surviving grandchildren and seven great-grandchildren.

THOMAS GOSSETT

The Rev. Dr. Thomas G. Gossett, 76, of Payson, Ariz., founder and director of Indian Trails Missions, passed away Aug. 1.

He was born July 26, 1939, in Battle Creek, Mich., and grew up in nearby Bellevue. On a high school mission trip to Arizona in 1957, he found his love for the native people, a passion he shared with then-girlfriend Sharon. He promised the people that one day he would return and start a work for them; in the summer of 1969 that promise was made good when Tom and Sharon Gossett started Indian Trails. A few years later the work was expanded into Mexico by Senderos de Misiones, the Mexican counterpart to Indian Trails.



Indian Trails has long been recognized as a National Missions Partner of the NACCC; and as dean of the NACCC’s partner missionaries, Tom for decades guided his fellow missionaries, helping newcomers adjust to the often strange new world of National Association affairs.

Tom is survived by three children, ten grandchildren, nine great-grandchildren, and a sister. He was preceded in death by his beloved wife, Sharon; his mother, Pearl; and his father, Thomas C. Gossett.

Memorial donations may be made to his life’s work, Indian Trails Missions, through the Mission and Outreach Ministry Council, NACCC, P.O. Box 288, Oak Creek WI 53154.

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DAVID HENRY

The Rev. Dr. David Bruce Henry, 64, of Chicago, died Aug. 26.

From 1975 to 1978 Dave served as director of Logan Square Youth Outreach, an NACCC mission project operated by Fourth Congregational Church. While serving in that role, he attended Chicago Theological Seminary, completed a doctorate in Christian Education, and was ordained in 1977. The next year, Dave accepted a call as pastor for a United Church of Christ yoked parish in Medinah/Streeter, N. Dak. In 1980, he was called as pastor of Fourth Congregational Church, Chicago, where he served through 1999.

In National Association affairs, Dave chaired the Congregational Foundation for Theological Studies and the Family Life Commission, and he received the Harry Butman Award for excellence in ministry. While pastor of Fourth Church, Dave completed a Ph.D. in Psychology at the University of Illinois at Chicago campus, where he also served as a professor of Health Policy and Administration, focused on improving the lives of children and adolescents from economically disadvantaged families. He was also a renowned scholar of Native Alaskan society and served as adjunct professor of Psychology (President’s Professor) at the University of Alaska, Fairbanks. Dave and his wife, Mary, were active at her home church, Immanuel Lutheran in Chicago, where Dave served as a liturgist, preacher, and forum leader.

“There were no limits to my father’s care and generosity,” said his daughter, Sonja. “If you needed his assistance in any way, he was there for you.”

The Rev. John Miller, First Congregational Church of Royal Oak, Mich., described him as “a kind man, a wise man.”

Dave is survived by his wife, Mary, and two children.

ARTHUR RUDMAN

The Rev. Arthur W. Rudman, 82—an engineer, pilot, teacher, coach, and minister—died Sept. 30, in Saco, Maine.

Born Aug. 28, 1933, in Worcester, Mass., Art graduated in 1955 from Worcester Polytechnic Institute, where he played on its undefeated 1954 football team. He worked as an engineer at Sikorsky Aircraft in Stratford, Conn., until called up into the U.S. Army, where he served four years as a pilot.

On Feb. 4, 1956, he married Nancy J. Russell. Through almost 60 years, Nancy and the family they created together were his greatest treasure and delight.

Art started coaching football in New Jersey as a volunteer coach while in Army flight school. After his military service, he taught mechanical drawing and coached football, wrestling, and track at Worcester Academy. Later, he taught and coached at six different schools, leading the Madison Area Memorial High School Bulldogs football team to the



Maine state championship in 1982, plus conference championships in 1983 and 1986. The school honored him in 2012, naming their football facility “Rudman Field.”

After retiring from coaching in 1986, Art enrolled in Bangor Theological Seminary and earned his M.Div. degree. To someone who questioned his return to school at age 57, he replied: “I’m going to be 57 anyway, whether I go back to school or not. I’d rather be 57 and working toward something I’m passionate about.”

He pastored the First Congregational Church of North Anson for 17 years; several years after retiring from the North Anson pulpit, he was called back to serve the Sebago Lake Congregational Church in Standish for three years. He served on the NACCC Missionary Society from 2004 to 2008 and annually hosted a visiting missionary from Cameroon.

Art touched many people, and his presence altered the course of many lives. He had an impeccable and unpretentious sense of integrity, and it seemed that he did things “the right way” without even having to think about it.

Art was predeceased by his parents and by a daughter, Karen Wildwood. He is survived by his wife, Nancy J. Rudman of Saco, and by a sister, two sons and a daughter, 11 grandchildren, two great-grandchildren, and many nieces and nephews.

Donations may be made in Art’s memory to the Mission School of Hope in Cameroon through the Mission and Outreach Ministry Council, NACCC, P.O. Box 288, Oak Creek WI 53154.

ROBERT FLEISCHMANN

The Rev. Robert H. Fleischmann died Oct. 5, in Green Valley, Ariz.

Bob was born Jan. 15, 1946, in McKeesport, Pa.; the family moved to southern California when he was 6 months old. He graduated from the California State Polytechnic College in Pomona, then attended the American Baptist Seminary of the West, and upon graduation in 1968 married Christine Good in Pomona.

Bob served as a settled or interim minister to National Association churches in California, Kansas, Minnesota, Wisconsin and Nebraska. He also served on the NACCC Christian Education Commission, the Missionary Society, and the Executive Committee, in the 1980s and 1990s. At the time of his death he was an active member of Valley Presbyterian Church in Green Valley.

Bob was an avid model railroader and during summer months volunteered as a conductor on the North Shore Scenic Railroad in Duluth, Minn., where he and Chris lived for many years.

Bob had a strong and abiding faith in God. He was a quiet, kind and loving man who always had a ready smile. He is survived by his wife, Christine, and his son, Douglas.

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WILLIAM FILLEBROWN



The Rev. Dr. William P. Fillebrown Sr., 64, died peacefully at home on Nov. 4.

Bill had served Chiltonville Congregational Church, Plymouth, Mass., as its pastor for 15 years and was also the fire chaplain for the Town of Plymouth. Although a true Plymouthean he graduated from Wachussett Regional High School in Holden, Mass. He earned a bachelor’s degree in Business from Stonehill College, and his Master of Divinity and Doctor of Ministry degrees from Gordon Conwell Theological Seminary. Bill served churches in Massachusetts, California, and New Jersey. Ministering in his home town of Plymouth was the fulfillment of a long-time goal.

He served the NACCC as a member of the Division for Ministry and of the Program Committee, and he was moderator of the 2008 Annual Meeting, held in Plymouth. He was also active in regional association affairs and was an active member of the Theological Commission of the International Congregational Fellowship, contributing articles for the *International Congregational Journal*. For many years he was a world traveler, taking advantage of opportunities to teach at seminaries in Ukraine, Turkey, Lebanon, and Brazil. He enjoyed visiting students at their seminaries in Africa, China, and South America.

Bill loved reading, playing the guitar, sports and stimulating conversation. He is survived by his wife of 44 years, Deborah (Moore) Fillebrown and by his four sons, seven grandchildren, a brother and a sister and several nieces. Donations in his memory may be made to: The International Congregational Fellowship Theological Commission (ICFTC) c/o CCC, 6 River St., Plymouth MA 02362; or Gordon Conwell Theological Seminary, 130 Essex St., South Hamilton MA 01982; or the Chiltonville Congregational Church, 6 River St., Plymouth MA 02362.

CALENDAR

JANUARY 18 - General copy deadline for *THE CONGREGATIONALIST* March 2016 issue - Contact Marianne King, editor@naccc.org or 800-262-1620, ext. 1610.

SAVE THE DATE

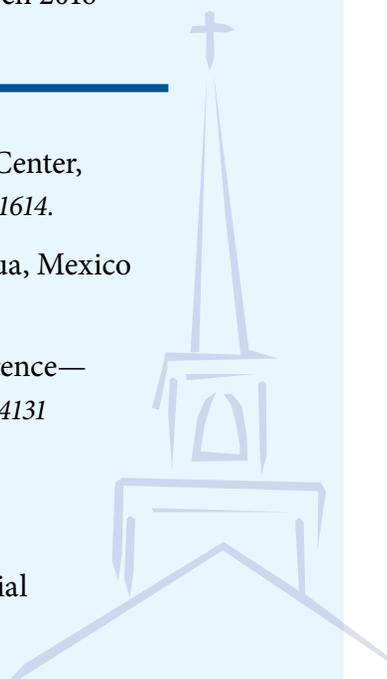
APRIL 4-7, 2016 - 47th Annual NACCC Ministers’ Convocation—Weber Center, Adrian, Michigan. Contact Marie Steele, msteele@naccc.org or 800-262-1620, ext. 1614.

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

JUNE 24, 2016 - Quiet Day Retreat preceding Annual Meeting and Conference—
Time and place TBD - Contact Rev. Dr. Charles Packer, Chaplain-Director, 734-755-4131

JUNE 25-28, 2016 - NACCC 62nd Annual Meeting and Conference—
DoubleTree by Hilton, Detroit/Dearborn, Michigan

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



RECENT CALLS

First Congregational Church, Fall River, Mass., has called the Rev. Debbie Cipolletti as interim minister.

First Congregational Church, Saugatuck, Mich., has called the Rev. Sarah Gladstone as senior minister.

First Congregational Church, Redlands, Calif., has called the Rev. Dr. Steven Davis as senior minister.

First Congregational Church, Elkader, Iowa, has called Pastor Linda Hauschild as lay minister.

Atkinson Congregational Church, Atkinson, Ill., has called the Rev. Jacob Stansberry as senior minister.

First Congregational Church, Toulon, Ill., has called the Rev. William Tolliver as senior minister.

United Church of Marco Island, Marco Island, Fla., has called the Rev. David Barnes as associate minister.

McGraft Memorial Congregational Church, Muskegon, Mich., has called the Rev. Jason Griffice as senior minister.

The Little Brown Church in the Vale, Nashua, Iowa, has called the Rev. Lonnie Wilkerson as senior minister.

First Congregational Church, Clear Lake, Iowa, has called the Rev. Harlan Seri as senior minister.

Glenolden Congregational Church, Glenolden, Pa., has called the Rev. Michael Dorich as senior minister.

Westchester Congregational Church, Colchester, Conn., has called the Rev. Ronald Thompson as senior minister.

IN SEARCH

SENIOR MINISTER

Arbor Grove Congregational Church
Jackson, Mich.

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

Congregational Church of the Chimes
Sherman Oaks, Calif.

Craig Memorial Congregational Church
Paradise, Calif.

First Congregational Church
Ashland, Neb.

First Congregational Church
Interlachen, Fla.

First Congregational Church
Peterson, Iowa

First Congregational Church
Roscommon, Mich.

First Congregational Church
Salt Lake City, Utah

Flatbush-Tompkins Congregational Church
Brooklyn, N.Y.

Little Stone Church
Mackinac Island, Mich.

Orthodox Congregational Church
Petersham, Mass.

Rockwood First Congregational Church
Rockwood, Mich.

Plymouth Church
Brooklyn, N.Y.

Plymouth Congregational Church
Racine, Wis.

Second Congregational Church
Jewett City, Conn.

Union Congregational Christian Church
Marbury, Ala.

United Congregational Church
Norwich, Conn.

NON-NACCC CHURCHES

Friendship Congregational Christian Church
Baxley, Ga.

Third Avenue Congregational Christian Church
Danville, Va.

The Beach Church
Pensacola Beach, Fla.