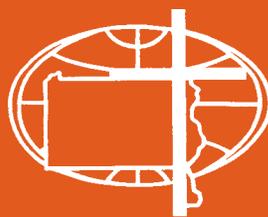


NOTES & NEWS, THOUGHTS & VIEWS



FOR ABCOPAD CHURCHES FROM
REGIONAL EXECUTIVE PASTOR REV. FRANK FRISCHKORN

VOLUME 26, NUMBER 10

OCTOBER 2014

GREETINGS IN THE LORD!

One of the books that the LLCs have been reading is entitled, *Present Perfect* by Greg Boyd. This book has a very simple premise, namely that we as believers need to grasp and gravitate to the fact that God is present in every moment of our lives.

God by his very nature is with us always: He is omniscient, He is omnipresent, He is omnipotent, but the reality is that we need to recognize that reality and lean into that presence, power and wisdom for every decision we make in our lives.

In 2 Corinthians 10:5b the Apostle Paul calls us to:

... take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ.

While that is a short phrase — only six words — that is a very tall task to live out ... at least in my life. Oh, I'm held captive alright, but often it's not by Christ or with the things of God. Often I'm held hostage by schedule and calendar, by my perceptions of what people want me to do or expect me to do, by the schedules of others, and even by my own fears.

(Truth be told, even as I write this reflection on the importance of focusing our hearts and minds

on God in every moment, the reality is I'm finding my mind whirling off in all sorts of directions: What do I have to do later today? What do I have before me for the weekend? What is yet to be done in preparation for the Biennial Leadership Conference? ... and on, and on, and on!)

Time and time again I find my heart, my life, my mind hijacked by the challenges of this life — challenges and agendas that draw me away from communing daily, moment by moment with Christ.

Please don't misunderstand, I'm not saying that all of those activities or things we do for God are not important. They are, but only when done in response to the leading and guiding of God by his Spirit.

The sad truth is that often we define what it means to be a Christian or the Church by

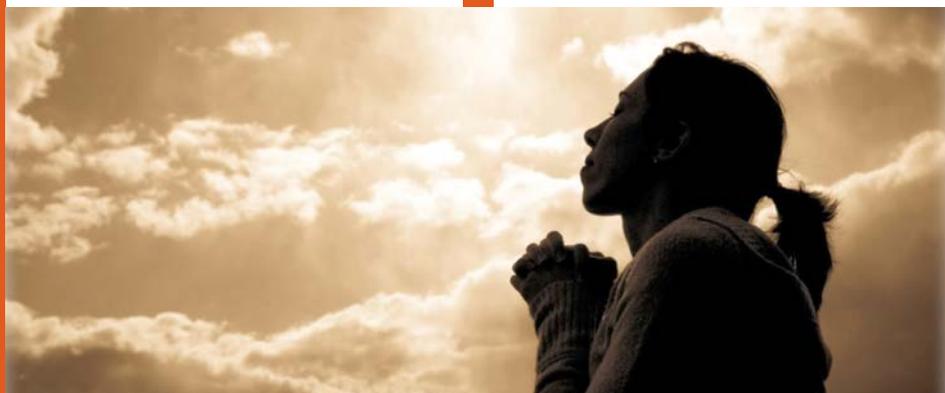
what we do: the fullness of our schedules and church calendars, the number of programs we have in place, or the finely-tuned nature of our Constitution and bylaws. We are all about *doing* when it seems to me that what God really wants us to be all about, is *being*.

It's all about becoming more like Jesus, so that we ensure that we can be Jesus to the world.

So the question that begs to be asked is this, *What is holding you captive today?* Are you held hostage by schedules, by the demands of others and their agendas for you, or are the hands that hold your heart and mind pierced as a vivid sign of His Love for you?

Longing to fall more and more in love with Him,

Frank





REV. DR. JEFFREY JOHNSON
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A year ago the Abington Association that encompasses Scranton and its surrounding area met, as many of our associations are doing right now, for their fall meeting. This association, however, met with real intentionality to discern the viability and value of association life in their part of our region.

Besides the mandatory delicious dinner and obligatory order of business, the bulk of the gathering was spent in a service focused on individual, congregational and associational renewal.

People gathered there understood that the local church is only as strong as the individual members within it, and by extension, so goes the strength of the association, region and denomination. At the conclusion of the service an invitation was extended. The front of the church packed out for an extended time of personal and corporate prayer. Even after the benediction, folks lingered in the Shiloh (place of meeting God) Baptist sanctuary to remain in the afterglow of the presence and power of the Holy Spirit. When people did leave, they were given a nut, a literal nut, a seed, and asked to use it as a point of contact for prayer.



The leadership of the association, under their moderator Mrs. LaMarr Coe, knew there had to be more. It could not stop with just that one service. Early this year, the core leaders of the association and committed folks from congregations in the association gathered at the United

Church of Taylor to discuss next steps. They determined they wanted to hold a fall revival, but not just any fall revival. They knew it would take work, as anything worth something doesn't come easy. They entered into an intense six month period of intentional daily prayer and Bible reading. The prayers took the form of both individual and collective intercession. It was all to symbolically water "the seed" they were given at the service the fall before. The seed was to represent that things start small but can get very big and give life to others and that all of us should be part of something larger and bigger than ourselves. The seed also represented the reality that each of us should be part of something that outlasts us; planting a tree under whose shade we may never personally sit but that others enjoy and reap the benefits thereof.



After months and months of faithfully seeking the Lord in prayer and His Word, the three-day set of services arrived. A lot of prayer *and* promotion went hand in hand. By the end of the services, it could indeed be said that the association realized all what others consider to be indicators of health and vitality. There were great attendances, new folks at each of the gatherings, even the last night people literally coming in from straight off the street to attend. Every night spiritual decisions were being made, seeing over 70 people come forward two nights straight during the invitation. There was even a baptism the last evening! Also, leadership was being raised up in the services, not just people participating who had never done so before but also two people committing during the services to serve God full-time, one desiring to become a pastor and another person deciding to become a missionary. Finally, as is true whenever The Church gathers, anytime, anywhere, missional ministry. Each service attendees were asked to bring in tangible items to give to the given community (because each night was a different place), to take the church outside its walls and engage its context.

The association leaders know the services were not a magic bullet. They were not a one-time thing that will fix everything in their lives; individually, congregationally, nor associationally, a huge Baptist value. What they do know is that God is moving among them and that by committing to the Lord and to one another, they can sure do a lot more together than any one Christian or any one congregation could do on their own. For the Abington Association, this is the start of something BIG! Can't wait to see what great things God will do!

Oh, if you want to check out the pictures of the gatherings, here is the link: <http://s1137.photobucket.com/user/msmsmail/library/2014%20Abington%20Revival%20Services?sort=3&page=1> ■





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On Sunday, Oct. 5, I worshipped at the Bethlehem Baptist Church of Ruff Creek.

Rev. David Earnest delivered the sermon and asked me to offer a short meditation prior to communion. Oct. 5 was World Communion Sunday. Millions of Christians around the world were all celebrating communion on the same day. During my meditation, the congregation recognized this act was meant to be a sign of Christian unity. In John 17:22 - 23 Jesus prays, "I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one—I in them and you in me—so that they may be brought to complete unity. Then the world will know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me." Jesus prays our unity will point the world to him. I asked the congregation at Bethlehem Baptist if they thought the world was watching the church celebrate communion and the answer was "no." If World Communion Sunday was meant to point the unchurched to Jesus, I think it went unnoticed by most, if not all the unchurched world.

Over the past few months my understanding of communion has been changing. Some of this rethinking comes out of reading *Prodigal Christianity* by David Fitch and Geoff Halsclaw. Toward the end of the book, the authors explain the way their faith community celebrates communion. Fitch and Halsclaw recognize Jesus, as he institutes communion, is commemorating the Passover. Passover, of course represents one of the milestone redemptive actions of God in the world. Jesus, as he conducts the last supper, is now marking an even greater redemptive act of God as Jesus will die upon a cross to redeem humanity.

Communion symbolically is a remembering of God's desire to redeem those who are far from him. Jesus is willing to sacrifice himself for a lost world. The authors point out that the church

has at times forgotten this facet of communion and thereby empty communion of a portion of its power. When we tack on communion to the last five minutes of a worship service, making it a mere remembrance of Jesus's sacrifice we fail to recognize God's desire to use communion to reach a lost world.

The authors point out communion was not meant to be trapped within the confines of the church. Communion stands as an opportunity for us to engage a world God seeks to save.

You may have heard regional pastors often pray for their servers while dining at a restaurant. There are numerous times Jesus has used these divine appointments to minister to those in need. After reading *Prodigal Christianity*, I have started to see these times of prayer and ministry at a restaurant being a form of communion. A few disciples of Jesus gathered together represent the church (Matt 18:20). Breaking bread together becomes an act of communion (1 Cor. 11:26). We claim the space for Jesus and the table we are seated at becomes a communion table. There, at that table we continue Jesus' redemptive act by ministering to unchurched individuals. Communion leaves the walls of the church and regains its power as we bear witness to Jesus in the world.

The closing chapters of *Prodigal Christianity* helped me better understand, from a theological perspective, what we have been doing as we pray for our servers at a restaurant table. While communion remains important in worship on Sunday morning, Jesus is also pleased when we practice communion at the restaurant after morning worship, becoming witnesses for Jesus in an unchurched world.

World Communion Sunday should not end with the closing hymn of the worship service. World Communion Sunday needs to leave the church so the table in the lunch room at work becomes a communion table. The table in the high school cafeteria becomes a communion table. Our dining room table, when we invite people for dinner, becomes a communion table and the table at our local restaurant becomes a communion table for Jesus. ■





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"It is the Lord your God you must follow, and him you must revere. Keep his commands and obey him; serve him and hold fast to him."

Deuteronomy 13:4 (NIV)

October is Pastor Appreciation Month

I believe that the primary job that Pastoral Leaders have is to help us grow spiritually. As Pastor Kelly Legg of FBC, Norristown often says, we are all "messy, broken people." As such, the Lord is working His work of sanctification in all of us and our job is obedience.

In my pastoral experience, it is this job of helping people get closer to the Lord and learning to obey Him that is the most rewarding, but at the same time carries with it a lot of pain. Pain? Pain. I have found that learning obedience is often most powerfully experienced as we fail the Lord. And then the Lord turns us toward Him, and we learn to follow Him more fully. This is also when we most powerfully experience His grace.

A counselor friend of mine told me once that if we as humans would just listen better to our friends and talk less, they would think us brilliant. Just learning to listen is powerful because many people just need to talk about their learnings out loud. And sometimes just hearing what they feel as they explain it, leads them to apply what they already know from Scripture. Pastors are often those people who are safe listeners.

Quite some time ago I visited with a 95-year-old woman in her home. She was staying with her daughter and they had been arguing. The 95 year old called and invited me over. It seemed her intention was for me to tell her daughter how wrong she was. I listened. They were both pretty upset. It came down to this: the daughter didn't know how to cook, which was a mystery to the mother who taught her how to cook. This became evident and the culprit today was green beans.

Now, this wasn't really true. The daughter was an excellent cook. BUT, the doctor was worried about her mother's cholesterol levels and put her on a special diet. No one told the mother this. The daughter just started following doctors orders. The daughter started to cry as she explained to her mother how important it was to follow the new diet.

Upset about not being told about the new diet, and clarifying her recipe, the mother explained: "I'm 95 years old. I taught you that the best green beans come when you use the bacon grease from breakfast. I'm 95 years old and you're not going to change my recipes now."

I simply shared with the mother, "it sounds like your daughter loves you so much that she was willing to upset you to make sure that she had you on this earth as long as possible. She's just desiring to show you her deep love for you. What do you think?" The mother agreed and reluctantly was willing to try some new recipes. Both were thankful for my visit. All I really did was prayerfully listen.

This life is all about relationships, our relationship with the Lord and how that forms our relationships with others. (Mark 12) Pastors spend a lot of time with the people they serve listening to stories they can never tell. Listening to their hurts and failures and pointing them to Jesus and His grace.

This is Pastor Appreciation month. What if you wrote your pastor an email or note, explaining why you appreciate them. If you are blessed by their sermons, give specifics about why. If you are blessed by their leading of Bible studies, tell them why. If you love the way they always are a great listening ear, let them know how this has encouraged you.

Pastors often worry that they aren't making a difference. This month maybe you could start a new trend, and remind them how much you appreciate them pointing you back to Jesus and the impact this has made on your life. Trust me, this will bless them beyond measure.

To God be the glory ...





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How do you know if a potential ministry opportunity is the right one for you? As a church pastor, this is a question we need to ask ourselves on a regular basis. There are plenty of opportunities out there, far more than we have the resources of time, energy, or money to be a part of, so how do we know if the latest idea is one that will really make a difference for the kingdom of God? The usual answers about talent and passion can be useful guides, after all, few pastors are likely to be much good at trying to be someone they aren't by tackling a problem where talent is lacking, and most pastors will find it hard to stick with a ministry that doesn't speak to the passion that drove them to choose to serve the Lord in the first place. Instead of looking at this from a philosophical or practical viewpoint, let me relate to you the story of how I came to be involved in the para-church ministry that now occupies a great deal of my ministry effort.

In 2012 I was new to Franklin, Pennsylvania. I had just moved here in January with my wife, Nicole, from Michigan where I had been a part-time pastor of a small rural church and a part-time alternative education teacher. The First Baptist Church of Franklin is an established church with a rich history and a beautiful building. The numbers at First Baptist had dwindled in recent years, but the passion of the people for serving God was still evident to me when I came here to candidate. When I accepted the job I knew it would be a long-term process of turning things around, but I also knew I would have the support of the congregation to do it.

In the spring of 2012 I was invited to attend a meeting of the Children's Roundtable of Venango County, a group consisting of local government officials, civic leaders, and local pastors, by another pastor who was unable to attend this particular meeting. Not knowing what the focus of this particular group was, other than guessing that it had something to do with Children's issues, I attended the meeting. The first meeting was informational for me, learning about some of the local poverty related issues that affect children, but didn't point toward any particular involvement on my part. When I attended a second meeting everything changed.

At the second meeting of the Children's Roundtable, it was clear that these local government officials and civic leaders were looking to the local churches as a potential source of manpower to help alleviate some of the previously identified problems. At this meeting, the local CYS solicitor, a good man who I now count as a friend, asked me to speak on behalf of the churches of our county and represent them. Now keep in mind, I was the junior member of anybody's ministerium list, still trying to figure out my role in this community, and certainly not anyone with any particular authority to speak for others. But I was there, and I went with it.

During the next several months, I became more and more involved in the process of talking about what needs the local churches might be able to help address, and how they would go about doing it. What started out as a wholly unexpected request to speak on behalf of my fellow pastors, soon saw me become the default leader of the church

response and the host of the eventual meeting to share this proposed local government and church cooperative effort.

When that meeting of about sixty interested people happened, we were covering ground that I had never imagined would be a part of my ministry here at First Baptist. I do have a history of ecumenical efforts, and this church has its own history of participating in the local food pantry and benevolent fund, but where this was going was far beyond anything that either I or they had attempted before. The basic premise of the idea that was then forming was to build a partnership between the Human Services Department of Venango County {It had begun as a CYS effort, but quickly grew to include Aging, Mental Health, and all the rest} who would provide the information of their clients who needed help beyond what they could give, and local churches of all denominations throughout our whole county.

In November of 2012 I led a second meeting to formulate our initial action plan, hoping to find a core group of people from several churches willing to be on a committee to get this lofty idea off the ground. Once again, I ended up with more than I bargained for. We did find our core leadership group that night, many of whom are still vital to our organization's efforts, but we also found something fairly daunting: our first referral. One of the caseworkers in attendance brought the file of her client who was in need of help, and after getting her permission to share that information, she told us about the significant repairs that this home needed before winter set in. Before we had a name, before we had an official leadership, we had work to do, and that is what we did. We helped someone when we were just trying to figure out who we were. From that day onward, the referrals started to flow in, first slowly, then a trickle, eventually a flood we can barely keep our heads above.

We eventually settled on the name of, Mustard Seed Missions of Venango County. It wasn't a ministry that I went in search of. The way that it functions today has a lot of my input on it, but the primary idea of government/church cooperation belonged to somebody else. I had never been much of an administrator, and my teaching days certainly didn't develop a love of paperwork in me, but when it came time to choose our first president, all eyes were looking at my end of the table.

Why did I do it, why take on this significant daily burden when I already had a church that needed me? One reason is that I felt liberated as a full-time pastor from my years of juggling two jobs and I really wanted to make a difference in this community. A second reason is that I had this strong feeling as the idea began to be formed early in 2012 that it wouldn't get off the ground if one of the local pastors didn't adopt it as his own. Lastly, I just couldn't say no when I was asked if the churches of our county would be willing to help the poor, if we can't say yes to that question, what can we say yes to?

How do you know if a ministry is the right one for you? I'm not sure I have any profound answer to that question from my own experience, but I sure knew that I had found my answer when I agreed to be a part of our para-church, non-denominational, government/church cooperative effort to help the poor in the name of Christ. ■

NEWS FROM ACROSS THE REGION

RIVERSIDE ASSOCIATION

New Hope Christian Church (*Jeff Evans*) would like to share another testimony from their outreach ministry *The Healing Rooms of Del. Co.* For the past couple of months in the healing rooms, we have been praying with and for a lady who was diagnosed with cancer. From the beginning, she asked for us to stand in agreement with her because she believed God told her not to do chemo or radiation. We have stood in agreement with her and continually prayed over and anointed her for healing. She came in tonight to the healing rooms with the news that all tests show no metabolic activity and she is completely healed. Praise The Lord!

1 Peter 2:24 — “who His own self bore our sins in His body on a tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes we are healed.” ■

OTHER ITEMS OF INTEREST

Don't forget to check out our website often at www.abcopad.org! ■

ISREAL 2015 TRIP POSTPONED

Because of the extraordinary events that are ongoing in the Middle East, we have decided to officially postpone the ABCOPAD Israel Pilgrimage trip in 2015. As new plans develop, we will let everyone know. In the meantime, continue to pray for peace for Israel and her neighbors. ■

NEW CHURCH PLANT NEWS

Last month I was able to introduce a little bit of the church planting journey my family and I have been on over the past couple of years. Over the past month we have continued to experience God's incredible faithfulness through many answered prayers (relationships, opportunities, housing, jobs and much more)! We are excited about this coming month especially, as we will be moving into our new home in Mechanicsburg, Pa. on Oct. 15. This move will allow us to finally complete the transition which we have been in for about 10 months now.

Over this past month not only have we been experiencing God's faithfulness, but we have been able to share the story of His faithfulness with different churches in our region (FBC, York; FBC, Lancaster; and Colonial Park Community). Overall now we have been to about 10 different ABCOPAD churches in the past three months, sharing what God is doing through new church planting. When we visit we do so to share the story and ask for prayer (we are NOT asking for money)! It has been humbling to build an incredible prayer network, as we have over 200 people reading our email updates and praying for us. It has been remarkable seeing firsthand God answering those prayers and us being able to share those answers with others. If you would like for us to come and share with you and your church, please contact me via email or phone. Over the coming months we want to visit as many of our ABCOPAD churches as possible to share the story. I am available for pulpit supply, presentations, Association meetings and anything else you can think of — please contact me with dates, we want to connect and build strong partnerships in ministry with YOU! We have been to western Pa. a few times and are willing to travel anywhere, so please don't let that stop you from asking. If you'd like to connect in person I will be at the Biennial in Altoona (Oct. 23 – 24), so make sure you talk to me there. Next month, we will share with you the groundwork we have been laying for the new church through the co-lab process.

Trusting in Him,
David Klock
New Church Planting

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Updates: tinyurl.com/k87u8mb

If you would like to follow what is happening with new church planting, please type in the web address above and sign up for our email updates (you can also read past issues)! ■

PASTOR APPRECIATION MONTH

Dear ABCOPAD Congregational Church Leader,

Do you know what the month of October is set aside for? If you click on the two links below you'll see October is set aside to raise awareness or celebrate all sorts of issues, events and people.

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_commemorative_months

<http://nationaldaycalendar.com/calendar-at-a-glance/october/>

From American Archives Months to Domestic Violence Awareness Month to Polish American Heritage Month to Vegetarian Month, October is set aside for a plethora of good causes. As a result, it's understandable if you are unaware that October is also Pastor Appreciation Month. But since I just told you October is Pastor Appreciation Month, now you know!

I am writing to encourage you to appreciate your pastor this month. You might think recognizing your pastor is not necessary. After all, your pastor is a pastor because he or she's been called by God. But I am here to tell you it is necessary. It is important and it can make a huge difference in your pastor's ministry, including increasing his or her energy for ministry. Pastors are people too and just as your energy for your job is increased when you are recognized and appreciated so it is for your pastor. I know this to be true because it reflects my own experience.

The first church I served, save for one older woman, did not celebrate Pastor Appreciation Month. But I knew October was Pastor Appreciation Month. I would look forward to the e-card the older woman sent each year. I would also tell myself that not being appreciated by the rest of the members or the congregation as a whole didn't matter. But truth be told, it did. I know it mattered because the current church I serve celebrates Pastor Appreciation Month. Their celebration of it makes a difference in my ministry. While not my primary motivation for serving as a pastor, when I feel appreciated and loved by my congregation, it provides added motivation to go above and beyond in serving, caring and loving them. In other words, it makes me a better pastor.

If you are a leader in your congregation and are reading this, I encourage you to gather with other church leaders and plan a way to appreciate your pastor. It doesn't have to be some grand event. Small gestures throughout the month can add up. A cake and a few members speaking kind words after a worship service is one way you can show appreciation. One year my current church gave me a gift certificate to a local restaurant for a date night with my spouse. Another year, they each wrote down a way I had ministered to them in their lives. I've kept them. I read them from time to time when facing a challenge. They help me get through that challenging moment.

Thank you for taking your time to read this letter. Please email one of the ABCOPAD staff leaders and let us know how you celebrated Pastor Appreciation Month this October. We'll compile your unique ideas and send them out to all the churches next September.

Sincerely,

Rev. David A. Braneky
The Baptist Church of West Chester
President, ABCOPAD Ministers Council

p.s. Here's a link to an article with ideas on how to appreciate your pastor: <http://www.lifeway.com/Article/pastor-Ideas-for-Pastor-Appreciation-Month-in-October> ■



CELEBRATION OF MISSION GIVING

September of this year compared to September of last year.

	2013	2014
United Mission Basics	\$38,262	\$49,394
Love Gift	\$1,619	\$3,562
Partners in Ministry	\$15,014	\$18,953
Annual Offerings:		
A.F.C.	\$789	\$637
W.M.O.	\$13,106	\$11,269
R.M.M.O.	\$1,126	\$380
O.G.H.S.	\$8,727	\$13,420

To view your own church's current giving amounts, visit our website and on the home page click on *World Mission Reports*.

The cumulative comparison figures

- United Mission Basics is behind by \$20,482. The decrease in United Missions (includes UMB, Love Gift and Designations) amounts to \$21,860 *less* in actual dollars that ABCOPAD received.
- A.F.C. is ahead by \$2,855. The increase amounts to \$1,076 *more* in actual dollars that ABCOPAD received.
- Partners in Ministry is ahead by \$19,663.

NOVEMBER 2014 DEADLINE

Items to be included in the Nov. issue of Notes & News need to arrive by **noon, Thursday, Nov. 6.**

Please send all material to Carol Bicking for approval.

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Thank you!

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