

May 2020

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A Word from Paul Gibson ABCGRR Executive Minister

LOVE IN ACTION. Love must be sincere. Hate what is evil; cling to what is good. Be devoted to one another in love. Honor one another above yourselves. Never be lacking in zeal, but keep your spiritual fervor, serving the Lord. Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer. Share with the Lord's people who are in need. Practice hospitality. Romans 12:9-13. That spells out the great commandment, to love God and to love others. Always good words to live by but especially good for our current times.

Virtual Campers. Several pastors in Area IV are encouraging pastors/churches to donate the cost for one or more "virtual campers" to go to camp. That cost is approximately \$225/camper. They already have the camp/camps in their budget and believe that the camps could really use the funds. Prayerfully consider joining them. Make sure you designate it for either Lake Springfield or Blackhawk. Both are great camps.

Special Mission Needs. International Ministries (IM) wants to help our Global Servants stay safe as well as meet all their needs. Unfortunately, International Ministries projects a **shortfall of \$700,000 by November 2020**. Sounds huge, but I know this need is not too big for God. Here are the names of some Global Servants that have a connection to our region: **Longkumer, Deiselberg, Good, Stanton, Rollet, Hegarty, Coats, Parajon and Reed**. To help meet the need, Melissa and I are donating \$1,000 of our Economic Impact Payment to help meet the shortfall. If 699 more do that same thing, the shortfall will be taken care of. Will you or your church consider joining us?

First Baptist Church in Sullivan was struck by lightning a couple weeks ago which caused extensive damage to the electrical system, computers, and other areas in the church. Please be praying for them as they work through this.

Here is some vital information for you and for your churches as you consider reopening. Most pastors we've spoken to are planning to move slowly and carefully.

◆ The Executive Order currently limits gatherings to no more than ten people and requires social distancing. At the same time, the Executive Order does not prohibit religious activities and specifically allows religious organizations to provide food, shelter, and social services, and other necessities of life, to its congregants and needy individuals. Religious organizations are permitted to conduct services and prayer online and with "drive-in" services. (Visit coronavirus.illinois.gov/s/article/what-about-religious-activities).

◆ Visit <https://www.abcusa-insurance.com/> for the ABC USA insurance information to help you with your local church and Covid19 response. This site also has helpful "Reopening Safely" slides and other reopening information.

◆ Visit <https://coronavirus.churchmutual.com/resources/> for helpful resources directly from Church Mutual and Covid19 response.

◆ Visit <http://www.abc-usa.org/coronavirus/> for ABC USA COVID19 Information and Resources.

Finally, no matter what is happening, this is great advice. Be rightly related to God and find your joy there and out of you will flow rivers of living water. Be a vessel that God can pour His love through.



◆ **All events are on hold for now.** In a couple of weeks, we will be making a final decision about our Regional Biennial Gathering that is currently planned for September 24-26 in Springfield, Illinois.

◆ GRR ABWM conference scheduled for July31-August 2, 2020, has been rescheduled to July 31-August 2, 2021 in Alton, IL.

Church Revitalization Initiative May Update

In these days of living through a stay at home order with no corporate worship my heart has been saddened, but I believe God is trying to teach me new and exciting ways to do ministry. In other words, use this time of insolation from friends and loved ones as a steppingstone, rather than a stumbling block. I remember as a little boy a word I used often was zoom. I would get my toy cars, trucks, trains, and of course, my bicycle, and I would zoom everywhere with them or, in the case of my bicycle, I would zoom on it, never ever realizing that 65+ years later that zoom would become a very important part of the new normal for the Church Revitalization Initiative. I have spent the month of April and the early part of May learning how to use this new ministry tool called Zoom. It has been so exciting seeing people face to face – some I haven't seen for some time. Seeing pastors face to face through zoom is as good as it gets apart from being across a table from them. I have been privileged to see a pastoral ministry team using this ministry tool as a part of Sunday worship. The Great Rivers Region has been using this tool for staff meetings, board meetings and area board meetings. Now don't get me wrong, I want this stay at home order to go away and I am praying for a cure, but I don't want to go back so quickly that we may lose anyone to this thing we call Covid-19. This week I read a book written by John Piper titled Coronavirus and Christ and the author says: "I am moved to write because playing the odds is a fragile place to put your hope. Odds like 3 percent versus 10 percent, youth versus old age, compromised health versus no history of disease, rural versus urban, self-isolated versus home meeting with friends. Playing the odds provides little hope. It is not a firm place to stand. There is a better way. There is a better place to stand: A Rock of certainty rather than the sand of probabilities." And of course, that rock is Jesus Christ. My prayers continue to be for all of you as we travel through uncertain times standing on the rock of certainty.

Wally Holt, CRI Coordinator



Mainstream Contact Information: Send your stories of mission/ministry. Please also send the names of new members to nancy@abcgrr.org or melissa@abcgrr.org GRR Website – Interim Webmaster: Julie Romanowski – jr.romanowski@gmail.com.

The two photos below are from **NightLight's** distribution on the streets of Bangkok. People are lined up way down the street now at distribution time. They have increased to 75 in the afternoon and 120 at night. They are so grateful for the provision by so many to make this possible. This neighborhood is being blessed and impacted by your love.



GRR ABWM 2018-2019 Special Project funds were used for the women's dormitory at North East Christian University in Dimapur, Nagaland.



The dormitory name, Wallick-Peterson House, was chosen by the GRR ABWM Board in honor of Sue Wallick and Ruth Peterson.

