

June 2018

It's another election year and, as you can imagine, it's hard to find agreement anywhere. The major parties are sharply at odds. Candidates within the same party differ on many items. And voters themselves are not in consensus. Even the polls, which are supposed to measure trends and then forecast outcomes, are all over the map.

Disagreement is a natural part of the national political process but it also finds its way into discussions about the work of the church and even our larger Southern Baptist Convention on occasion. That's not necessarily a bad thing since spirited, yet gracious, debate and the exchange of varying perspectives actually can lead to some healthy outcomes. Still, it's a wonderful thing to see God's people come together in agreement.

Galatians 2:10 records just such an instance.

*"All they asked was that we should continue to remember the poor, the very thing I was eager to do."*

It was a pivotal time in the life of the early Church. Paul was recalling the Jerusalem Council (see Acts 15) where he had been given the blessing of the church leaders as they affirmed his call to preach the Gospel to the Gentiles. As they prepared to say farewell and embark on journeys which would separate them geographically and culturally, they made a covenant that would bond them together in ministry: *Caring for the poor would be a priority for them all.*

For 100 years, our Southern Baptist family has remembered retired ministers and their widows in critical financial need. From our early days in 1918 when we received seed funding from the Baptist Sunday School Board and the Rockefeller Foundation, all the way until this month when you shared your generous gift, we have been on a mission to provide dignity to pastors and their families at the crossroads of life and ministry.

Patrick Ramer pastored small churches for 40 years in Alabama, North Carolina, New York and Connecticut with his wife Pat by his side. We've been helping Pat with a grant from Mission:Dignity for the last 18 years following Patrick's death age 67. She sent a note last month that not only expresses her personal thanks but also speaks on behalf of the many other widows and pastors we serve:

*Thank you for your prayers and also for the monthly grant money. There is security in knowing that needs—known and unknown—are being met because of the generous people involved in this ministry. It's a blessing to know that we haven't been forgotten!*

We are so grateful you elected to share so generously this month. Faithful servants like Pat Ramer are perfect candidates for a gift of love and compassion as we reflect on their years of ministry, remember them in their time of need, and remind them they are loved and not forgotten.

And that's something we can all agree on!

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".

John Ambra

Director of Development