

# Congregational Profiles

Articles from the *Congregationalist*, 1958-1997

Readings in the History and Polity of the National  
Association of Congregational Christian Churches

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Rev. Dr. Arlin T. Larson, editor

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## INTRODUCTION

Of all the articles compiled for this course, those about people, these Profiles, caused the most anxiety. Who should be highlighted? For what reasons? How accurate a picture of the people of the NACCC do these particular profiles paint?

I do not pretend to have firm answers to any of these questions. It remains for qualified historians, sociologists, and others to conduct a thorough study of the NACCC, weighing the events and personalities from a more scientific perspective. These articles will, however, bring to your attention many people who have been highlighted in the pages of the *Congregationalist*. Whether there has been over the years any consistent basis of selection, I cannot say. Some of those profiled are leaders at the national level. Others are historical figures who someone (the editor him/herself?, an editor just glad to receive some material) thought worthy of notice. Many profiles are more on the order of human interest stories, exemplary instances, or “people in the news.”

What does it say about the NACCC that we honor, recognize, choose to lead us, listen to these particular people? There are certainly lessons to be gleaned by an observant reader. What conclusions do you draw?

## **Congregational Profiles**

# Founders

# The Executive Committee And Its Chairmen

Louis B. Gerhardt

The National Association of Congregational Christian Churches was born in the historic Fort Shelby Hotel, Detroit, Michigan in 1955. The Articles of Association, so necessary to the NA's permanent development, were adopted at Wauwatosa, Wisconsin in October of 1956. It was at that time that the idea of an Executive Committee was recommended by the by-laws committee to the assembled delegates. This by-laws committee felt that a twelve member board, with limited terms of service, elected directly by the churches in Annual Meeting assembled, was the best way of giving our world-wide fellowship the stability and strength to deal effectively with the necessary day by day decision-making that is vital to the growth and development of any viable organization. This by-laws committee recommendation was unanimously adopted by the churches gathered at Wauwatosa.

The decision has proved to be a good one. From the very beginning the Executive Committee has been sensitive, strong, imaginative, patient and always faithful to the wishes of the member churches.

Ernest Crosby, now of Carmel, California, was the first Executive Committee chairman. He reflected on the 1956-57 year as follows:

"We were, of course, much concerned with organizational matters and a few growing pains: budget, committee appointments, necessary church visitations both nationally and world-wide and a host of other things.

"However, we were able to set up some excellent commissions which worked well in the first year and produced some excellent reports.

"Perhaps my happiest recollection is that of the fine spirit which prevailed. Everyone seemed happy and optimistic with the big decision taken and the opportunity before us to build a permanent Congregational structure. The numerous meetings held during the period were well attended and it seemed easy to get things done. There was some very inspirational oratory by Raymond Waser and several others and amusing interludes provided by that wittiest of raconteurs, Joe Fackenthal.

"It all seemed a bit haphazard and experimental at the time, but with the record of intervening history, it looks as if the job was pretty well done."

Since that good beginning, the Executive Commit-

tee has always conducted itself in an orderly, restrained and efficient manner.

Some of the milestones in their years of work are as follows:

In February, 1958, with the leadership of Dr. Harry Bulman, we began issuing our national publication under the ancient and honorable name, THE CONGREGATIONALIST.

In 1960, with Dr. George Bohman's leadership, the Executive Committee implemented The Special Education Effort (SEE), sponsored by the National Association, to properly study the proposed Constitution of the UCC and the Executive Committee appointed the first Associate Executive Secretary for our growing fellowship.

In 1961, with Dr. John Alexander as chairman, the Executive Committee sponsored the development and adoption of the Articles of Incorporation which completed the legal structure of the National Association. By this action it was determined that such activities as the Missionary Society, the Foundation for Theological Studies, and the Building and Loan Fund, instead of being independent entities, would be divisions of the National Association, responsible to the Churches of the National Association. This was a basic, philosophical determination by the National Association in order that we would not develop competing agencies, but rather arms of one Association reaching out into the world for Christian service. The Divisions were given considerable autonomy over their own programs, but incorporated as parts of one Corporation for the National Association.

In 1962, under Rev. Leonard Maunder's fine leadership, the Pastoral Relations office was located at the national office in Milwaukee and Dr. John Claxton was called as the first Pastoral Relations secretary.

Dr. Leslie Deinstadt, chairman in 1963, remembers the incorporation of the NACCC during his term. "It was something of an historic moment when I signed the papers," writes Les. "I remember being seated at Neil Swanson's desk for the event surrounded by staff and committee members."

The years 1964-68 were times of careful planning and the continued development of a sound structural organization under the efficient leadership of William Stouffer, Dr. Erwin Britton, Robert Black, Paul Miller

and Edward W. Adams.

It was during Rev. Howard Bull's term in 1969 that the comprehensive use of liaison persons (Executive Committee members) working closely with each Board and Commission of the NA was developed, and the institution of a Central Fund Investment program on behalf of each Division of the Corporation was accomplished.

The hard working Long Range Planning Committee was initiated by Alexander Irvine during his term as chairman in 1970.

Dr. Louis Gerhardt's term in 1971 featured the appointment of the Executive Finance Committee which has become a vital part of our growing National Association.

The year 1972, with the dedicated leadership of Robert Morris, culminated in the delegates at Green Bay, Wisconsin, expressing their faith in the future of the NA by adopting the challenging "Forward in Freedom" campaign. And since that exciting moment, with the leadership of the Executive Committee chairmen Leland Johnson and Dr. Harry Butman, the NA has accomplished its greatest financial growth to this date.

In no small way, our success as a national fellowship has been due to the countless sacrificial hours spent by Executive Committee members who have wrestled mightily and successfully with both large and small matters that have had an important effect in developing the image of our free fellowship throughout the world.



Ernest S. Crosby



Harry R. Butman



George V. Bohman



John H. Alexander



Leonard H. Maunder



Leslie G. Deinstadt



William K. Stoufer



Erwin A. Britton



Robert B. Black



Paul A. Miller



Edward W. Adams



Howard E. Bull



A. S. Irvine



Louis B. Gerhardt



Robert G. Morris



Leland C. Johnson

# Dad And His Church: A Portrait Of Dedication

By KAREN HOFFMAN  
Staff Writer

SUN CITY, ARIZ. — Dad was too tired to talk but too ecstatic not to.

He was sitting on the couch, a snack tray with a partially consumed sandwich in front of him, reflecting on the events of the day.

The clock on the television stand was ticking off the final hours of what I realized was the biggest day of his life.

Sunday, Feb. 21, 1982, was dedication day for the Congregational Church of Sun City — the final church to be built in that retirement community, the first and only traditional Congregational church in Arizona and the first church founded by my father, the Rev. Dr. John H. Alexander.

"It really went well, didn't it?" Dad asked of no one in particular, the mouth of his freckled face curling into an uncertain smile.

"Wonderfully well," said the Rev. John Travell, pastor of the Penge Congregational Church of London, England, who had assisted in the afternoon dedication service.

The two ministers, one from the country where Congregationalism was born with the Separatists and the other a former executive secretary of the National Association of Congregational Christian Churches who was reared 50 miles from Plymouth Rock, where the Pilgrims brought the Congregational movement to the new world, were sharing a relaxed meal with my mother, my sister Margaret, and me.

We sat for a moment in contented silence. And then the emotions took over.

"I learned things about you today that I never knew," I said, looking into my father's tired brown eyes. It was a difficult statement for a 32-year-old daughter to make, confessing, as it did, a lack of understanding of the man who gave me life.

"You did?" he said, leaning back in genuine surprise. "What didn't you know?"

I looked at my father, a man of 62 whose black hair, greying at the temples, is thinning. His once pronounced Boston accent, which I remembered from my childhood, had been diluted during years of ministering to midwestern churches.

"Most kids don't ask questions about their parents' lives," I said... until they reach adulthood themselves and move away and don't see their folks often enough to engage in such serious conversations, I thought.

Because we live a continent apart, I hadn't heard my father preach for more than a decade. I'd never heard the personal reminiscences he shared that morning with his congregation.

If dedication Sunday was important to my father, the minister, his sermon was important to his oldest daughter, me.

"The things you said in your sermon, about the clergymen and laymen and churches that were important in your development as a minister," I began, valiantly blinking back the tears rimming my eyes... "Dad, I never even knew the name of the church you attended as a boy..."

"Oh, that was quite a story," he said, his eyes lighting with the memory. "I remember one Sunday when I was ushering. We ushers, all of us were teenagers, we knew the order of Rev. Barnard's service and we'd sneak out before the sermon, go to a cafe across the street for coffee and donuts, and get back in time for the collection."

He began to laugh, well, wheeze. Dad wheezes when he's amused, wheezes so hard it's impossible not to laugh at as well as with him.

"Well, one Sunday old Rev. Barnard changed the order of the service and took the collection before he gave the sermon..." Dad was wheezing too hard to finish the story, but we all could guess the end.

He hadn't wheezed during his sermon that morning when he told the story of his decision to become a minister to the congregation of 200 retirees who had financed the construction of the beautiful new

\$850,000 building out of their own pockets.

The four churches my father previously served had undergone building projects of some type during his pastorate, and the National Association's headquarters in Milwaukee was built under his leadership.

But Dad never before had nurtured a church from the roots.

At the end of his term in 1976 with the National Association, he moved to Sun City to form a Congregational church in a retirement area. The Congregational Church of Sun City started with a dozen persons who met in my parents' home on April 15, 1976.

The importance of this new church in his life... well, his sermon said it all.

"It was during a midweek Lenten service at the Roslindale Congregational Church in Boston that I decided to become a minister," he said to his people. "I don't remember if the visiting minister, whose name I can't recall, delivered a particularly moving sermon that evening or if the singing of the hymn, 'Lead On, O King Eternal,' was especially spirited."

"I do remember walking into the office of the Rev. Alfred Barnard and hearing him say, 'You must be here for one of two reasons, John. Either you've decided to become a minister or you want to get married. And I know you don't want to get married, at least, not yet.'"

My mother, who was seated with the choir, smiled as the congregation chuckled.

My father was 21 years old, an usher, Sunday school teacher and member of the Roslindale Church council, and was employed as a clerk in a stationary supply store when that decision was made.

He spoke of Dr. Marion Bradshaw, a professor of philosophy at Bangor, Maine Theological Seminary, where he studied after graduation from Bowdoin College in Brunswick, Maine.

(Continued on page 11)



missionary to appear in that part of Papua came from the Cook Islands and this particular village had already made a pilgrimage to that particular spot in the Pacific. But the second and many subsequent missionaries had come from Samoa and this particular village wanted to express their gratitude for the way in which the Gospel had been brought to them, not by the white missionaries from Britain and America, but by the simple Polynesian people of the South Seas.

In his letter, the Papuan pastor said that he and his people wanted to share in simple Christian fellowship with people of a different culture, but who were in very fact their fathers in Christ. Moreover they wanted, if it were permitted, to erect a monument in that village of Falelatai, which they judged to be very similar to their own, to the devoted service of the Samoan people in bringing the Gospel to other parts of the world.

The important thing to emphasize was that this was not a letter between two Christian denominations — it was not from the United Church of Papua, New Guinea and the Solomon Islands to the Congregational Christian Church of Samoa — but it was from one local congregation of Christ's people to another local congregation in a distant land. The request so made has met with a warm and affirmative response from the Samoan people and plans are already being made as to how this large party might be housed and fed and the

... *Dedication (cont. from p. 10)*

"He infused in me the need for reason as well as emotion in religion," Dad said, grasping the sides of the pulpit in a stance so familiar to me. "He taught me not to accept things on the surface; taught me critical analysis, how to think."

My father always stressed to us kids the importance of clearly thinking things out rather than acting on impulse. And he always accepted our thoughtful decisions with love and understanding, even if he didn't agree with them.

Listening to his sermon, hearing that resonant voice fill the sanctuary, I began to understand his unquestioning acceptance of my not attending church in Pittsburgh, a fact that must hurt him even though he'll never take me to task for it. His daughter is able to make her own decisions.

"The autonomy of the local church, the belief that where two or three are gathered in Christ's name, He is in their midst, is the basis of the Congregational faith... that each person has the right to interpret the scripture and apply its teachings for himself," he continued.

"The most effective and fulfilling aspect of the Christian life is voluntary discipleship to Christ rather than being compelled by the creed of a church. The Congregational way... faith, freedom and fellowship — is based on the importance of the in-

dividual conscience before God."

He compared the congregation sitting before him in row after row of new pews to the members of a Congregational church in Kristacoil, India, who, when the courts locked them out of their building, worshipped, rain or shine, in front of the church doors until the building was returned to them.

"The support you have given to create this new church," he said, his voice cracking slightly, "showed the same determination and dedication."

When we sang the recessional hymn, "Lead On, O King Eternal," I couldn't read the words for the tears in my eyes.

"I didn't realize you didn't know those things," Dad said as he finished his sandwich. "You know; it's hard, after spending the day talking to someone who's dying, or who's marriage is failing or just listening to people, to then spend time talking at home."

"The ministry is an emotionally draining job," echoed Rev. Travell.

The people of the Sun City church call my father "Dr. John," a combination of respect and affection.

The label fits him perfectly.

Doctor — an intellectual. For years he has striven to preserve the traditional Congregational church, fighting against the movement begun in the 1950s to merge churches from many denominations into the United Church of Christ.

That movement reduced the number of Congregational churches from 6,000 nationwide to the 450 which now compose the National Association. On Feb. 21, he added another church to that association.

John... a modern day disciple of Christ whose love for people is the foundation of his ministry.

They should add "Father" to that name. But then, they don't know him like I do.

(Reprinted with permission from the *Observer-Reporter*.)

Editor's Note: See related article on page 6.

As we note our twenty years of development as the National Association of Congregational Christian Churches, we want to acknowledge the very fine leadership we have received from all five of the Executive Secretaries who have served us faithfully and well during these often tumultuous, yet always creative times. We could think of no better-qualified person to write the brief sketches of these good men than the loved and respected past Moderator of our National Association, Mrs. George J. (Cary) Mead of Hartford, Connecticut.

# Our First Magnificent Five



Rev. Harry W. Johnson, D.D.

The Rev. Harry W. Johnson, D. D., was the first Executive Secretary of the National Association of Congregational Christian Churches, which was organized on November 10, 1955, and he certainly got us off to a good start. The son of Swedish parents who had migrated to America in 1869, he was born in Oakland, Nebraska, and attended Sunday School and Church in the Free Evangelical Church there until he finished high school. He graduated from the University

of Nebraska in 1912, and in 1915 from the Divinity School of the University of Chicago with M.A. and B.D. degrees. He was married to Anna Linn, his boyhood sweetheart from Oakland, on July 3, 1915, with whom he shared more than 50 years of devoted happiness.

He was ordained in September of that year in his first parish in New London, Wisconsin. In the next few years he served several churches with distinction, and each one prospered. It could not be otherwise, as no one could resist his unbounded enthusiasm and dedication.

The Pacific University of Forest Grove, Oregon, conferred on him the degree of Doctor of Divinity in 1949, and the accompanying citation spoke of his tireless and selfless work for 20 years as "pastor of pastors in the Intermountain district, embracing Idaho, Wyoming and Utah, driving thousands of miles each year in all kinds of weather to bring strength, understanding, and encouragement to ministers and their

wives in lonely parishes." In 1955 he received a similar citation from the Board of Home Missions in recognition of his 40 years in the ministry.

His term as Executive Secretary of the National Association was tragically cut short by blindness. Many of us had only come to know him, and therefore love and admire him, in those three all-too-brief years as he saw our young association through its birth pangs and infancy, and we were stricken that the work of such a great Christian minister should be so curtailed.

When he died on Sunday, October 7, 1973, his son said of him, "His life was devoted to the preaching and teaching and practice of love for his God, his fellow man, and his family. A few men in each generation find God and gain the peace and security of His boundless love. A few men of each generation find a good wife and gain the peace and security of her love. This was one of the rare few who found both. He was the happiest man I ever knew. Now I know his happiness is eternal."





**Rev. Neil H. Swanson, Jr.**

My introduction to Rev. Neil Swanson was over a microphone, so to speak, as he steadfastly and doggedly tried to defend the Congregational Way at the baleful meeting of the General Council at Omaha in 1956. Time after time, to the discomfiture of the top brass sitting on the platform, his "Neil Swanson from Wisconsin" would ring out, and we all would hear yet another point scored for the Congregational

Way.

Born and brought up in Minneapolis, he was educated at Cornell College in Iowa, at Union Theological Seminary, and at Garrett Theological School in Evanston, Illinois. At age 19 he served as student minister to two small churches in Iowa. He then did graduate work at the University of Minnesota, where for several years he taught philosophy and the humanities, also serving as minister of youth in two large churches in Minneapolis. He was brought up a Methodist but shifted to Congregationalism after exploring other denominations. He was ordained in Como Congregational Church in Minneapolis in 1945. He went as associate to Wauwatosa in 1951 and was called to it as senior minister in 1952. In 1957 at South Congregational Church in Hartford he was elected as the third Moderator of the National

Association.

He succeeded Harry Johnson as Executive Secretary of the National Association in 1958, and during his six-year term he built well on the foundation which had been laid. Many churches were added to the roll during those years. An informative and delightful newsletter kept us all in touch with one another, and when we were struggling to solve the problem of educating our ministers, he came up with the brilliant suggestion of the Congregational Foundation for Theological Studies.

After completing his term as Executive Secretary, he accepted a call to First Church, Toledo, where he served with distinction for two years before accepting a call to Makawao Union Church on Maui, where he is happily doing a fine job, as well as teaching in a college, and involving himself in many enterprises.



**Rev. A. Vaughan Abercrombie, III**

Rev. A. Vaughan Abercrombie III was born in Bridgeport, Connecticut, on December 27, 1912, the son of Mr. and Mrs. A. Vaughan Abercrombie, Jr. He received his A.B. degree at Marietta (Ohio) College in 1937. There he and Charlotte Osborne Manning had met and fallen in love. They were married on October 17 of that year.

He attended Harvard Divinity School from which he graduated in 1946. From 1943 to '48 he was personnel director of the Rock Manufacturing

Company in Stoughton, Massachusetts. He was ordained to the Christian ministry on November 8, 1950, at the Riverpoint Church at West Warwick, Rhode Island, and served there until 1956 when he was called to the First Congregational Church of Tacoma, Washington.

His service in the National Association included a term on the Commission on the Ministry, of which he was chairman from 1961 to '63. He later was nominated by the Executive Committee as the Executive Secretary of the National Association in June of 1964, which nomination was confirmed at the Wichita meeting. This made it possible to achieve an orderly transition in that office, to take place during the summer before he took on its fulltime duties in September. Before completing his term as Executive Secretary, he was called to be the pastor of the Congregational Christian Church of East Orange, New Jersey, in which he

is serving at present.

He is the author of several books, including "How to Gather and Order A Congregational Christian Church" in 1966, and a "Handbook for Presiding Officers" in 1971. He received a heartwarming citation at the Taunton, Massachusetts, annual meeting in recognition of his five years' service as Executive Secretary of the National Association. One of the achievements of his term in that position was the installation of modern business procedures and machinery in the office, and a balanced budget. It was during his term that the Growth & Development Fund was initiated and completed. It has served as a backlog of financial security for the National Association since that time. The aforementioned citation concludes with, "... And for Vaughan's ever forthright and knowledgeable leadership, coupled with a warmth of friendship and insight shared by many who knew him well."



**Rev. Donald R. Brownell**

The Rev. Donald R. Brownell was born in Chappelle, Nebraska, and was brought up in the Methodist Church, but became a Congregationalist when he had reached years of discretion. He graduated from Nebraska Wesleyan University and received his master's degree from the Iliff School of Theology. He then received his Master of Religi-

ous Education degree from the Hartford Seminary Foundation. He served as chaplain for five years in the Army in World War II.

In recent years he has been the minister of the Plymouth Congregational Church in Racine, Wisconsin, where he is serving with devotion and distinction. In 1970 and 1971 he organized and was dean of the Plymouth Seminary, which was a one-year experiment in discipline in the life of prayer, along with the academic training of seminary students. He has also completed his basic training in transactional analysis, which includes one month's training at Western Institute of Group and Family Therapy located at Mount Madonna, California.

He has served the National Association in many different ways, one of the most signifi-

cant of which was his leadership of the youth work camp which spent the summer of 1966 building the meeting house of the Church of the Northern Lights in Anchorage, Alaska. Another very special contribution was his discovery of the Sienna Center, which has welcomed the Executive Committee and the commission members for the mid-winter meetings for several years.

He served as Associate Secretary of Missions for part of one year and was also the Moderator of the National Association.

All these are interesting facts, but they do not give the true flavor of the man who is a devoted and able minister, whose friendship we all cherish, whose wife we all love, and whose achievements we all admire.



**Rev. John H. Alexander**

The Rev. John H. Alexander, D.D., was born in Boston, Massachusetts, October 19, 1919, the first child of John and Elizabeth Coffin Alexander. Their ancestry was Scottish, and his father was an elder in the Presbyterian Church of East Boston. His Christian education began in the Sunday School of the Congregational Church of Melrose, whither the family had moved after a sister and later a brother had joined the family. John's father died when he was eleven, and his mother went back to teaching. John had a newspaper route and later a job as clerk in a

grocery. At age 16 he joined the Order of DeMolay, and after five years he became Master Councilor.

Rev. Alfred J. Barnard, pastor of the Rosindale Church, greatly influenced his religious development. John taught Sunday School, was an usher, and eventually a youth member of the church council. He received his training for the ministry at Bangor Theological Seminary, and during those five years he had opportunities to preach in many of the Maine churches whose ministers were in the armed forces. While serving as student minister at the Hammond Street Church, he met Donna, who became his wife on June 27, 1943, and she helped him through the ensuing years of commuting, studying, and serving churches.

It was during this time that John became involved with the struggle to preserve the Congregational Way. And he has been involved in that struggle ever since; first on the Continuation Committee,

of which he was treasurer after Dr. Davies' death, and later he was Moderator of the Constituting Meeting of the National Association on November 10, 1955.

In this brief sketch, I cannot dwell on the churches he served, except to mention his being associate at Wauwatosa, and later minister of the First Congregational Church, Marshalltown, Iowa.

For some years he was Associate Secretary of the Missionary Society in the National Association, and then was appointed Executive Secretary, in which capacity he is now serving. Perhaps the most significant achievement during his term has been the initiation of the Forward in Freedom Fund, which envisioned a national headquarters of our own (now complete and dedicated), a fund for New Church Development, and an endowment fund. We hope and trust that long before he completes his term as Executive Secretary in 1975 we can complete this fund.



### *In Memoriam*

**MALCOLM K. BURTON**

March 28, 1905—February 29, 1984

A text that expresses the sentiments I feel as I prepare this article has been suggested by Harry Butman:

*"Do you not know that a prince, a great man, has fallen this day in Israel?" 2 Samuel 3:38*

King David wept over the death of his loyal general, Abner. Our tears are shed for the sudden loss of one who was the "Tom Paine" of continuing Congregationalism in those days when our Way was sorely tried by those who sought to suppress the voluntary fellowship of autonomous churches in order that organic union might be the stance of the day for Protestant Christianity. The reading of the various issues of *The Christian Century* of the year 1955 will pro-

vide ample justification for this statement.

The decade from 1945 to 1955 would have been vastly different in the annals of the church were it not for Malcolm Burton. Not only was the National Association of Congregational Christian Churches founded, but the nature of the United Church of Christ is different than it would have been, due in large measure to the pointed pen and challenging faith of this soldier for freedom among the followers of Jesus of Nazareth.

Although the merger controversy stimulated Malcolm's most forthright energies, he was always a pastor and a friend, knowing that the local church, its welfare, its success, its dedication to the "good news" was the abiding call of a minister of the Gospel. No matter how strong the pressure to be the defender of and the spokesman for Congregationalism in interdenominational circles, he never flagged in his zeal as the minister of a local church. The books of which he was most proud were the collections of sermons which reflected his

# A Prince Has

*By Dr. John H. Alexan*

life and faith. The love and respect which the churches he served accorded their minister and his wife are testimony indeed!

From 1942 onward Malcolm Burton was "on fire" for a cause which he held dear, and his writings, at first lonely proclamations in the morass of growing ecumenism, slowly but surely called many others to the banner of the Congregational Way. I, as a seminary student in those days, at first looked askance at an "obstructionist," but I soon came to realize that a prophet was abroad in the land.

The proponents of merger were prone to call upon Malcolm Burton when they wanted to give lip service to those who opposed the Basis of Union. It fit their purposes to pretend that he was their only opposition, a lone voice in the wilderness. But he had more company than they were willing to admit, and we who were motivated by his writings came to the fore in the Committee for the Continuation of the Congregational Christian Churches; in the League to Uphold Congregational Principles; and in 1955, in the formation of the National Association.

Malcolm was the pamphleteer extraordinaire. He was not really patient with sitting on boards and committees, nor with holding denominational offices. It was with some reluctance that he accepted the office of moderator of the NACCC in 1968-69. He was more comfortable, and he felt more effective, in the local church pulpit, or in his study writing cogent sermons and articles, pamphlets and books, and therewith cutting to the very heart of the issues that confronted Congregationalists. He enjoyed the environment of debate and discussion.

His wife, Carol, whom he married in 1930, was always at his side, work-

*Dr. John Alexander is Minister of the Congregational Church of Sun City, AZ and a former Moderator and Executive Secretary of the NACCC. He is Secretary-Treasurer of the Committee for the Continuation of Congregational Christian Churches on which he has served with Rev. Burton and others since 1949.*



# as Fallen

xander

ing as diligently as he for that in which they believed.

Those who have come into the National Association in the last decade or so did not get to know Malcolm Burton very well. We who have known him want you to know that without him it is unlikely that the NACCC would be here, nor would there be the free church fellowship which we all share today. As Harry Butman has so well said, "Others of us were workers, but we were not the progenitor; there can only be one such." . . . Malcolm Burton.

Malcolm was born in 1905, the son of the Rev. Charles Emerson Burton who, when his son was a teen-ager, became Executive Secretary of the General Council of the Congregational Christian Churches, the highest executive office of the denomination. Charles Burton wrote the first Handbook for the Congregational Way.

Malcolm was educated at Phillips Academy, Andover, MA; Carleton College, Northfield, MN; and the Chicago Theological Seminary. He served a student pastorate at the Edgebrook Community Church, Chicago, IL, 1927-1929. Then followed four successful ministries in Congregational Churches: Massena, NY, 1929-1933; Pelham, NY, 1933-1938; Second Church, New London, CT, 1938-1952; and Pontiac, MI, 1952-1971.

In 1971 he and Carol "retired" to Agawam, MA, close to their treasured summer hide-away on Lake Sunapee, NH, where they enjoyed canoeing, boating, and hiking in the woods for over fifty years.

While resident in Agawam, Rev. Burton served for ten years as associate pastor of the Wachogue Congregational Church with the Rev. Curtis Wing.

During the years Rev. Burton served as moderator of county and

state Associations of Churches in both Connecticut and Michigan. He served as an ecclesiastical expert in two national lawsuits on the merger question, including the famed Cadman Case in the early 1950's. Pamphleteering was his most effective method of communication on the merger issues. The cogency and forthrightness of his writing brought many of us to the banner of continuing Congregationalism.

In addition to his books of sermons, he was the author of several other books. Among them *Destiny for Congregationalism* (1953) and *Disorders in the Kingdom* (1982).

Malcolm was a photographer; and a printer of more than amateur skill. He executed the printing of much that he wrote. Carol stuffed the envelopes and put thousands upon thousands of items in the mail. To them Congregationalism owes a deep expression of gratitude.

Malcolm King Burton died suddenly on February 29, 1984, at his home in Agawam. None of us who knew and respected him had a chance to say "thank you" or "farewell faithful servant." On behalf of all for whom his death leaves a void, I do so now with the faith that he has received God's eternal blessing: "Well done, . . . enter into the joy of your Lord."

Dr. Harry R. Butman says it for all of us: "Of all the good men strong and true who fought that our Way might not perish, Malcolm Burton was first and best. To him, above all others, we owe the continuation of Congregationalism in our time."

He fought the good fight . . . he finished the course . . . he kept the faith. May the God of our Fathers grant him the crown of righteousness that fadeth not away.

You may communicate with Carol Burton at 1159 River Road, Agawam, MA 01001.



*A MEMORIAL SERVICE for MALCOLM K. BURTON will be held in The Cross Church, Fresno, CA, on Sunday, June 24, 1984 at 4:00 p.m. All who will be in Fresno for the Annual Meeting of the NACCC are invited to arrange their schedules so that they may join in this final tribute to him.*

*Mrs. Carol Burton and many of Malcolm's friends have encouraged gifts to a Memorial Library to be housed at the National Association office. Upon establishment of the library, Malcolm Burton's collection of papers and books will be donated so that all Congregationalists may have access to them. It is hoped that other collections will be added to the library in the future. Donations for the establishment of the library will be received by the National Association from anyone interested in the project.*



*Malcolm loved to take to the water in his canoe.*

# The Congregationalist

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## *A Guest Editorial*

### THE GOSPEL WE PREACH

**Rev. Harry R. Butman, Los Angeles, California**  
*Chairman of Executive Committee, National Association*

For the first time since September, 1935, the name THE CONGREGATIONALIST appears at the mast-head of a journal of religion.

In Milwaukee, January 22, 1958, the Executive Committee of the National Association of Congregational Christian Churches, in accordance with the directive given by the Hartford meeting, elected a Commission on Missions and Church Extension.

These two events are facets of a single truth of first importance for all Congregationalists. The National Association has now taken the bold but inevitable step of evangelizing. By means of these agencies, by word and by deed, the Christian Gospel will be proclaimed and spread in the Congregational way. This is a strong step forward.

For more than a quarter of a century seminary professors have taught, powerful ecclesiasts have promoted, and docile ministers have echoed the doctrine that the Gospel is a summons to submission, and that the Kingdom of God is an ecclesiastical super-state. The word *ecumenicity* (that Baal, that golden calf of Protestant officialdom) has been the cantrip, the spell, that has ensorcelled preachers and laymen alike, although the word never fell from Christ's lips, nor is its advocacy to be found in His teachings. Urged by the same compulsive craving for conformity which has led to the totalitarian state in the world of politics, men of religion have cried for chains, and this is a cry which never goes unheard or unanswered.

#### **Liberty Is Viable**

But liberty is a hard growth, and the drought of Gospel truth in these years has but stunted, not killed it. With the reappearance of a name once most honored in all American religious journalism, and the establishment of a commission to build free churches, and to spread the free church faith, we are seeing a spiritual renaissance. Not without reason did Dr. Daniel Poling, elder statesman among the Christian editors in the United States, call the Hartford gathering of the National Association, "the most prophetic meeting in American Protestantism in the last fifty years." The statement was ignored by the religious reporters of the



REV. HARRY R. BUTMAN

major newspapers, for they too have fallen under the spell of the Circe of ecumenicity. But it was made, and it was true. The tide of tomorrow is with the individual, not the many. In the days to come ("How long, O Lord, how long?") men will move forward out of the gray pall of conformity which now befogs them. The whole life process works toward freedom and individuality, and today's sad stagnation by which the group is glorified, is but a back eddy in the mighty stream of life force. Man dare not lose his individuality in the herd; only in God can that loss take place to the soul's profit.

Let us rejoice, therefore, that we are fearlessly thrusting the craft of our movement out into the rough strong current of that stream, disdaining the safety of the marshy backwaters.

THE CONGREGATIONALIST, and the Commission on Missions and Church Extension will make religious history as they reclaim an ancient and presently tarnished treasure by proclaiming the good news of the freedom of the Christian man with all the daring and wholeness which true Congregationalism so abundantly possesses.

#### **The Trumpet Sound**

For we have a message to proclaim, and that message is freedom. Consider the good words the Holy Page has for us:

*(please turn to page 2)*

"Proclaim liberty throughout the land and unto the inhabitants thereof."

"With a great price obtained I this freedom."

"The glorious liberty of the children of God."

"Stand fast, therefore, in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free."

Brethren, these and many like words should be to us as the shouts of strong men going forth to righteous battle, and as the songs of Deborahs hailing the returning victors.

An army charges best when a trumpet is sounded.

There are those of us who yet recall the name of our paper in the great days when it was the voice of free Congregationalism. The full, and all-but-forgotten title was, "THE CONGREGATIONALIST AND HERALD OF GOSPEL LIBERTY." God grant, in the days to come, that all who cherish freedom and toil for its triumph may be cheered, in reading this reborn paper, by words of truth and challenge, and chronicles of achievement and comradeship. May it be a silver trumpet which shall with no uncertain sound forever blow the brave music of freedom.

A MEMORIAL SERVICE FOR  
DR. JOHN W. CLAXTON  
THE LITTLE STONE CHURCH,  
MACKINAC ISLAND, MICHIGAN  
OCTOBER 7, 1976 3:00 P.M.

One of the very last sermons that John Claxton gave from this pulpit was on the topic "Seeing the Unseen" or, more exactly, "Not Seeing, Yet Believing." I did not have the good fortune to hear the sermon, but he wrote me about it. He was especially pleased that Governor and Mrs. William Milliken of Michigan, and the Vice President of the World Relief Organization at Valley Forge were there in the congregation. They reacted to the sermon with much appreciation and the Valley Forge Organization asked for permission to publish the discourse. I assume that it will be forthcoming. John spoke of the Governor being very complimentary in his remarks. And, in response John recalled the times that he had gone across the street while a pastor in Lansing to pray for the lawmakers, saying that in those days they needed it.

I have mentioned this sermon because it seems to me that the long, successful and devoted ministerial life of John Claxton is fully illustrated by the theme: "Seeing the Unseen." His ministerial career, which began in the summer of 1921 was ended on September 27, 1976 at the Pasadena Presbyterian Church in St. Petersburg, Florida. All those years exemplified his life, faith and devotion. May I suggest, therefore, that a man's life is built around the visions he sees, the voices he hears and the inspirations to which he responds. Among those influences we note that:

(1) As a very young lad John responded to the opportunity for acquiring a good education. In the Canadian Universities and the American Theological Seminaries he gained several degrees. The importance of this preparation for life and ministry was never forgotten by him, and it was always envisioned for others.

(2) In the early 20's he saw and felt the heart need of hard-working, lonely Canadian farm families on the western prairie province. During that summer appointment in 1921 he ministered to the needs of these people, and in so doing developed the compassionate heart of a true pastor. This quality was a blessing that never escaped him during the following years.

(3) Although he was a good conversationalist, he learned to listen well, and to help others lift their loads.

On an afternoon of late August we spent several hours together, at which time the conversation covered the strength, needs and concerns for the National Association. Although he was retired from official responsibilities to the National Association he remained keenly interested in every aspect of its work.

(4) He was fortunate as a young minister — even as a student — to hear men from various



parts of the world who were giants in the pulpit. From these early experiences came a living abiding inspiration to him, he was privileged to sit under some of the great teachers, and he responded to their challenge. So great were these influences that he became thorough in scholarship meticulous in sermon preparation. He said that while he was pastor in Green Bay he spent 3½ hours each morning in serious study, and never went to the pulpit without having re-written his sermon three times. All of this was done with discipline and dispatch so that he could recall that Saturday evenings were the most carefree times of the week.

(5) He knew how to keep confidences; thus it was that many sought him out with their most intimate concerns, because they knew that he would be sympathetic, helpful and trustworthy.

(6) Had the ministry not been his calling he would have done very well in the world of business affairs and financial interests. This talent enabled him to guide many a church in the successful management of its financial affairs. He always said that he never left any church he served in debt. What a record!

(7) He not only valued a good education for himself, but he was totally devoted to making it possible for others. In seven years of the depression of the thirties he served as the President of Defiance College in Ohio, and he loved to say that during that time no faculty member was asked to take less than 75% of salary. This was at a period when many people had no assured salary or even a job. Following the pastorate in Lansing, for 8 years he was the founder and Dean of the Congregational Foundation for Theological Studies. His was the joy of guiding young men and women along the road of preparation for the Congregational ministry. He

*Continued on page 11*

*Continued from page 9*

told me that while at the same time he wore the other hat of Pastoral Relations Secretary he helped to place 400 men in pastorates. Many of these were recruited from outside the Congregational stream, I being one of them.

(8) The pastorates he served are known: Manistee, Michigan, and before that as an Associate at Detroit; Green Bay, Union Congregational Church; and Plymouth in Lansing. The friends that are everywhere, and the memorial services which are being held, are witness to the high regard with which he was held as a man and minister. The crowning experience as a pastor was regarded by him, and many others, to have been the two years as interim minister at First Congregational Church in Los Angeles.

He was never the pastor of Pilgrim Congregational Church at Green Bay, but in a very real sense he was the spiritual father of the congregation. He visited the church on many occasions, and frequently gave the sermons, and offered counsel and guidance in the beginning years. He had a great deal to do with my becoming the pastor of that congregation over 8 years ago. In fact on a September evening in 1967 he invited my wife and me to Owosso, Michigan, where he was then staying, for what he called, "A little chat." After about 3 hours I was trying to discover

some reason for the invitation to "chat" when he abruptly turned to us and said, "How would you like to go to Green Bay?" The other part of the story is known, and does not need repeating.

So, in this hour when we give thanks and pay respects to the memory of John Claxton, I cannot help but feel that his life was lived in response to what he saw and heard and to the inspirations that charmed him for 55 devoted years of ministry. Truly, he lived as, "Seeing the Unseen."

But, I could not fail to mention that these influences brought him, for 28 continuous years, to this historic Island as the pastor of the Little Stone Church. Millions have come here to find rest and relaxation, but he came here seeking to share the claims of the Christian life and faith with the thousands who heard him from this pulpit. It is the influence of that life and ministry that has brought us here today to pay profound respect to a beloved colleague, an esteemed friend and brother who in his life always responded to what most people never see.

May God bless the family and all of the friends who have gathered to be a part of this service. Amen.

*Terry P. Ragland, Minister  
Pilgrim Congregational Church  
Green Bay, WI*





Rev. Howard  
Conn, D.D.

20 Years  
at Plymouth Church  
Minneapolis

## The Personal Accent

On September 7th, 1944 the Reverend Howard J. Conn was called to the pastorate of the Plymouth Congregational Church of Minneapolis.

Twenty years later, Plymouth Church saluted its minister in a unique series of special observances, and by the publication of a twenty-eight page booklet "An Appreciation of Howard Conn."

The attractive booklet bears a phrase on its cover which expresses the personal accent of Dr. Conn. That phrase is "Freedom kindled by the flame of the Spirit." Within the covers of the booklet are to be found sincere and moving tributes to the man thus characterized.

Born in Fresno, California on June 19, 1911, Howard Conn graduated with great distinction from Stanford University in 1932, and after attending the Harvard Graduate School received his Bachelor of Divinity degree from Yale Divinity School in 1936, magna cum laude. He now holds a Doctor of Divinity degree granted by Yankton College in 1948.

Plymouth Church on Nicollet *used to be* in the center of a fashionable district of Minneapolis. Some neighboring Churches fled in the face of rapid social change. Plymouth stayed.

Not only did Plymouth Church remain on Nicollet Avenue, it expanded. The lovely chapel was added. Parking was provided. And the Church gathered an increasing company of competent civic leaders whom Dr. Conn has inspired to do great things in the business, cultural and inter-Church life of Minneapolis.

Little wonder that the recognition of Howard Conn's twentieth anniversary had the Honorable Walter H. Judd and Dr. Howard Thurman (Dean Emeritus, Marsh Chapel, Boston University) as speakers.

The sermon theme for "Family Sunday" was *To Gain a Little Splendor and Magnificence Along the Way*.

The words of Dr. Donald J. Cowling, President Emeritus of Carleton College put in two sentences the respect, love, and esteem of a multitude. Dr. Cowling writes:

"Perhaps the simplest statement that I could make showing my deep appreciation of Dr. Conn's ministry would be to say that I hope he will spend at Plymouth Church the remaining years of his active ministry. I know of very few, if any, church groups which are so unanimously in support of their respective ministers as is true in the case of Dr. Conn."

# Rev. James W. Fifield, Jr., D.D.

30 Years  
at First Church, Los Angeles



## On Dedicated Service . . .

January 1st, 1935 the Reverend James W. Fifield, Jr., D.D. started his ministry at the First Congregational Church of Los Angeles.

Economic depression gripped the land, and the giant Church edifice of First Church was three quarters of a million dollars in debt. There were those who said no man in his right mind would tackle such a task, and they were many. But there was *one* man whose meteoric career at East Church in Grand Rapids proved to be but the prelude to decades of vigorous and creative leadership in Los Angeles.

It was not very long before the mortgage was burned. The annual Bach festival, the beautiful special services at Christmas and Easter, the powerful radio voice every Saturday evening answering questions fearlessly and forthrightly, the development of the one-member-one-office concept, Sunday after service dinners, quarterly Church meetings, and an unending willingness to tackle whatever needed doing . . . all these are just episodes in the achievements of thirty years.

Characteristic of Dr. Fifield is *action*. His sermons and writings have been printed and read by thousands. But he has never been satisfied to say what needs to be

done. He has *acted*. All around the country there has been *talk* about senior citizens, but in Los Angeles *action* has been the key word . . . and three fine hotels, now served by a splendid nursing facility as well, became Fifield Manors—in Wiltshire, Hollywood and Pasadena.

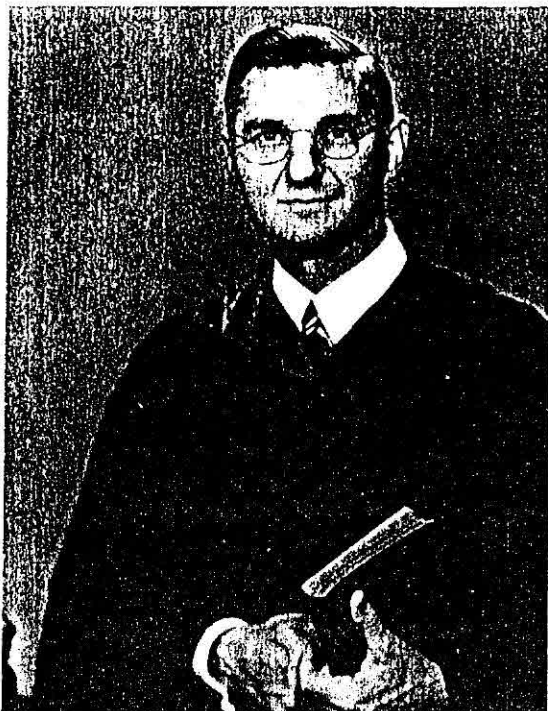
After years of thought and planning, the Pilgrim School has become a reality. Its beautiful new building will provide one of the finest school plants in the area.

There will be twenty classrooms on four floors with a capacity of four hundred students, with well-equipped science and music rooms, outside passageways for easier traffic flow, and expanded library facilities.

Improved physical education areas are the result of the attractive landscaping project, providing three areas to meet the needs of the various age groups. The roof of the building is also to be utilized as a student relaxation area.

This is another expansion of services provided by First Church to meet the increasing educational needs of Los Angeles.

It is quite impossible to portray Dr. James W. Fifield, Jr., *freedom fighter extraordinary*. Who else in our day could have done all that he has done.



HENRY DAVID GRAY, EDITOR  
"THE CONGREGATIONALIST"  
1962-1966

*With the issue of September, 1966, Dr. Henry David Gray ended his work as Editor of THE CONGREGATIONALIST: those who hold dear the Congregational Way are debtors to him.*

During his tenure *THE CONGREGATIONALIST* was marked by an increase of readability and attractiveness of format. His covers had taste and appeal; the content of the magazine reflected his catholicity of interest without losing the particularity which is the mark of good journalism. He told of far-flung travels, and redeemed the journal from the charge of parochialism by giving space to the wider concerns of Christendom. But he never forgot the heart and core of Congregationalism, the local Church. His staunchless zeal for youth and missions, to which he gave the devotion of deed as well as word, was witnessed by picture and paragraph.

His sense of Congregational history led to one inconspicuous but important innovation; he introduced the practice which witnesses to the continuity of publication of one of the oldest journals of religion in America. He re-established the device of consecutively numbering the issues of *THE CONGREGATIONALIST* since the founding of the paper, so that whoever looks at the masthead page of this issue will see that it is in its 126th year of publication. Yet his scholarship is so precise that he meticulously listed the three founding dates, 1816, 1849, and 1958; the last being the time when the honored name, *THE CONGREGATIONALIST*, was rescued from the dust of desuetude where the uncaring had flung it.

## A Tribute

# HENRY DAVID GRAY

By Harry R. Butman

Henry David Gray is a man with a mind of his own, and the editorial page and the body of the paper reflected his personality and thought. The day of personal journalism is not over so long as men like Henry David Gray live. He has strong opinions, and he stated them with clarity and frankness. Like Henry Martyn Dexter and A. E. Dunning, his great predecessors, with whom he may well be named, he put the stamp of his style and thinking on the pages of *THE CONGREGATIONALIST*. This incisiveness was not without some disadvantages, of course. There were many contributors (this writer among them) who mumbled in annoyance when their cherished articles failed to appear; and his ideas did not always coincide with those of the Commission on Publications. But no editor can accept everything that comes across his desk. Magazines of distinction are not edited by cautious committees. A journal with the salt of quality must be edited by a man of independence and intelligence, and Henry David Gray is such a one.

It should never be forgotten that in addition to the work of editing—a task in itself enough to tax the powers of most men, Dr. Gray has the burden of the pastorate of one of the great Churches of our fellowship. He faced the intricate problems of an urbanization which threatened to inundate an historic Church, and yet had time force to give to the work of the National Association. To appreciate his merits we must see the whole man—denominational executive, world traveler, youth worker par excellence, administrator of great parishes, successful author and preacher. Yet with all the responsibilities which these capacities brought to him, he was ready to undertake the hard, skilled, hour-consuming toil of editorship. In no mawkish or trite way, his was a labor of love. Such men as he are much needed if our Congregational Way is to live and prosper.

Let these words be no mere valediction, no farewell to him as a person of worth and function in the councils of the National Association. May he for many years serve the fellowship in other ways, as he has served it so well as Editor of *THE CONGREGATIONALIST*.

—Harry R. Butman is pastor of the Congregational Church of the Messiah in Los Angeles.

In Memoriam

## World Christian Statesman

**The Rev. Dr. Henry David Gray, 1908-1994**

Dr. Henry David Gray was received by our Lord into God's eternal Kingdom on September 3, 1994 from Ventura, California. Born in Antrim, Ireland, January 18, 1908, he was educated in Canada, California, Connecticut, and Scotland. A graduate "magna cum laude" from Pomona College, he pursued post-doctoral studies in Tübingen, Germany, and at Boston University.

A profound scholar and theologian, he would have been an outstanding professor on any university or seminary faculty, but instead he dedicated himself to the parish ministry in Congregational churches in Scotland, Massachusetts, California and Connecticut. He "retired" to California in 1970 from the pastorate of the South Congregational Church, Hartford, Connecticut; and with his wife of 64 years, Helen Lorbeer Gray, made his home in Ventura, where his membership was in the Congregational Church of the Foothills.

Dr. Gray was present at the Fort Shelby Hotel, Detroit, Michigan, in November, 1955, when the National Association of Congregational Christian Churches was born. Through the years he has served Congregationalism in numerous leadership roles. He was Moderator of the NACCC in 1958-1959, and for four years from September 1962 he was editor of *The Congregationalist*.

As recorded in the citation given to Dr. Gray at the 1984 Annual Meeting of the NACCC, "Yours was a great ministry to YOUTH." He was founder and first director of the National Pilgrim Fellowship, and as leader of influential odysseys and

pilgrimages he showed young people far places in the world, and introduced them to all classes of men and women from the poor on the rice paddies of the orient to the leaders of nations in their offices and palaces. He was in every sense a Christian statesman of the world.

To my knowledge he has been the only minister to receive a standing ovation from the hundreds of high school and college youth at an NACCC Annual Meeting.

Some of us have had the privilege of working with Dr. Gray as fellow ministers along the Congregational Way; others have known him only through his prolific writing. His published works include books on history, devotions, Biblical commentary, inspiration, theology, worship, and a two-volume autobiography. We have known him best by his book, *The Mediators*, which dealt with the issues and personalities involved in the discussions of the Committee on Free Church Policy and Christian Unity, of which he was a member from 1950 to 1954.

Dr. Gray's *Congregational Worshipbook* is used by many of our ministers, and is given to each graduate of the Congregational Foundation for Theological Studies. Perhaps best known is a booklet: "What It Means to be a Member of a Congregational Christian Church," which has been in print more than 35 years and used by many NACCC churches as they orient new members to Congregationalism. He was founder and only editor of *The Congregational Journal*, published during his retirement years to provide distribution of thoughtful articles on the Christian faith.



*Dr. Gray with his wife of 64 years, Helen Lorbeer Gray.*

A new generation of men and women, clergy and laity, now leads the churches of the National Association. They must know that the Congregationalism they now serve would not have survived had not "Doc" Gray and others like him walked this path before them.

In 1977 Dr. Gray delivered a sermon in Westminster Abbey, London, where the International Congregational Fellowship gathered for the first celebration of the Lord's Supper by non-Conformists in that historic Church of England since the days of Oliver Cromwell in the mid-1650s. He chose the subject "By Glory Possessed," based on a text from Revelation 3:20ff, which he paraphrased as follows:

*Jesus says, "Behold, at the heart's door I stand smiting the outer side, testing the barrier between us.*

*Let anyone who hears the clear ring of my voice swing wide the heart's door and I will come boldly in with prophetic power that you may know God's Son."*

Henry David Gray for one final earthly time has opened the door of his human heart, and he knows God's Son. He is "By Glory Possessed."

After a long life as husband and father, pastor, scholar, Congregationalist, and faithful disciple of Jesus of Nazareth, it may surely be said, "Well done, faithful servant, enter into the joy of your Lord." ...

*The Rev. Dr. John H. Alexander  
Sun City, Arizona*



## Tribute to Cary Mead 1898-1990

*by the Rev. Dr. Harry R. But*

**C**ary Mead was a lady of honey and fire: each of these words is carefully chosen. "Lady" is a dated word, but once it denoted a woman possessed of an indescribable but unmistakable presence; a lady had breeding, manners, poise, and dignity. Also a lady had kindness, grace, and charm—all qualities seldom found in the feminine role models of this freer and lesser day. Cary Mead was truly a sweet woman, but within her was an unceasing flame that could flare to scorching heat. She was a Valkyrie, a warrior goddess, mighty in defense of the things she held to be true and right.

I find it an impossible task to pay her full tribute. Her children, friends, and pastor said many true and good things about her at the time of her passing. She really was a good woman—a faithful wife, a loving mother, a church worker of the tribe of Dorcas. The superlatives applied to her were simple truths. The offices she held in the CCCNA: a member of the Executive Committee, the World Christian Relations Commission, the Spiritual Resources Commission; the first woman Moderator—bespeak her ability and dedication. The citation given her



by the fellowship in 1968 was eloquent in singing her many worths.

But full justice to her unique and vivid personality demands a full length biography; it cannot be done in a brief article. So I will make no attempt to paint a formal word-portrait. I will simply thread a few pearls of event on a strand of personal reminiscence.

### ***A Lady of honey and fire.***

I first met Cary Mead some 40 years ago when a group of Yankee Congregationalists assembled on a Sunday afternoon in South Church, Hartford, aflame with the desire to save the Congregational Way from abandonment. Our introduction was casual and carried no hint of the lasting friendship that was to come. My admiration for her was first aroused when I sought her out at church and found her on her knees scrubbing the kitchen floor. Cary was a woman of means: Balbrae, her great house of stone and warm wood panelling, was a five-minute drive from the front gate of the church. It was odd to see the chatelaine of such an estate busy at a menial chore. "I could pay to have this done, Harry," she said apologetically, "but some of the women on the kitchen committee cannot, so I take my turn at scrubbing."

She was a prodigious worker. I was once with her in Hawaii for several days when we were trying to save some native churches from the maw of the Hawaiian Evangelical Association. After breakfast she would say, "I'll see you at lunch," and her whole morning would be busily spent at her desk. She once showed me the new bedroom she had added to her summer home on the shore of Lake Winnepesaukee (She lamented that she had allowed the movie, *On Golden Pond*, with its raunchy dialogue, to be filmed on her property). The most prominent feature of the new room was a tall stack of green filing cabinets at the head of her bed. "In case I can't sleep nights," she explained. "I can always get up and work without bothering anyone."

She wrote and spoke well. Her book, *Wings Over the World*, a biography of her husband, left two lasting impressions. One was her astonishing grasp of mechanical details. Despite her careful explanation, I never really understood the principle of the split connecting rods that made the huge Pratt and Whitney radial engines so reliable. The other was her utter conviction that the maker of their giant engines—her husband, George J. Mead—was the summit of masculine worth. To her, Jack Mead was the one man in the world. Her other book, *Sunshine and Shadow*, revealed her as an archtypical matriarch. She described in loving detail every family wedding—what the bridesmaids wore and who caught the bouquet. And these conjugal unions always resulted in the birth of darling little boys and girls. She knew racking grief when death struck her family and in such times her deep and true faith sustained her.

I have said that she was a lady of fire. That flame burned more vehemently when Congregationalism was threatened. Her article in *The Congregationalist* (September, 1966) was a harsh denunciation of the doctrine of the UCC leaders and their dealing with the little local churches in Hawaii.

It may seem strange to hear such "off the wall" tribute coming from a friend, but are the necessary dark tones in a true picture of Cary Mead: she cannot be accurately chronicled in clichés. She was no tinted and gilded plaster saint, but a strong woman with strong convictions. The severities of her nature were balanced by sweeter qualities—her affectionate maternity, her hospitality, humor and generosity, her love of her church and the Word she so often read, her life of prayer and her faith in God; all these cry her character. Her life and deeds truly adorned the doctrine of God.

### ***She was no tinted and gilded plaster saint, but a strong woman with strong convictions.***

I end this inadequate memoir with the narration of a strange event. I had written Cary telling her of the Beloit Meeting and asking for financial help for a National Association Church legally threatened by the UCC. Shortly after I was informed of Cary's death by telephone, I got an answer as it were from her grave. It was written by her faithful secretary of 30 years and was dated Friday, June 13—a bad luck day. She began: "On Wednesday Mrs. Mead and I enjoyed your letter of July 4, and yesterday she was drafting a reply, a copy of which is attached. We found her hand-written notes this morning ... I am sorry to relay the bad news that she died last evening."

I quote a part of Cary's final letter because it reveals her fire and honey in the last hours of her life: "Thanks so much for your wonderful letter telling so much about the meeting. That 'grab' by the UCC is infamous, outrageous, and unbelievable! I'll certainly help as much as I can. ..."

The letter was never finished. She died that night in her own house, sitting in her favorite chair, her open Bible on her lap—a fitting and poetic passing for a woman of God. "Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord ... Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labors, and their works do follow them."

In her earthly life Cary Mead was a daughter of Martha, a doer of the word and not a hearer only. She delighted in music, was a choir member, and a donor of organs. But I dare suppose that by now she has found that harp-playing in the celestial choir makes too small a demand on her times and powers, and has asked the Lord for some work to do in heaven. ■

## A MEMORIAL: REV. ARTHUR ACY ROUNER, SR.

The National Association fellowship is saddened by the death of Arthur Acy Rouner, Sr., on July 21, 1981.

Dr. Rouner was at the very center of the Continuation movement at its inception, and later of the National Association and its beginnings at Fort Shelby Hotel in Detroit, Nov. 9 and 10, 1955.

Following immediately after approval of the Basis of Union, at its meetings in Oberlin, 1948, and finally at Cleveland in February, 1949, Dr. Rouner's church filed suit in the New York Courts to block the merger. The suit was filed in April, 1949, and the trial began in November of the same year.

Prominent laymen in the Cadman Memorial Church had prepared the suit and helped lead the church in its vote to bring suit. But Dr. Rouner, himself, became a star witness during the trial, giving over one hundred pages of testimony and covering thoroughly the nature and importance of Congregationalism and the manner in which it would be impaired or destroyed if the Basis of Union were carried out. Other witnesses called by the Cadman attorney, Mr. Kenneth W. Greenawalt, later testified that they agreed with Dr. Rouner's testimony.

Almost simultaneously with the start of legal proceedings came the organization of the Committee for the Continuation of the Congregational Christian Churches. Started by Dr. James W. Fifield, Jr., in the fall of 1948 as "Anti-Merger," the group changed its name in January, 1949. It made support for the Cadman lawsuit one of its first priorities and raised a large portion of the court costs.

Out of the Continuation Committee came the National Association of Congregational Christian Churches, called jointly by the Continuation Committee and the League to Uphold Congregational Principles. At its first meeting in Detroit, the National Association elected Dr. Rouner as a member of its first Executive Committee. Then, in 1956 Dr. Rouner became Chairman of the Continuation Committee's Executive Committee, a position which he continued to hold until his death.

Dr. Rouner has always been held in very high esteem for his clear and forthright leadership in both the Continuation Committee and the National Association. He began his ministry in Farmington, Maine, in 1924, after graduation from Union Theological Seminary in 1923. Before being called to the Cadman Church, he served eighteen years, 1929 to 1947, at North Congregational Church in Portsmouth, N.H.

Born in Omaha, Neb., July 13, 1895, Rouner became state high-jumping champion and a national YMCA weight-lifting champion. At the age of eight he had started working to help support himself and his mother. Later he worked his way through Harvard College. He continued his athletic interests throughout his life.

At Union Theological Seminary Dr. Rouner assisted Dr. Harry Emerson Fosdick in the teaching of homiletics. He also served as a student assistant to Dr. Harry Sloan Coffin.

In Maine he pioneered in young adult work, and in New Hampshire he served on the Board of Directors of the Conference and was on its Executive Committee. Nationally Dr. Rouner served on the Commission of Evangelism and Devotional Life. He taught homiletics and sermon preparation to ministers at summer schools at Sylvan Dale and La Foret in Colorado. He was outspoken against anti-Semitism and was a leader in New Hampshire in relations between Christians and Jews.

He was a life member of the So-

ciety of American Magicians, and was famous in his parishes for magic tricks accompanying his Children's sermons. He collected rare books, art prints, autographs and Americana. He was author of numerous articles and the book, "When A Man Prays."

Dr. Rouner and his wife, Elizabeth Stephens Rouner, shared 59 years of marriage together. He is survived by his wife; his sons, Rev. Arthur Acy Rouner, Jr., and the Rev. Leroy S. Rouner, professor of philosophical theology at Boston University; two daughters, Miss Elizabeth S. Rouner of Center Ossipee, N.H., and Mrs. Louise Van Kesteren of Tesquesta, Fla.; and eight grandchildren.

*The Reverend Malcom K. Burton*



## **Tribute to The Reverend Philotheos Zikas**

1907-1990

*by the Rev. Dr. Henry David*

**G**reat Saints and Great Souls of the Congregational Way walked and worked with us since we dared to choose the upward way of liberty in Christ in 1955 at the Fort Shelby in Detroit. The promotion of Phil Zikas from earth to heaven celebrates a twentieth century saint, after the pattern of the Apostle Paul, and "one of us."

Eight times a refugee, many times jailed, harried by Greek Orthodox zealots, he endured three wars, planted a string of Congregational Churches in Thrace, established a renewal and conference center at Makri called Camp Grace, trained men to be pastors and women to visit homes, upgrading child nurture and distributing Bibles and tracts. At all hours of the day and night, he responded in person to the dying, the sick of body or soul, the persecuted, and the villagers whom even time had forgotten.

His short, stocky, rumped frame was distinctive chiefly for his deep-searching eyes, windblown hair, craggy face, big nose and infectious enthusiasm for Christ. *This* was God's chosen instrument to preach and embody "Love Never Fails." He may be the only Christian to speak in an Islamic Mosque (Komotini and Zanthi). His love knew no bounds, fear was alien to his body, courage native to his soul.

Yes, he had to escape with the help of Russian Evangelists from massacre in Turkey, so he learned both Turkish and Russian. Yes, he had to escape from Mylotopos lying on the bottom of a cart of hay, aided by Turkish-speaking Christians. Yes, he had to face the blunt German Captain who held captive 44 innocent Greeks at Berea while hunting those who killed three German soldiers; and offer himself as captive in their place, as he did not once but



many times. The American General in charge of truce negotiations had to dismiss seven shouting, blatant translators for English, Greek, Turkish, Russian, French, Armenian, German and Greek negotiators, *and replace them all* with Phil Zikas. I asked Phil once, as we communed together under an olive tree at Camp Grace, "Did you always translate *exactly* what each said?" "Well," he replied, with a twinkle in his eye, "I always translated what they *meant* to say."

In truce time, he raced the rough roads from the Turkish border above Domoticon two hundred miles to Thessalonika to Berea as the United Nations Relief Agent (UNRA), healing the hurt and wounded since there was no doctor, distributing clothing, food and tent shelter throughout a shattered Thrace. Aye, but *beyond* material aid, he brought new hope, rekindled a sense of personal and national worth, and, even in uniform, preached the Gospel "Love Never Fails."

He became a legend in a land hostile to Protestants in which *he* was a Congregational Pastor. I glimpsed that in Athens in 1952 by the attitudes and remarks of those who listened as he talked to 23 young American Congregationalists. But in 1956 and later years we journeyed together to Agnandia where the Greek Orthodox head man greeted Phil like a savior. It was the same in tour after tour. Somehow, word would spread that Phil had arrived; the mayors of Domoticon, Ferrai, Komotoui, Zanthi, Kavalla—everywhere—parted the crowds to hug him and kiss his rugged cheeks, with tears in their eyes: like his Master, he had fed them and clothed them, comforted and challenged them with no distinction of race, class or creed. "God loves you" Phil told them. "Don't thank me, thank Him, and all those, especially in America, who pray for you and send you the things you need and the medicine to cure your sores and sicknesses." To travel with Phil was humbling and inspiring. We became soul-friends to such depths that when he was in need in Greece and I was in California, no letters were required. In a way I do not understand, God carried the message and its reply.

### ***He became a legend in a land hostile to Protestants.***

Once, when we were buying land for Camp Grace, \$12,000 was air-mailed on the very day postmarked in Greece bearing news of its of its need.

Care for others, especially youth, was intrinsic in both Phil and his highly intelligent, hard-working, ever-loving wife, Mary. Their two lovely daughters, Effie and Katy, shared their parents' love. So, when, in 1956, 1960, 1961, 1962, 1963, 1964, 1967 and 1970, bands of American adolescents arrived, they were met with arms wide open and minds to match. Whether working side by side at Alexandropolis to build Gray Hall at Agnandia to build a small

hall with a pastor's apartment above it, or at Camp Grace, created from the ground up; no matter where, the lilt of Phil's laughter, the sense of doing God's work, and the joy of being together in Christ never failed. And each eventide the Spirit descended like a dove to bless each and all.

Greece was not the sole beneficiary of God's witness in Phil Zikas.

Across the United States, he roused the enthusiasm where none had existed, by unconscious shining, he led young men and women into Christian service, and above all, brought to each church or home the knowledge that God's love is powerful, deep and gentle (all at the same time) and sufficient to meet the varied needs of home and church.

### ***Greece was not the sole beneficiary of God's witness in Phil Zikas.***

When urged by Rev. Neil Swanson and me to write, he began sending *The Congregationalist* manuscripts which intermingled Greek and English and sometimes German. But what insight into God's Holy Word!! "The Song of the Added S" in a Christmas issue brought a mountain of mail asking for permission to reprint it, which was given freely. But "I'm a talker not a writer" Phil insisted. However, many other popular articles followed.

Born in 1907 in Anatolia, schooled by Russian Protestants, graduate of the Congregational College in Athens, and only a dissertation away from a doctorate at the University of Chicago, Phil epitomized the practical power of a mind ever "on quest." The three-week trail of Pilgrim Fellowship in Greece followed "In the Steps of St. Paul," but before reaching Paul's landing place, we stopped at Komotini to meet the Rhodope Mountain gypsies, the Moslem leaders—and the church. Next came Abdera. In 1956, a boy dove from and rock perch and cut his head badly on a submerged rock—but Phil found there coins, shards of glass and porcelain and the Greek government walled in the underwater city, pumped out the water, built a museum, and Phil often bubbled over with zeal as we perched on the side of an overview cliff, "Look, look, look! Here is where *men began to think*. This is the home of Democritus who discovered the atomic theory of matter. Find a coin if you can, and treasure it as a symbol of God's *thinking* people."

There is neither time nor space to relate more than a tiny fragment of Soul Giant Phil Zikas. He was my closest and dearest friend. It mattered not that 9000 miles might separate us; we *knew* that the other thought and felt.

This has been a century of Christian saints, and far more than our due share were (or *are*) Congregational Christians. God has graciously lent an uncommon number of them to be His Exemplars among His gathered Congregational Christian Churches. ■