

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 line 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 Faleletai, 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 Roslindale 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-

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.

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. Alexander

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-

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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.

