

December 2017

“Thanks for noticing me.”

Winnie the Pooh characters were a big thing at our house when our boys were little. We had books, videos, stuffed animals, blankets and a host of other themed items.

Winnie always had a hand in the “hunny” jar. Tigger was bouncing all over the place with an upbeat attitude. Piglet was on the shy side but showed some bravery from time to time. Kanga, Roo, Owl and the rest of Pooh’s friends made for quite an assortment and just about every one of them was camped out on the boys’ beds.

Of all the characters, Eeyore is the one I often remember. The grey donkey with the bow on his tail could be wise, observant and insightful, but he is known more for his downcast, gloomy and pessimistic demeanor. If someone did something nice for him or shared a word of kindness, Eeyore’s favorite response was, “Thanks for noticing me.”

Gwen Williams’ note a few weeks ago said something very similar. If anyone had reason to be downcast or discouraged, it was this sweet widow from northeast Louisiana. Her husband, John, pastored for over 50 years and died in 2010, less than a month after Gwen was diagnosed with breast cancer. The combination of health and financial challenges, plus the heartache of losing a spouse, has been a lot to bear. But Gwen chose to look forward with optimism knowing that a loving God and caring people are actively concerned for her well-being.

In October, our GuideStone employees had a special focus on Mission:Dignity. In addition to raising over \$50,000 in gifts from our staff, we put together “care packages” to send to a number of our retirees. One of those packages went to Gwen and she couldn’t wait to call with a word of thanks. Through tears of joy, she told Karla Myers of our team, “It is so nice to know that someone is thinking about me and cares about me.”

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I want to thank you for sharing generously with the nearly 1,800 retired pastors, workers and their widows who are blessed by the grants they receive through Mission:Dignity. Because of your care and compassion, these faithful men and women are able to buy food, pay for medicine, and not worry so much about many other necessities of life.

But, even more than the financial benefits, they are greatly encouraged by knowing there are people just like you, and churches like yours, that haven't forgotten them, haven't turned their backs, and haven't left them alone in difficult times.

We are grateful for you and are so glad you are part of our Mission:Dignity family. Your prayers and gifts make a tangible difference in the hearts and homes of those we serve and are a continual reminder to the precious individuals and couples we assist that they are dearly loved and remembered.

Thanks for noticing them!

Grace and peace,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John Ambra". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "J" and a long, sweeping underline.

John Ambra

Director of Development