



Dr. John Williams
Executive Minister

Included in this issue:

- * *Pastors' Conference*
- * *Planned Giving*
- * *Progress Report*
- * *Senior Adult Retreat*
- * *Parish Paper*
- * *CBTS News*

I have a friend for whom autumn is a favorite time of year. While changing seasons, beautifully colored trees, brisk sunny days and crisp starry nights may captivate others; my friend finds this season most welcome because so many things are pumpkin-flavored! He loves the smell of pumpkin spice; his mouth waters at the thought of pumpkin pie. When I start to rattle off my collection of pumpkin recipes (pumpkin bars with cream cheese frosting, pumpkin pancakes, pumpkin-gingerbread trifle, pumpkin rolls, pumpkin scones with spiced glaze, pumpkin whoopee pies with maple cream cheese filling, etc.) I'm sure his eyes tear up and his lips begin to quiver. To say my friend likes the smell and taste of pumpkin is a bit of an understatement.

What are the aromas and flavors you like? We all have our preferences; but I daresay there is one we should all share. Should not our lives be saturated with the fragrance and taste of Christ? Should we not taste like honey and salt, sweetened with the word of righteousness and salted with the purifying presence of the Holy Spirit? Should not our lives be as the fragrance of Christ to God; sweet, aromatic and pleasing to the Holy One?

I heard recently that a school was evacuated because of a strange odor that turned out to be a pumpkin spice air freshener. I wonder what had been added that made the fragrance so offensive to others. There are things that, when added to the life of the Christian, make us odious to God and to others. Thinking of the theme of this year's Annual Gathering, "Serve with Humility," I am reminded that arrogance and a lack of humility can produce a pungent odor in the life of a Christian. Pride, unkindness, stinginess, argumentativeness, untruthfulness are but a few of the smelly things God deems detestable in Proverbs 6. The seven deadly sins identified in the writings of the Desert Fathers include lust, gluttony, greed, sloth, wrath, envy and pride. Any of these can alter the fragrance of Christ's servant, making him or her odious to all around.

And what can enhance the fragrance of the one who serves Christ? Paul lists compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience as admirable virtues, along with forgiveness and love, "which binds them all together in perfect unity." Certainly those qualities added to our lives add to the sweetness of our fragrance. We are told that the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Again, sweet-smelling qualities that enhance the fragrance of one's life and witness.

Why am I "sniffing the air" in this way? I am aware that for those of us in ministerial leadership, the desire to live a life that is pleasing to God, a life that is a fragrant aroma of sacrifice to the One we love, is truly our heart's desire. But when others don't see us that way, what can we do? For me, I check to see what I've added to the formula for the fragrance I want to waft from my life. The things that smell badly are not the things I want to add to my life. The sweet-smelling qualities that enhance the fragrance of my life and witness are exactly the things I want in greater measure. I hope that would be the case for all of us who have laid our lives on the altar of sacrifice for the sake of Christ and the church He has called us to serve.



PASTORS' 2017 FALL CONFERENCE

Saturday, November 4 @ Milton FBC
Monday, November 13 @ Stilwell FBC
10:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.

How to Recognize DECLINING RELATIONSHIPS in Your Church Relationships

led by

Dr. Bill Hendricks, Performance Consultant

In this workshop, you will:

- * Determine relationship pluses and minuses with your congregation.
- * Review the eight relationship factors (4 positive indicators & 4 negative).
- * Equip yourself with the practical tools you need to build and maintain a healthy, long-lasting church relationship.

COST: \$25 (includes meals & snacks)

RSVP by Nov. 1

by contacting Jim Autrey at
jmautrey@tctelco.net or 620/767-8472

Sponsored by the Professional Church Leaders Vision Team of the ABCCR



- ❖ FOCUS is a newsletter published for professional church leaders in the Central Region, and it is distributed monthly. It is also available on the Region website, <https://abccr.org/>.
- ❖ The deadline for FOCUS is the first of the month of publication.
- ❖ A variation in content and format is required for copy to be printed in two or more successive issues.

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Follow your Region staff on the ABC/Central Region Facebook page as they provide information on resources and services, as well as events and happenings across our Region — <https://www.facebook.com/ABCCRegion/>

Check our ABC Central Region Twitter link — <https://twitter.com/ABCCRegion>

Find local, regional, national and international mission opportunities and inspiration for your own projects and activities with mission emphasis at <https://www.facebook.com/abccr.missions>

Please like and share the posts made on these Central Region social media accounts to help us spread the news!

Kansas Baptist Convention Foundation

Planned Giving

A Ministry of American Baptist Churches of the Central Region

It Has to Come From the Heart!

The whole country was touched by the massive shooting in Las Vegas this month. Everyone has a different way of expressing their grief. In many cultures, loud weeping, wailing and the tearing of clothes are accepted ways of lamenting personal sorrow or a great national calamity. For the people of Old Testament Israel, similar actions expressed deep mourning and repentance for turning away from the Lord.

An outward demonstration of repentance can be a powerful process when it actually comes from the heart. But without a sincere inward response to God, we may simply be going through the motions.

After a plague of locusts devastated the land of Judah, God, through the prophet Joel, called the people to sincere repentance to avoid His further judgment.

“Rend your heart and not your garments. Return to the Lord your God, for he is gracious and compassionate.” Joel 2:13

After a tragedy it seems everyone is asking all to pray, but it doesn't take long until it's back to 'business as usual' and God is either forgotten or ignored. What will it take for a sincere inward response to God from the American public?

We, as Christ's followers, are called to be examples in the world of the love of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. We can show that love in many different ways. I know many shared financially through One Great Hour of Sharing for all the hurricane and earthquake victims which was greatly appreciated as the continuing need is tremendous. Fortunately, we have not recently seen that kind of devastation in Central Region but there are a huge number of homeless and those with other needs. There are also many who are struggling with health issues, dysfunctional families, etc. that need to see the love of Christ. What is God calling you to do?

Some of us can help physically while others can help financially. There is something that everyone can do. Have you thought about including one of our nursing homes in your will so that they can continue to care for those who can't afford to pay?

What outreach ministries does your church have that need financial assistance? I'd be glad to meet with you to help establish whatever you feel God calling you to do, whether a Charitable Gift Annuity, an outright gift, or something in your will. Please contact me as there is no obligation or fee for my services.

Rev. Wilma E. Engle, Director of Planned Giving, wilmaengle@juno.com
6745 Interurban, Wichita, KS 67204-1323, 316-838-3065 or cell 316-644-2069

American Baptist Churches of the Central Region

Mission Giving for September 2017

	2017	2016	Increase (Decrease)	% Increase (% Decrease)
United Mission	\$58,199.63	\$67,454.92	-\$9,255.29	-13.72%
ABW Ministries Love Gift	\$2,231.65	\$4,008.80	-\$1,777.15	-44.33%
American Baptist Mission Support	\$113,913.35	\$101,513.83	\$12,399.52	12.21%

Mission Giving September YTD

	2017	2016	Increase (Decrease)	% Increase (% Decrease)
ABW Ministries Love Gift	\$26,721.67	\$30,830.47	-\$4,108.80	-13.32%
One Great Hour of Sharing offering	\$76,556.96	\$60,783.87	\$15,773.09	25.94%
World Mission Offering	\$22,812.54	\$31,983.04	-\$9,170.50	-28.67%
Retired Ministers & Missionaries	\$25,319.37	\$28,005.11	-\$2,685.74	-9.59%
Region Offering	\$43,328.95	\$33,485.95	\$9,843.00	29.39%
Institutional Support Process	\$49,716.09	\$33,382.96	\$16,333.13	48.92%
Specifics	\$142,850.09	\$109,272.52	\$33,577.57	30.72%
American Baptist Mission Support	\$1,022,199.02	\$1,030,582.11	-\$8,383.09	-0.81%

Our Church's Giving for September

United Mission	\$ _____
One Great Hour of Sharing offering	\$ _____
American Baptist Mission Support	\$ _____



**WORLD
MISSION
OFFERING**

“Come, follow me.” (Mark 1:17)

Senior Adult Retreat Committee Announces Dr. Susan Gillies as Keynote Speaker for the Senior Adult Retreat, Apr. 25-26, 2018

Dr. Susan Gillies will provide the keynote messages for the Senior Adult Retreat on the topic of “The JOY of the Lord is My Strength.” Her key scripture will be Nehemiah 8:9-12.

Dr. Susan Gillies is a retired denominational executive. She most recently served as Interim General Secretary of American Baptist Churches USA in 2016 and 2017. Previously, she served as Executive Minister of the American Baptist Churches of Nebraska. During that time, she also served two terms as President of the Regional Executive Ministers Council.

Dr. Gillies has also served as Deputy Executive of the American Baptist Home Mission Societies (ABHMS), then National Ministries. She served the organization as Manager of the Ministry of the Laity in the Workplace Program, working with ABHMS for 13 years in total. She was also commissioned by the organization as a home missionary.

Gillies has served on a number of American Baptist Boards, has been a faculty member of several universities and also worked in public radio at those universities. She has produced numerous news and music programs, documentaries, live coverage of political and community events and received North Dakota Associated Press awards for agricultural reporting and documentary production.

She is co-author of two books: *Renewing God's People*, published by ABHMS and *Empowering Laity Engaging Leaders*, part of the Judson Press



Dr. Susan Gillies

Living Church series. She also wrote a newspaper column for several years.

She received a Bachelor's degree from the University of Sioux Falls and a Master's degree from the University of Memphis. She holds a certificate in non-profit management from the University of Wisconsin.

In retirement, she has done local church consulting and audio podcasts. She expresses her artistic side as a silversmith. She currently lives in Omaha, her hometown, where she is a member of the Benson Baptist Church.

ABCCR SENIOR ADULT RETREAT--APRIL 25 - 26, 2018

Cross Wind Conference Center, Hesston, Kansas

Registration Deadline is MONDAY, APRIL 2, 2018

***** \$10 PER INDIVIDUAL LATE FEE ASSESSED IF POSTMARKED AFTER APRIL 2*****

Cancellation Policy: A full refund will be given if cancelled by Thursday, April 5, 2018

After April 5, a \$25 cancellation fee per individual will be non-refundable.

Name: _____ Phone: (Home) _____
(If registering as a couple, please write spouse's name below.) (Cell) _____

Spouse: _____ Email: _____

Address: _____ Home Church: _____
& City _____

City/State/Zip: _____

_____ I will be rooming with the following: _____

(Due to high demand, roommates will be assigned to those who have not specified a spouse or roommate)

	<u>Number of guests</u>	<u>Total \$\$</u>
• Full Retreat (<i>includes programming, all meals & lodging and is per person being registered.</i>)	_____ @ \$99.00 per person	_____
• Full Retreat (Incl. programming, all meals) NO LODGING	_____ @ \$79.00 per person	_____
• Wednesday Only (Incl. Prog and supper) NO LODGING	_____ @ \$59.00 per person	_____
• Thursday Only (Incl. Prog, breakfast & lunch) NO LODGING	_____ @ \$59.00 per person	_____
• RV's(Incl. Prog, & all meals) \$64.00 per person	_____	_____
+\$30 RV space per night	_____	_____
TOTAL AMOUNT DUE		_____

Make checks payable to: **Senior Adult Retreat** and mail payment and completed registration form to:
Les Freeman, PO Box 332, Concordia, KS 66901. If you have questions, call Les at (785) 243-3470.

Alternate accommodations can be secured at motels in the area.

You must make your own housing arrangements if not staying at Cross Wind

First time to attend a Senior Adult Retreat? Yes ____ No ____

***Registration begins Wed. at 10:45 a.m. **First event is Lunch at 12:00 noon**

(Cut here and retain this stub for your records and information.)

Senior Adult Retreat -- Cross Wind Conference Center, Hesston, KS **April 25 & 26, 2018**
Registration begins at 10:45 a.m. on Wednesday the 25th. First event is Lunch at 12:00 noon.

The conference will close at mid-afternoon on Thursday the 26th.

Amount paid to Registrar: _____ Check number: _____ Date paid: _____

SHORT-TERM MISSION TRIPS THAT YIELD LONG-TERM SUCCESS

Reporting on the popularity of short-term mission trips, sociologist Robert Wuthnow estimates that in the US, 32 percent of congregations sponsor short-term overseas volunteer trips every year. About a quarter of the US population has taken part in a short-term mission experience at some point in their lifetime.¹ In fact, the prospect of embarking on a short-term mission trip, fueled by well-resourced, energetic people of faith, can be exhilarating for both participants and the community being served. Still, despite the best intentions, such trips often fall short of expectations for all involved.

Worst Mission Trip Ever: A Case Study

Moments after the ten-passenger van arrived in the Central American village of San Valente, Jenna pulled out her camera to photograph the dozens of patchwork buildings made of corrugated metal, plastic, and wood. Matt said, “Wow! This reminds me of last year, when we were in Mexico.” Scott, the trip’s coordinator, asked the group to help hand out the goods to community residents that would arrive via truck that afternoon.

This mission trip’s purpose was to lay the foundation for a new community church. The mission trip leader sent money in advance to hire someone to dig the foundation trenches. However, when the group arrived at the work site, they were shocked because the trenches were only half-finished. Miguel, their host, explained the reason: They preferred to hire local workers with hand tools, not a single person with heavy machinery, so that more people would be employed. “Looks like it’s going to be a long week!” Jenna exclaimed.

While this story is fictional, it contains instructive examples of misguided actions.²

- Before Jenna reaches for her camera, she and the other missionaries should be advised to get to know their hosts, and gain an understanding of what it is like to live there. Otherwise, the trip—whether to El Salvador or inner city Detroit—becomes voyeuristic or like a tourist destination.

- Matt’s memory of last year’s Mexican mission trip highlights that, while changing destinations every year can be enjoyable, the best way to develop a lasting relationship is to make a long-term commitment to one community and return each year.
- The coordinator’s plan to hand out supplies from the back of a pickup truck can be an offensive practice, as it reinforces a pattern of top-down paternalism. Instead, give the items to a local service agency or congregation to distribute.
- The expressions of shock over a half-finished trench remind us that missionaries need to respect that they have now entered their hosts’ world. Logistics and timelines need to proceed under local direction.

Best Practices for Effective Mission Trips

Laurie Occhipinti, an anthropologist who researches economic development, has spoken with missionaries, read scholarly articles and religious leaders’ accounts, and participated in trips herself. With this background,



she offers best practices to ensure that short-term mission efforts are effective.³

Establish Long-Term Relationships. The here today, gone tomorrow quality of many short-term mission trips begs the question: How are we not simply religious tourists? Long-term connection through repeated visits can change the relationship quality between sender and host, assisting team members in deepening their local cultural understanding and allowing those who have made multiple trips to help newcomers learn what to expect and how to behave. Repeated visits also increase the likelihood that local community members will have input into the projects undertaken.

Reflect on the Experience. Orientation and debriefing sessions should be mandatory for groups undertaking short-term projects. These sessions work if everyone provides input. Newcomers should be encouraged to talk aloud about their preconceptions about the trip and the culture. At the final debriefing, group discussions provide an important opportunity to frame the social, cultural, and political contextualization of the encounter.

Work to Ensure the Project Benefits the Community. Good mission trips often resemble successful community development projects undertaken closer to home. This involves practicing good listening skills with local leaders; focusing on resources, not deficits; and considering how the project could enhance community sustainability five or more years down the road. Such steps ensure that the host community, and not just the mission team, receives lasting benefits.

Understand the Role of Culture. Occhipinti notes that mission participants often “collapse cultural differences” by lumping the poor in other countries with the poor everywhere else, disregarding cultural variances. Time invested in learning about the local culture, perhaps even learning language basics, is time well spent.

Work in Partnership. “The question is not *whether* we travel and work with others; the question is *how*.” In other words, the *process* of working with others matters as much as the project’s material output. Unfortunately, Christian mission history is tainted by missionaries’ collusion with colonial governments and institutions seeking to extract resource wealth from colonial territories. Only by continually stressing *partnership* in the project’s planning and execution can both sides of the mission equation—missioners and hosts—learn from each other.

Where Should We Go?

When initiating a short-term mission trip, the most important decision may be the first: where should we go? Here are two possibilities for finding that answer.⁴

Personal Connection. This occurs because a church leader learns about the host community through a friend or business colleague. In one case, a professional woman started a nonprofit agency after learning about the poor living near a Nicaraguan landfill while on vacation. Her home church stepped up to support her with funds and additional support through mission trips. If you choose to rely on a personal contact, do your homework. Contact a nonprofit development organization with contacts in the region you plan to visit, or talk with someone in your denominational mission office.

Institutional Connection. If your congregation is part of a larger denomination with global reach, denominational staff may have institutional ties with nongovernmental agencies in the host region or country. One advantage: the denominational office may be able to help with logistical arrangements as well.

So which is better? Personal connections may appear more direct and less bureaucratic, yet a potential downside is the “side-of-the-road syndrome.” Occhipinti describes it this way: Everybody loves the mission site that lies on the beaten path, while the greater need may lie just inland from there. For example, Juarez, Mexico, located just across the border from El Paso, Texas, receives many American mission teams, while more remote locations receive hardly any at all.

Reflecting on Meaningful Mission

Do mission trips do any good, or are they simply faith-based tourism masquerading as meaningful engagement? When handled effectively, such trips can help missioners from a dominant culture challenge long-held assumptions. Immersion in another culture, especially in a less developed country, cracks open cultural assumptions, as if a fish, always accustomed to immersion in water, suddenly became aware of its surroundings. Such experiences can be transformative.⁵

1. Laurie Occhipinti, *Making a Difference in A Globalized World: Short-term Missions that Work* (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2014), 13-14.

2. Mark Radecke, “Misguided Missions: Ten Worst Practices,” *Christian Century*, May 18, 2010, 22-23, 25.

3. Occhipinti, 117-21.

4. *Ibid.*, 95-96.

5. *Ibid.*, 34-38.



Resources for your ministry



Dr. John Park
Des Peres Assist. Professor of
Congregational Health and
Director of Doctor of Ministry

A New Focus on Followership

The study of leadership is pretty recent in comparison to other disciplines; however, the idea of leadership has been around as long as the history of humankind. During the 20th and 21st Centuries, countless books have been written with different emphases, titles, and experiences, but most of them centered on the leader and leadership. Little has been said and written about the idea of followership, but the topic of followership has become important as times are changing. Not only has the level of followers' awareness gone up, but also people in general do not want to be led unless a clear vision of what the leader says and does resonates with them. In postmodernism, horizontal rather than hierarchical relationships are preferred – where the follower and the leader are the same in importance, although their functions are different.

Kellerman titled one of her books *The End of Leadership* (2012) because she realized that followers are as important as leaders, or in some cases, more important (as she noted in another book, *Followership*, 2008). In one interview, she stated that she wanted to strike a balance between leadership and followership.

Recently Central's faculty and staff were asked to participate in fraud intervention by responding to an article. In many instances, leaders, be they CEOs or church leaders, committed frauds of varying scales because followers failed to stand up to their leaders for the sake of the organizations of which they are members. They did not dare to challenge, confront, and stand up to their leaders because they had not been equipped and empowered to do so. Just as leadership exists for an organization, not for the leader, and thrives on a clear vision, so does followership. Followership is nurtured and flourishes when leaders recognize the importance of empowering followers to stand up to them when their leadership goes wrong (Chaleff 2009). Kelly, Chaleff, and Kellerman all divided followers into several categories based on their support, challenge, and engagement. It is interesting to see which type one fits or where one falls on a continuum of engagement.

Whatever the type or wherever one falls on the continuum, followers need first to align themselves with the vision and mission of the organization, and help their leaders to do the same when the latter fail to do so. Standing up to the leader takes courage and, at times, requires intelligent disobedience. Followership should be more highlighted to continue to change the way leaders and followers think and interact with one another. An old Korean saying holds that, "No one is above others, and no one is beneath others." It illustrates well the equality and freedom that need to exist between the leader and the follower, as all of us were created equal before God.

The time of turbulence and discontinuous change we live in calls for courageous, intelligent, and resonant leaders, but it also calls for courageous, intelligent, and resonant followers. We can't afford our followers to be too weak to stand up to our leaders when they fail and drift away from the vision and mission of the organization or when they exercise bad leadership. We can be leaders and followers at the same time. That is, we're followers in some venues, while we are leaders in other venues. We need to sharpen and strengthen our followership, so that our leadership can be more effective. The DMin Program in Creative Leadership at Central addresses this important concept of followership in various seminars of the program, so that the student can be a confident, courageous follower when he or she is in a followership position while at the same time leading in their respective fields as a leader. Leadership is on loan. That is, it can be always taken away when the leadership is not good. Thus, the leader must exercise good leadership. When one is not a leader, he or she needs to exercise good followership.

Resources

- ◆ Chaleff, Ira. *The Courageous Follower: Standing up to & for Our Leaders*. 3rd ed. Berrett-Koehler Publishers, Inc., 2009.
- ◆ Chaleff, Ira. *Intelligent Disobedience: Doing Right When What You're Told to Do Is Wrong*. Berrett-Koehler Publishers, 2015.
- ◆ Kellerman, Barbara. *Followership: How Followers Are Creating Change and Changing Leaders*. Harvard Business Review, 2008.
- ◆ Kellerman, Barbara. *The End of Leadership*. HarperBusiness, 2012.
- ◆ Kelley, Robert. E. *The Power of Followership: How to Create Leaders People Want to Follow and Followers Who Lead Themselves*. Doubleday Currency, 1992.