

**WISCONSIN CONGREGATIONAL ASSOCIATION
of Churches and Ministers**

Organized April 27, 1968

Amended April 4, 2003 at First Congregational Church of Wauwatosa, Wisconsin
Revised and Consolidated with the Wisconsin Congregational Ministers Association
April 18, 2009 at Heritage Congregational Church, Madison, WI
Amended April 17, 2010 at First Congregational Community Church of Roscoe, IL

COVENANT

We covenant with the Lord and with one another in striving to know the will of God as taught in the Holy Scriptures, and in our purpose to walk in the ways of the Lord, known or to be made known to us and to be free from the will of humanity for the purpose of becoming perfectly subject to the will of God.

We voluntarily associate ourselves together for faith, freedom, a fellowship, with Jesus Christ as our only Head. We affirm and maintain the freedom of individual conscience as enlightened by the Holy Spirit, our only interpreter of the Word of God.

We also claim that each Church shall be free, independent, and forever devoid of any and all control by the Association.

ARTICLES OF ASSOCIATION

I. NAME

The name shall be the Wisconsin Congregational Association.

II. PURPOSE

The Congregational Way affirms Fellowship among the churches as central and essential to the nature of what it means to be a Congregational Church[1]. The purpose of this Association shall be to provide for that Fellowship among the member churches and act as a resource for Congregational Christian Churches. Fellowship is defined as: (1) that free relation of affection which binds churches together – first as a body of believers gathered in covenant around Christ and second as those covenant communities joined together in covenant community for service to one another and the needs of the Church Catholic;2 The Wisconsin Congregational Association gathered as an Ecclesiastical Council at the request of a local Church to provide advice on matters defined in such a call, and; (3) The Wisconsin Congregational Association gathered in regular meetings as defined hereinafter to conduct such business as is necessary to fulfill this Article and allow the opportunity for the free sharing of ideas, presentation of speakers for the edification of the member Churches, and the general enhancing of spiritual bonds among the member Churches to assist them in their local proclamation and witness of God. Any purpose or activity not expressly defined in these by-laws is reserved to the local Churches.

III. MEMBERSHIP

Membership in this Association shall be by Churches and ministers who are loyal to and support the stated purposes of the Association. Churches, Ministers, and Associate Members are entitled to membership subject to written application to the Executive Committee and vote of the Association.

A. RECEPTION OF MEMBERS AND ASSOCIATE MEMBERS

1. Reception of Churches

Any Congregational Church subscribing to the Association's Covenant may be received into the Association upon written request and by vote of the Association.

2. Reception of Ministers

Ministers are received into membership through their appropriate call and installation to a member church and through the grant of ministerial standing by this Association.

3. Reception of Associate Members

Individuals from non-member Churches, including ministers, who subscribe to the purposes of this Association, may be enrolled as "Associate Members." Associate members of the Association have voice but not vote in the Association.

B. ACTIVE AND INACTIVE MEMBERSHIP

Members are categorized as active or inactive. The Secretary and Treasurer of the Association shall certify the list of active member Churches and Ministers to the Moderator prior to the convening of the Annual Meeting.

1. Active Membership

- a. An active member Church is one that either sends a delegate to the Annual Meeting of the Association in the current or preceding year; or which has, in the two years immediately preceding the Annual Meeting, made a financial contribution to the operating budget of the Association.
- b. An active member minister is one who maintains her or his ministerial standing as outlined in these articles, who attends the Annual Meeting and/or is engaged in the fellowship activities of the Association.[3]

2. Inactive Membership

- a. Inactive members are those churches or ministers who for whatever reason have not met the qualifications for Active Membership. Inactive members may participate in Association Functions but do not have the right to vote or serve in Association positions.
- b. An inactive Church shall be automatically restored to active status by fulfilling the requirements for active membership. For churches by either sending a delegate to the Annual meeting or making a financial contribution to the Association. Ministers may be restored to active status by attending the Annual Meeting and/or the Ministers' Fellowship.

C. DISMISSAL OF MEMBERS

At the heart of Congregationalism is the mutual bond of fellowship between Churches. There are times when such fellowship is strained or no longer beneficial between parties.[4] The Association does not infringe upon the rights of the local congregation or its ministers to withdraw from the Association at any time. The Association also reserves the right to dismiss a member if it deems appropriate. Thus, dismissal from membership of the Association can take place under three circumstances: voluntary withdrawal; termination by vote of the Association; or perpetual inactive status.

1. Voluntary withdrawal:

A Church or minister may voluntarily withdraw from the Association by providing written notification of such an intention to the Secretary of the Wisconsin Congregational Association.

2. Termination by Vote of Association

A member (whether Church or minister) may also be dismissed from the Association by a three quarters ($\frac{3}{4}$) majority vote of active members at an Annual Meeting.

3. Continual Inactive Status

A member, having remained inactive for four years, will be removed from membership in the Association. Such termination of membership will transpire one year after due notification in writing by the Executive committee, if no attempts are made to re-establish active membership.

IV. DELEGATES AND VOTING

A. An active member Church may elect one lay delegate, who shall be an active member of said Church. The designated Minister, senior or associate, shall also be a delegate to this Association with right of vote. Vote by the Association must be a majority of the active member Churches present and voting each Church having two votes, one by delegate and one by pastor.

B. Honorary, Fraternal Delegates, and Visitors, shall normally have the right to the floor, which may be limited by the Moderator when urgency of business may require, but shall have no vote.

V. OFFICERS AND COMMITTEES

A. **OFFICERS:** The officers of this Association, elected at the Annual Meeting, shall be a Moderator-elect, a Secretary, a Treasurer, Ambassador(s), and the Chairperson of the Youth and Camp Committee., men or women, either clergy or lay who are members of active member Churches, shall be eligible for election to office. They shall take office at the first Executive Committee meeting following the Annual Meeting.

A. **MODERATOR:** The Moderator shall serve as the official representative of the Association and shall preside at all meetings of the Association and of the Executive Committee. The Moderator shall serve a term of one year after which that person shall not be eligible for election to any Association Office until after the expiration of one year.

B. **MODERATOR-ELECT:** The Moderator-elect shall succeed to the office of Moderator at the expiration of the current Moderator's term of office. If the Moderator is unable to complete the term of office, the Moderator-elect shall fulfill the Moderator's duties for the balance of the term and shall then become Moderator for that person's regular term. The Moderator-elect shall be elected for a term of one year. The Moderator-elect shall not be eligible for election to any Association office until after the expiration of one-year following the term as Moderator.

C. **SECRETARY:** The Secretary shall keep a full and accurate record of the proceedings of the Association and of the Executive Committee. The Secretary shall keep a record of the membership of the Churches of the Association, shall keep an attendance record of Churches represented at meetings of the Association, and shall receive official communications, notices, and correspondence as directed by the Association or Executive Committee. The Secretary shall be elected for a term of one year and shall be eligible for re-election.

D. **TREASURER:** The Treasurer shall receive all contributions and disburse all funds as are necessary to carry on the business of the Association. The Treasurer shall be elected for a term of one year and shall be eligible for re-election.

5. **Ambassador(s):** Two Ambassadors from the active member Churches, one lay and one clergy, shall be elected at the Annual Meeting and shall take office at the first Executive Committee meeting following the Annual Meeting. Each representative shall be elected for a term of two years and may be re-elected for one additional term of two years after which that person shall be ineligible for re-election to this office for a period of one year. The Ambassador(s) shall serve in cooperation with the Executive Committee as liaison, official representative and formal designee between the Association, its member churches, and such other religious bodies and institutions as the Association deems appropriate. The Ambassador(s) may lend such advice and counsel as may be sought by member and non-member churches and clergy, within the parameters set forth in Article II of the Articles of Association.

A. EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE: The Executive Committee shall consist of the six officers of the Association, the Chairperson of the Youth and Camp Committee, a representative of the Credentials and Ministry Committee and the President of the Ministerial Fellowship, making a total of nine persons. The Immediate Past Moderator shall be an ex-officio member (non-voting).

A. RESPONSIBILITIES: the Executive Committee shall act for the Association in the time between Annual Meetings. It shall transact such business as the Association shall direct. The Executive Committee shall have authority to contract for all necessary expenditures for the carrying out of policies authorized by the Association. The Executive Committee shall make a full report of all its doings, the consideration of which shall be a part of the order of business at the next regular meeting of the Association. It may make rules for its own guidance not inconsistent with the Articles of Association.

- a. The Executive Committee may submit to the Association for consideration any recommendations that it may understand are helpful for the further development of the life and work of the Churches.
- b. The Executive Committee shall propose an agenda for the Annual meeting, but such agenda may be modified and amended by the delegates gathered for the meeting and the discussions and actions of the meeting shall not in any manner be limited by the suggested agenda.
- c. The Executive Committee shall serve as the business committee for the meetings of the Association.
- d. The Executive Committee shall prepare the proposed annual budget for the Association and present it for discussion, approval, and adoption at the Annual Meeting.
- e. The Executive Committee shall not exceed the authorizations to it by the Association.

C. YOUTH AND CAMP COMMITTEE

1. The Youth and Camp Committee shall be comprised of nine members: The Chairperson, two Adult Members at Large (one lay, one clergy), the Junior and Senior High School Camp Directors, The Mini Camp Director, and two Adult Advisors to the Wisconsin State Pilgrim Fellowship, and two youth, one representing the Junior High age group and one representing the Senior High age group.

2. It is the purpose of the Youth and Camp Committee to offer the local Churches youth programs and support so that the member Churches may provide opportunities for youth to grow in the understanding of Christian life principles.

a. The Youth and Camp Committee, for as long as is necessary, will be responsible for organizing and supervising, under these Articles, a camping program for junior and senior high school age youth.

b. The Youth and Camp Committee will supervise, on behalf of the Churches of the WCA, the Wisconsin State Pilgrim Fellowship program. This will be done in a way that is consistent with the principles of Congregationalism and with sensitivity to the Articles of Association of the Wisconsin State Pilgrim Fellowship.

3. Chairperson: The Chairperson of the Youth and Camp Committee shall be nominated by the Association Nominating Committee and be elected at the Annual Meeting of the Association and shall take office at the close of camp in the year in which they were elected. The term of office shall be one year. The Chairperson may be elected for one additional term of one year after which that person shall not be eligible for re-election until after the expiration of one year.

4. Adult Members-At-Large: Two adult members-at-large, one lay and one clergy, shall be elected and shall take office at the close of camp in the year in which they were elected. One representative shall be elected at each Annual Meeting for a term of two years and may be re-elected for one additional term of two years after which that person shall not be eligible for re-election until after the expiration of one year.

5. Camp Directors: The Youth and Camp Committee shall, each year, be responsible for securing Directors for Junior High Camp, Senior High Camp and Mini Camp. The Directors shall be members of the Youth and Camp Committee until such time as their successors are secured.

6. Adult Pilgrim Fellowship Advisors: There shall be at least two but no more than three adult Advisors nominated and elected by the Wisconsin State Pilgrim Fellowship (hereafter designated WSPF). Their appointments shall become effective upon ratification by the Executive Committee. Two Adult Advisors shall be members of the Youth and Camp Committee. They shall continue as members of the Youth and Camp Committee as long as they continue to be Adult Advisors to the WSPF. When they are replaced they cease to be members of the Youth and Camp Committee.

a. An Advisor must be at least 20 years of age.

b. Each year at least one Adult Advisor shall be nominated at the second rally to a two year term, by the outgoing WSPF officers, to be elected by the newly elected WSPF officers, and ratified by the WCA Youth and Camp Committee. In the event of a position being vacant the WSPF Officer Committee shall select a replacement to that term.

c. No meeting of WSPF may close without at least two Advisors in the office.

d. Advisors are responsible for the programming and scheduling at all WSPF meetings.

e. The Advisors, as members of the WSPF Officer Committee, are to work closely with the officers, and to take serious consideration of all suggestions and ideas.

f. The Advisors are directly and solely responsible and we are bound to maintain a proper level of discipline at all WSPF meetings.

g. It is the duty of the Advisors to see that meetings are being organized.

h. All ties in WSPF committee meetings shall be decided by the Advisors.

Article III, Section C. Number 5: Adult Wisconsin State Pilgrim Fellowship Advisors may in future be modified as necessary to reflect the current article on Adult Advisors to be found in the Articles of Association, Wisconsin State Pilgrim Fellowship.

D. CREDENTIALS AND MINISTRY COMMITTEE

1. The Credentials and Ministry Committee shall be composed of seven members (3 lay and 3 clergy), and the Moderator-elect who acts as the chairperson of the Committee.

a. The election of members shall take place at the Annual Meeting of the Wisconsin Congregational Association; terms of three years, with one clergy and one lay representative elected each year.

b. The Credentials and Ministry Committee:

- shall endeavor to encourage fellowship between the ministers of the Association;
- shall be charged with supervising ministerial standing, as described in Article VII, of all ministers in this Association;
- shall have supervision of students for the ministry who put themselves "in care" of this Association, and candidates for licensure who have the approval of their church and pastor;

- shall endeavor to assist churches to find ministers, and in the placement of qualified ministers, with full cooperation of the National Association of Congregational Christian Churches;
- shall coordinate an annual, or more frequent, pulpit exchange between ministers of this Association;
- and shall be responsible for carrying out applicable provisions of Articles VI and VII.

2. This Association shall not presume to exercise authority over the churches. It shall, however, encourage the Christian character and professional fitness of all its members. It will endeavor at all times to strengthen the hands and promote the usefulness of each member, as well as uphold the reputation of the Christian ministry. On all occasions it will strive to strengthen the witness of its members to the Congregational way of faith and order, and to promote the Kingdom of God.

3. The Association may receive into its care any person who desires to enter the full-time Christian ministry; in conferring this status the Association extends fellowship and counsel to such persons and certifies that he or she is a candidate for the ordained Christian ministry.

A. The following procedure is prescribed for the attainment of “in Care” status[5]:

1. The prospective candidate make her or his desire to become an ordained minister known to her or his pastor, who offers personal counsel and who advises as to subsequent procedures.
2. Upon recommendation of pastor and Church, the Credentials and Ministry Committee examines the prospective candidate as to character, aptitudes, and Christian experience.
3. Upon a satisfactory examination, and the personal appearance of the prospective candidate, the Association votes to take her or him “In Care” and to offer its friendship and counsel through a pastoral advisor designated by it. Annual contact and conference shall be maintained between the candidate and his or her advisor.
4. The candidate shall then receive “In Care of Association” credentials and her or his name and date of receiving status shall be recorded with the Association.

B. In Care status shall be reviewed each year and renewed if requested and circumstances are satisfactory.

4. The Association may grant licensure to candidates for the ordained ministry of our Churches. Licensure is the status through which a candidate in training for the ordained ministry of our churches is certified by the Association as qualified to preach the Gospel, and as a licentiate to serve a Church.

A. The following procedure is prescribed for the attainment of licensure[6]:

1. This status is achieved at an appropriate time during the candidate’s seminary course, and as a first professional step towards his or her ordination.
2. The Association shall require from the candidate in personal interview or examination; evidence of Church membership; of graduation from an approved college; of commendation from the candidate’s home Church and/or Association; transcript of college credits; a transcript of seminary credits to date; a statement of purpose in entering the Christian ministry and/or a statement of maturing Christian faith; a written sermon; evidence of knowledge of Congregational Christian history, polity, and current program practice; evidence of ability to lead in public worship and to perform the other duties required of a licentiate who is serving a church.

3. Licensure is granted for a period of one year.

B. The licentiate shall then receive credentials, properly signed and dated by the appropriate officers of the Association.

E. NOMINATING COMMITTEE

1. **MEMBERSHIP:** The Nominating Committee shall consist of three members from the active member Churches of the Association who shall be elected at the Annual meeting. They shall be elected to serve until the next Annual meeting.
2. **DUTIES:** The Nominating Committee shall prepare a slate of officers and committee members for election at the Annual Meeting. No nominations may be presented unless the nominee has consented to serve if elected. Nominations may be made from the floor at the Annual Meeting.
3. **VACANCIES:** In case an office becomes vacant between Annual meetings the Executive Committee, after consulting with the Nominating Committee, shall fill the vacancy by interim appointment until the next Annual Meeting.

F. OTHER COMMITTEES

The active Member Churches of the Association may elect other committees as needed. The purpose of the committee and the length of time required to fulfill the stated purpose shall be included in the constituting motion.

VI. THE MINISTRY

- A. This Association affirms the importance of the ministry which, as the Cambridge Platform points out "...the Lord Jesus out of his tender compassion hath appointed, and ordained officers which he would not have done, if they had not been useful and needful for the church" and, while not denying the validity of other ways of ordination, holds, as did our forebears, that a gathered Church, being complete under Christ, with all spiritual and ecclesiastical power, has the right to call and to ordain its own minister.[7]
- B. This Association stands ready to assist a gathered Church in the calling of Councils (such as the Ecclesiastical Council of the Vicinage) for advice and assistance as to ordination and/or installation.
- C. There are two common pathways to the ordained ministry.
 1. The first path is when a person is called to the ministry initially and following completion of four years in college proceeds into an accredited theological school.
 2. The second path is the emergence from the laity, whereby a person is called as a mature lay person whose professional experience and training has been in a vocation other than the professional clergy. This path, historically, has normally led to licensed lay ministry or to a local ordination.
- D. In behalf of the unchallenged principle concerning the value of an educated ministry[8], the Association, through its Credentials and Ministry Committee, shall have the responsibility for the encouragement of this principle in at least the following ways:
 1. The Committee shall, by the request of a local congregation and in behalf of the churches of the Association, assist in the review of the credentials presented by candidates who have

completed degree programs in accredited college or universities and a degree from a theological school approved by the Association of Theological Schools in the United States and Canada, or an equivalently accredited institution of theological education.[9]

2. For persons emerging from the laity and working toward licensure or local ordination the Committee will direct and encourage them toward a supervised study in such areas as, Biblical understanding, theology, Congregational history and polity, pastoral skills, church administration, Christian ethics, and personal growth (e.g. the Congregational Foundation for Theological Studies Lay Ministry Training Course).

- E. The Association encourages all churches to invite all Association congregations as participants, chiefly by means of the Ecclesiastical Council of the Vicinage, during the call, ordination and/or installation of ministers to their churches, regardless of the pathway to the ministry from which a person has been called.

VII. MINISTERIAL STANDING

- A. This Association shall grant “standing” to any minister who is a member of any member Church of this Association, such request being recommended by a member Church and accompanied by credentials of ordination. “Standing” may also be given to ministers who are Associate Members of the Wisconsin Congregational Association. In the Congregational tradition “Ministerial Standing” requires three things: 1) membership in a Congregational Church; 2) ordination by a competent ecclesiastical authority; 3) membership in a Congregational Association. “Standing” is the appropriate recognition of one’s ministerial character and that one is a Congregational minister.[10]
- B. Standing within the Association may also be given to interim ministers, chaplains, and students ‘In Care’ of the Association and Licentiatees under the following categories: “Student Standing” and “Licentiate Standing”.
- C. In the event that a pastoral relationship between a member Church and its minister is dissolved, the pastor’s standing may be continued as an Associate Member of this Association, with approval by the Credentials and Ministry Committee upon the condition that a written report is submitted annually to the Secretary of this Association, including the nature of ministerial activities, and the desire for continued membership, retired ministers included. Non-compliance with this would mean termination of standing at the next Association Meeting after having been duly notified.

VIII. MINISTERS’ FELLOWSHIP

- A. The purpose of this Fellowship shall be to provide mutual encouragement, mental stimulation, spiritual inspiration and professional improvement for all its members.[11]
- B. Membership shall be open to any Congregational minister who adheres to the purposes of this Association. (For example; such membership shall be open to ministers of Churches (regularly or locally ordained or licensed), interim ministers, retired ministers, chaplains, ministers who are serving in executive and administrative positions, missionaries, and ministers serving as teachers in colleges, universities or seminaries.)
- C. The officers of this Fellowship shall consist of a president, vice president, and secretary-treasurer elected by the members.
1. The election of officers shall take place annually at the September meeting of the Fellowship.
 2. The Fellowship shall collect, keep and maintain its own funds.
 3. The Treasurer will file an annual report of funds and activities with the Executive Committee.

(As of the date of the acceptance of this revised Wisconsin Congregational Association's "Articles of Association and By-laws," all current members of the Wisconsin Congregational Ministers Association are automatically members of the Ministers Society.)

IX. MEETINGS

- A. **REGULAR MEETINGS:** The Wisconsin Congregational Association shall hold an Annual Meeting in the spring of each year, the date and location to be fixed by the Executive Committee.
- B. **SPECIAL MEETINGS:** Special meetings may be called by the Executive Committee or upon request of five active member Churches. The purpose of the Special Meeting shall be stated clearly in the call for the meeting.
- C. **NOTICE OF MEETINGS:** Member Churches shall be notified of all meetings at least two months in advance of the scheduled meeting date.
- D. **QUORUM:** A quorum at all meetings where actions affecting the Association are to be taken shall consist of a majority of active member Churches.
- E. **PROGRAM:** The program of the meetings shall be consistent with the Covenant and emphasize faith, freedom, and fellowship.

X. AMENDMENTS

At any duly called meeting of the Association, if a majority of active members of the Association is represented by delegates present at such a meeting, these Article of Association may be amended by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the active member Churches represented at such a meeting through their delegates. Notice of such proposed amendment or amendments shall be printed and distributed with the call to the meeting at which they are to be considered.

XI. COVENANT:

The Covenant of the Association may be amended only by a unanimous vote of the member Churches taken by mail ballot.

[1] *The Cambridge Platform (1648) speaks to the "communion" or fellowship of Churches:* "Although Churches be distinct, & therefore may not be confounded with one another: & equall, & therefore have not dominion one over another: yet all the churches ought to preserve *Church-communion* one with another, because they are all united unto Christ, not only as a mysticall, but as a political head; whence is derived a *communion* suitable thereunto." [chapter 15]

[2] cf. Conrad Wright, *Walking Together*, "So congregationalism meant, as it should still mean, not the autonomy of the local church, but the community of autonomous churches." (p. 21) Also, Steven Peay, "Fellowship: The Neglected Focus of the Congregational Ellipse"(2003), "Fellowship is the participation or sharing of individual believers in the formation of a community and then of such communities one with another for mutual edification and the accomplishment of various tasks to promote the common good." (p.6) See also *Congregationalism the Church Local and Universal: The 1954 Polity and Unity Report*, p. 26-28 and 37-41 and William E. Barton *The Law of Congregational Usage* (1916), p. 288-326.

[3] cf. *Congregationalism the Church Local and Universal: The 1954 Polity and Unity Report*, p. 38, no.12.

[4] cf. *Congregationalism the Church Local and Universal: The 1954 Polity and Unity Report*, p. 38, no. 18; also William E. Barton, *The Law of Congregational Usage*, "Membership in a Congregational Association being voluntary, yet according to the rules laid down in its constitution, a church may withdraw from the fellowship..." (p.229); "An Association, for good cause shown, may withdraw fellowship from a church within its bounds. This should be done, however, only in the case of some scandalous refusal on the part of the church to right some wrong affecting the welfare of the churches as a whole." (p. 301-302)

[5] This procedure is derived from *The Congregational Christian Ministry, a Handbook of Standards, etc.* (1953) as quoted in A. Vaughn Abercrombie *The Congregational Christian Way of Inter-Church Fellowship* (1988), p. 33-34.

[6] cf. Abercrombie, p. 34.

[7] For the history, theology and approach of Congregationalists to ordination see: *The Cambridge Platform* chapters 6-10 in Walker, p. 210-217 and Preston Cummings *A Dictionary of Congregational Usages and Principles According to Ancient and Modern Authors* (1857), p. 274-292 and Barton *Laws of Congregational Usage*, p. 206-234 and Lloyd M. Hall, Jr. *From Call to Settlement*.

[8] cf. Preston *A Dictionary of Congregational Usages*, p. 261

[9] cf. Abercrombie *The Way of Inter-Church Fellowship*, p. 36-38.

[10] cf. William E. Barton *Congregational Manual and Rules of Order* (1927), p. 137ff and *Polity and Unity Report*, p. 26 (par. 15) and p. 39 (par. 20). Wright *Walking Together*, “By distinguishing between ordination, which is reserved for the church, and the granting of professional status, which is done by the Fellowship Committee, we are able to protect the interest of the community of the churches without taking from the local church the basic right to select its own leadership.” Wright is describing the current practice in the Unitarian Universalist Association, which continues to hold the essential Congregational polity out of which it came in 1825.

[11] On the historic nature and role of Associations of Congregational Ministers see Henry Martyn Dexter *A Hand-Book of Congregationalism* (1886), p. 123 where they are described as “voluntary clubs” and Barton *Manual*, p 135-137, note especially p. 137, “Ministers still have voluntary clubs, and are at liberty to have as many as they like; but these voluntary clubs have no right to license ministers, and no right of ministerial standing Present-day Congregationalism involves an association, inclusive both of ministers and churches, and having some rights to guard, on behalf of the churches, both doors to the ministry.”