



Dr. John Williams
Executive Minister

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Last month I had the privilege of attending the Centennial celebration of the Oklahoma Indian American Baptist Association (OIABA). This four-day event featured many inspirational speakers; beautiful native hymn singing and wonderful stories of God's mission lived out in our Native American churches and church leaders. It was an incredible time.

On the first night Dr. Jeff Haggray, Executive Director of the American Baptist Home Mission Societies, recounted the story of Pentecost. In a powerful message, Dr. Haggray reminded us that "they were ALL there, ALL praying, ALL gathered around a common mission, ALL together ... and God moved and filled them ALL." For those of us gathered at an association meeting, it was a good reminder of the mighty ways God works when we are together. Although God called Ann and Adoniram Judson to be Baptist missionaries in Burma, very little could have happened had not Luther Rice gathered Baptist churches to work together for the support of foreign missions. In like manner, the combined efforts of many Baptist women (who became the American Baptists Women's Home Mission Society) opened ways for God to move powerfully among the Native tribes in southwest Oklahoma over a century ago. Being, living, praying, serving, working, believing, worshipping ... together makes a difference! I have often noted that a one-man band might be entertaining to watch, but the music produced is not very good. An orchestra, on the other hand, is a treasure for the ears.

All this is a good reminder that isolation, withdrawal, separation and division hamper God's Spirit and God's ability/willingness to do something great among us. I'm not saying this as though God is weak, but the truth is, our attitudes can inhibit or enhance the work of the Holy Spirit in our midst. This month the East Central Area, Northeast Area, Southeast Area and Western Area will hold their annual meetings, creating opportunity for brothers and sisters to be together in one place. Next month the wider ABCCR family will have opportunity to gather at Cross Wind for our Annual Gathering. In all of these gatherings the Holy Spirit yearns to meet us there in surprising ways, manifesting God's presence and power to change lives and call us all to greater service. Will you choose to be present? Will you choose to be in fellowship with your American Baptist sisters and brothers, listening for God's voice and the rush of God's Spirit? That's what God does when we are ALL together.

After leaving the OIABA Centennial Celebration I drove north to meet with a group of people who have started a new church and are seeking to be in relationship with the ABC-CR. They have realized something important. There is no strength in going it alone. To be on the journey with others; to be in fellowship with others; to be praying and working with others; to be joined with others around the cause of Christ is an invitation for God to break through in remarkable ways. Together, we invite the possibility of a "new" Pentecost every time we surrender our own control and allow God to speak to and through ALL those God chooses.

I hope you will be part of the many gatherings and opportunities for "coming together" this season. Without you, we will all be less than we should be. Without one another, we will truly see less of God and the power God wants to pour out in our midst.

roast

roast (rōst) v. **roast•ed, roast•ed, roasts** [ME *rosten* < OFr. *rostit* of Germanic orig.] – vt. **1.** To cook (food, especially meat) by prolonged exposure to heat in an oven or over a fire. **2.** To brown, dry, or parch by exposing to heat. **3.** To expose to excessive heat. – n. **1.** A cut of meat that has been roasted or that is intended for roasting. **2.** The act or process of roasting or the state of being roasted. **3. A party to honor a person at which the honoree is subjected to good-natured ridicule.**

Please join ABCCR for a

Retirement Party

————— in honor of —————

Rev. Dr. John S. Williams

Friday, October 13, 2017 at 7:30 p.m.

Cross Wind Camp & Conference Center
8036 N Hoover Rd
Hesston, Kansas 67062

Come prepared to share your stories, jokes, and remembrances from John's 43 years of ministry in the ABCCR. If you wish to share with the aid of audio-visual equipment, please contact Joanna Gillette at joanna@bgillette.com



- ❖ 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

What Do You Do When Things Go Wrong?

We all are familiar with I Thessalonians 5:18 “Give thanks in all circumstances for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.” It’s much easier to quote it than to live it.

How can the people in Houston who’ve lost everything and had no flood insurance still give thanks to God? The best place to see Jesus showing us the way is in the upper room when He gave thanks before He went to die on the cross for our sins.

Think about what He meant: ‘Thank you, Father, that my body, symbolized by this bread, is about to be brutally broken and I am about to be (momentarily) damned by your wrath (Isaiah 53:10) so that you will receive supreme glory in being able to forgive undeserving sinners (Phil. 2:11), and I will share eternally full joy (Jn 15:11; Ps 16:11) with hundreds of millions of forgiven sinners made righteous through my sacrifice (Isaiah 53:11).’

Jesus’ thanks was not based on his present circumstances. He was about to endure the worst possible horror. He felt thankful to the Father for the grace and glory that was coming because of the cross, and this gave him joy.

That’s where God wants your eyes: on the future joy He has promised you. The trouble that we endure has a purpose: in it we are displaying the reality of Jesus to the world in a unique way. The kingdom of God is most clearly shown on earth when Christians gratefully suffer present trouble because they see a future weight of glory coming that makes everything this world throws at them as ‘light momentary afflictions’ in comparison (II Cor. 4:17).

Take a look around your home and see how God has blessed you materially. How have you shared the financial goodness of God? He’s promised to meet our needs, but are we like the rich man who wanted to build bigger barns so he could relax and enjoy his wealth? God blesses us so we can be a blessing to others.

Every church and non-profit or flood victim could use some of your financial blessings but, of course, you can’t help them all. Please pray how God would have you use what He has given to you. I’d love to talk with you about tax benefits and different ways you can do this. There is no cost or obligation 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 August 2017

	2017	2016	Increase (Decrease)	% Increase (% Decrease)
United Mission	\$65,693.19	\$69,245.43	-\$3,552.24	-5.12%
ABW Ministries Love Gift	\$2,246.84	\$4,418.55	-\$2,171.71	-49.14%
American Baptist Mission Support	\$113,294.89	\$117,546.09	-\$4,251.20	-3.61%

Mission Giving August YTD

	2017	2016	Increase (Decrease)	% Increase (% Decrease)
ABW Ministries Love Gift	\$24,490.02	\$26,821.67	-\$2,331.65	-8.69%
One Great Hour of Sharing offering	\$46,439.49	\$54,356.23	-\$7,916.74	-14.56%
World Mission Offering	\$16,607.63	\$23,522.44	-\$6,914.81	-29.39%
Retired Ministers & Missionaries	\$24,731.00	\$27,700.27	-\$2,969.27	-10.71%
Region Offering	\$38,622.89	\$30,101.93	\$8,520.96	28.30%
Institutional Support Process	\$46,930.02	\$31,788.37	\$15,141.65	47.63%
Specifics	\$135,116.94	\$102,612.19	\$32,504.75	31.67%
American Baptist Mission Support	\$903,700.67	\$929,068.28	-\$25,367.61	-2.73%

Our Church's Giving for August

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

FROM THE DESK OF JACK COBB, ABMen USA Disaster Relief Coordinator

I am issuing a NATIONAL CALL FOR VOLUNTEER TEAMS to travel to Lake Charles, La., in response to the devastation caused by Hurricane Harvey.

The logistical arrangements necessary for volunteer teams to respond have been finalized. I will be on-site the weeks of Sept. 24, Oct. 1, Oct. 8, Oct. 29, Nov. 5, Nov. 12, Dec. 31, 2017 and Jan. 6-20, 2018, to help coordinate work.

Continuing assessments will be made as we progress; and in the event work in the Lake Charles area is completed, we will move our work to another location.

Contact my office for details on how you can help:
325 E. Maplewood Estates, Scott Depot, WV 25560-9746
(cell) 304/206-8462, cobbjack@suddenlink.net

Cross Wind
October 12-14, 2017
ABCCR Annual Gathering



Serve with Humility

“Always be humble and gentle. Be patient with each other, making allowance for each other’s faults because of your love.” – Ephesians 4:2, NLT

Details and registration forms are available on the Region website, abccr.org.

Keynote Speaker:
Rev. Dr. Lee B. Spitzer
General Secretary, ABCUSA



IM Missionaries:
Keith & Debbie Myers
Central Mexico



PASTORS' 2017 FALL CONFERENCE

Saturday, November 4 @ Milton FBC
Monday, November 6 @ 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

EQUIPPING VOLUNTEERS BUILDS A STRONG CHURCH COMMUNITY

Sociologist Joshua Packard describes an emerging population he calls the “dones.” They are “spiritual refugees” from organized religion who were once long-time members, but who pass through the exit door of the church and never look back. Though many reasons exist for their departure, a significant theme is the feeling of being of ignored or underutilized. “It’s hard for me to be just a passive worshiper,” one of Packard’s interview subjects said. “I’ve got to do things. That’s how I understand my faith and how I understand God.”¹

Signs of Trouble

Marlene Wilson, a recognized specialist in volunteer training, explains that in many churches the Pillars do much of the work, fostering close and satisfying relationships within their clique and making a majority of the decisions. This can leave the Pewsitters with a lack of enthusiasm about getting involved. Additionally, while one can be part of an active core of volunteers and still experience a vague sense of dissatisfaction, Wilson describes signs of trouble within a volunteer system.

The team leader or committee chair does all the work for the team. Though it is tempting to blame laziness, the culprit might be an overactive team leader. Imagine gathering for a team meeting where the leader lays out her vision for the team’s work, hands out printed material, and adjourns. Later, team members realize that the leader did all the talking. Unless team members are asked to contribute, it seems pointless to participate.

Leaders are asked to do several jobs at once—and retained for too long. When leaders juggle multiple tasks, they are unable to give their best effort to any one thing. Without an influx of new volunteers, the regulars may feel burdened and unmotivated. Some churches address this issue by refusing to allow anyone to be in charge of more than one ministry team.

Unrealistic time commitments scare volunteers away. The era when volunteers inhabited their jobs for a lifetime is over. “A major trend in volunteerism,” writes Wilson, “is

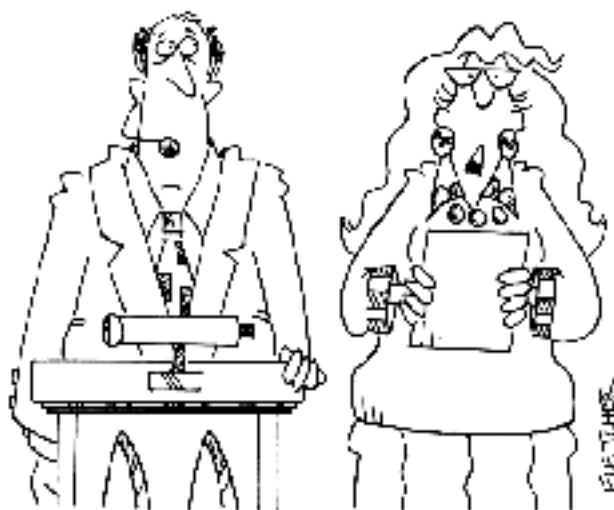
that volunteers prefer three-, six-, or one-month assignments rather than longer commitments. The shorter time commitments fit better into volunteers’ busy lives.”

There is no system for coaching volunteers. Imagine being assigned a volunteer job with no one to be accountable to and no one to contact in case problems arise. Supervising is just as important for volunteers as it is for paid employees. The best approach is to create a documented process. Develop a coaching system and write it down.

Volunteers are more committed to the director than to the program. Inspirational leaders are never a problem—unless the leader leaves! Every team or committee needs a mission statement that answers the question, “What is our purpose?” and a written vision statement of where the team is heading.²

Discovery First, Equipping Second

Sue Mallory and Brad Smith lay out an equipping system for congregations structured around the journey a new member makes from entry to worship involvement



“THE 20 PERCENT OF OUR CONGREGATION THAT DOES
 80 PERCENT OF THE WORK WILL BE HONORED
 AT A SPECIAL LUNCHEON . AS SOON AS THE REST OF US
 FIGURE OUT HOW THAT’S DONE”

to volunteer ministry.³ At the heart of this equipping system is the discovery interview, which seeks to discover the abilities and interests of potential volunteers. It is best to recruit a team to conduct these interviews. Anyone who is able to ask open-ended questions and practice reflective listening would qualify. The interviewer should take prolific notes or use a pre-fabricated form. Some congregations use volunteer database software for its members, which is fine as long as confidentiality is respected regarding personal issues that might arise in the interview (see “Top 20 Volunteer Management Software Products,” <http://www.capterra.com/volunteer-management-software> for examples).

Here are some sample questions for a discovery interview⁴:

- I would be interested in learning about your family. Tell me about. . .
- What do you do (or have you done) to earn your livelihood?
- What do you love doing?
- What do you dislike doing and hope never to have to do again?
- We seldom have the opportunity to share with others those things that we most enjoyed and felt we did well. Are there things you have accomplished that you are really proud of?

Matching and discovery are different tasks, and discovery must come first. Matching then requires a thorough review of the abilities, interests, and motivations of the potential volunteer before seeking to fill available slots. When matching, one should pay attention to not only positive factors, but also reasons why this might not be the best time to volunteer, such as exhaustion from previous service, personal crisis, or a significant life transition.

The Basics of Equipping Volunteers

Success in volunteer service requires encouragement and support. This is often called equipping, a reference to Paul’s call to leaders “to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for the building up of the body of Christ” (Ephesians 4:12, NRSV). Here are four keys to effective equipping.⁵

Apprentice your volunteers. In the Middle Ages, the apprentice served alongside the master, who provided instruction and guidance. The apprentice learned by doing. The effect here is that of the slow cooker or crock-pot, not the microwave oven. Demonstrate how it is done, and let it simmer.

Use a team structure. The problem with the solo approach is that we end up doing too much of the work ourselves. If you are launching a new project without a team in place, it risks collapse. If the size of your long-standing committee or team has dwindled over time, you risk burnout. Pay close attention to forming and sustaining the team.

Train for the work. Once you have a team in place, think about attending a training conference together, watching an instructional video, or visiting another congregation that does what you do. Observe and ask questions: What worked? What didn’t?

Develop leaders. While training prepares a person to complete a task, leadership development aims at developing the whole person. For instance, a church-operated food pantry may recruit new volunteers from its customers and train them to stock shelves or clean the floor. Then, invite volunteers who show interest and leadership potential to serve on the board or hold other leadership roles. With proper guidance, this customer-turned-volunteer might develop into a trusted leader. Leaders may come from anywhere.

How Volunteer Ministry Feeds Us

Equipping others for the work of ministry, Paul writes, serves to build a strong, diverse community called the body of Christ. Where do you fit into that community? Are you a Pillar, a Pewsitter, or something in between? What would a discovery process look like with the newest members, your circle of friends beyond the church, the “dones,” and the “not-yet-dones”?

ABOUT THE AUTHOR: The Rev. Dr. Dana Horrell, executive director of Faithful Citizen (www.faithfulcitizen.net) and United Methodist pastor, works to engage congregations in social ministry.

1. Joshua Packard, “Meet the ‘Dones,’” *Christianity Today*, Summer 2015, <http://www.christianitytoday.com/pastors/2015/summer-2015/meet-dones.html>.

2. Marlene Wilson, *Creating a Volunteer-Friendly Church Culture* (Loveland, CO: Group Publishing, 2004), 47-53.

3. Sue Mallory and Brad Smith, *The Equipping Church Handbook* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2001), 244-346. Also see Sue Mallory, *The Equipping Church* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2016).

4. *Ibid.*, 287-88.

5. Dan Entwistle, *Recruiting Volunteers* (Nashville: Abingdon, 2007), 39-50.



Dr. David M. May
Professor of New Testament
Director of Online Curriculum Design
Director of MA Program

Silence

Several years ago, my wife and I went to a movie called *Into Great Silence*. It was one of those types of movies shown at art house theaters. This movie wouldn't make it at a mainstream theater, because it's about silence. It was a documentary about the Carthusian monks in the Grande Chartreuse monastery nestled in the French Alps. The movie is 2 hours and 49 minutes long—and not one word is spoken. The filmmaker just followed the monks, who had taken vows of silence, as they went about their daily tasks. I remember about thirty minutes into the movie two young people got up and left. It was clear; they couldn't stand the silence.

Silence is a powerful and unnerving experience. It affects us because we can no longer bury ourselves into noises that distract and entertain. Silence calls us to stop, lift our heads, and turn our ears towards something beyond the everyday and mundane. Many biblical writers understood the experience of silence. In that strange and intriguing book *Revelation* is a scene where the seven seals are being opened by the Lamb, and after each opening is a loud and incredible action by God. Each seal seems to get bigger and louder, until the seventh seal is opened—and there is silence in heaven (Rev. 8:1). That seventh seal beckons us to grasp the wholly otherness of God.

One of the intentional parts of worship each Sunday should be a time for silence. In the midst of greetings, announcements, songs, litanies, and sermons, we can make a time where noise is absent so God may be present. By making room for silence in our worship, we may discover God and—God can discover us.

Resources

Below are some web resources for considering how silence might be incorporated into worship and our everyday lives.

- ◆ The Role of Silence in Worship—<http://bit.ly/2wRXrsi>
- ◆ Stillness, Stillness and Listening to God—<http://bit.ly/1dTUaLS>
- ◆ Bible Verses on Solitude and Silence—<http://bit.ly/1qzp6r2>
- ◆ The Value of Silence—<http://bit.ly/2y0mcjK>
- ◆ Using Silence in Worship Leading—<http://bit.ly/2xfW0si>