

Thank You for Your Faithfulness

It has been almost fourteen years ago that I began my ministry with you, the American Baptist Churches of Oregon. I gave the devotional at my first board meeting with you. It was entitled, "The Gratitude Attitude." I centered my remarks around my gratitude for the opportunity, my gratitude for safe travel here from Indiana, and especially my gratitude to God for His Hand moving across my life.

As I end my official time with you, I once again center my thoughts on "The Gratitude Attitude." There is only one problem: I don't have enough space to adequately convey my gratitude to you and to God for all the blessings. Our Board of Ministries and the Annual Gathering Task Force tell me that my official "send off" will be at the Annual Gathering. Perhaps I can say more then. In the meantime, I raise up appreciation on many levels:

Thank you, ABCO Pastors and Congregations, for your faithfulness these years. You have given to the ministries of ABCO and ABCUSA in marvelous ways. None of what we do year after year could be done without this family giving to the rest of the family. Together we have completed a successful capital campaign. We have brought new churches to ABCO. We have launched a concerted effort to help our churches become revitalized. We have recently received a designated gift of approximately \$250,000 from FBC Pendleton for Congregational Revitalization and New Church Planting. We have received another gift of \$50,000 from the estate of Rev. Johnnie Johnson for promoting church planting. We have built cabins, a swimming pool and improved the infrastructure of Camp Arrah Wanna. We have walked together through ordinations, pastoral placement, and a support system for our churches. All of this and more in the midst of difficult times in our nation.

Yes, I am also thankful for what we have *not* done. We have not become embroiled in the controversies of current social issues. We have stayed together and avoided the deep divisions that have plagued many other ABC Regions. We can be thankful for that legacy. It has not been easy...for you or for me. But together, caring about the broader ministries for Jesus Christ, we have done that.

I am thankful to the members of our Board of Ministries for their deep commitment to Jesus Christ. Your Board has worked hard and has been a partner in ministry with me. The Board has served two terms to get us through the capital campaign. You are truly to be commended for your dedication and perseverance. President Helen Elsasser and the entire board will always have a fond spot in my heart.

I am thankful for our wonderful ABCO staff. I am always amazed how much work is done by so few! Our small staff does wonders with their time, talents, and the resources that you make available. Pray for them during this transition time. If you are in the area of the ABCO office, stop in and give Judy, Terrie, and Nancy your greetings and encouragement.

I especially thank my wife and family. Yvonne, Angela and Todd have encouraged me through all the shades of responsibility that accompany this type of ministry. I am so thankful for them!

So, much remains to be done. I will pray for you as each of us moves forward with gratitude for the past and with expectation for the future.

Yours in Christ,

Wm. Wayne Brown, Ed.D.
Executive Minister