



**AMERICAN BAPTIST CHURCHES USA**

***CONVERSATIONS REGARDING MISSION FUNDING  
WITH REGIONAL EXECUTIVE MINISTERS OF ABCUSA  
IN REGIONAL CLUSTER SESSIONS***

**FINAL REPORT**

***“For just as the body is one and has many members, and  
all the members of the body,  
though many are one body,  
so it is with Christ.  
For in one Spirit we were all baptized into  
one body.”***

1 Corinthians 12:12-13

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## SECTION I

### Introduction

In an attempt to respond to ABCUSA's current financial challenges in mission funding, Mission Resource Development (MRD) conducted a series of cluster meetings with ABCUSA Regional Executive Ministers across the denomination. The purpose was to obtain direct information from and to draw upon the wisdom, experience and expertise of the regional executives as we seek to find a new way forward in mission funding.

MRD extended a personal invitation to each executive requesting her/his presence at a small cluster gathering for conversations around the topic of mission funding. The response to the invitation was nearly unanimous (schedules and other personal matters affected the attendance of some who originally agreed to attend), and the attendance held up solidly through the end of the sessions. In some instances, executives made significant personal sacrifices to attend cluster sessions. On one occasion, an executive traveled to the meeting over being in attendance at the birth of a new grandchild. Others made hard choices to attend while stretching their travel budgets; and others rearranged schedules to be present. Of the current 31 executives (the total number of ABCUSA executives during the period of the cluster sessions), 22 came together (one participated in written form). They wanted to attend these meetings and valued the opportunity to discuss the important subject of mission funding, a long-standing need finally fulfilled for many executives. Comments included:

*"Today is the first time the denomination has formally asked for input from the executives."*

*"I had been calling for these kinds of conversations for years, and I am pleased that we are finally having them."*

The executives who participated in these conversations brought with them a total of 156 years of experience as ABCUSA executives. In addition, the four ministers of mission support who participated brought a total of 25 years of experience in mission support ministry.

In the four-to-five-hour conversation sessions, conducted from March to June 2010, participants spoke candidly, with affection for and commitment to ABCUSA, and with the hope that these cluster sessions would produce not just a report, but tangible results with action steps. In fact, one person stated (and some others agreed):

*"I had been around meetings like these before and came against my better judgment, because nothing ever results from denominational gathering like these."*

*"The system is broken so badly that it cannot be fixed."*

Comments such as these indicate the level of mistrust, frustration, discouragement, and yet, flickering embers of hope that may still be burning.

*“We are a Resurrection people who believe in a God of new life and new beginnings out of the most hopeless of situations.”*

In any case, it seems clear that denominational leaders need to work on repairing the broken trust relationship. It is interesting to note that, after a five-month study, the Skystone Ryan report of March 1, 2003 offered the following observation as the first point of its Conclusion:

*“Immediate action must be undertaken to establish, repair and/or rebuild positive relationships between the Office of the General Secretary and regions and between the leadership of the four National Program Unit Executives and the regions.”<sup>1</sup>*

And in the Introduction of the January 2005 McConkey/Johnston International report, we read:

*“We feel it is imperative that leaders and managers throughout the denomination ‘get’ the criticality of these findings and their implications.”<sup>2</sup>*

A recurring question among the executives in the cluster sessions was: *“What is the value of being part of the denomination?”*

The overriding consensus is that (1) the whole ABCUSA structural and operational system with its lack of focus and a clear identity is broken; (2) United Mission (UM) needs urgent and denomination-wide attention and action; and (3) we need a radical change to realign the denomination to meet the ministry challenges of a postmodern world, especially since post-modern giving trends do not give positive support for denominational giving streams like UM.

Time is running out, according to many of the executives. If this attempt in meeting in these cluster sessions also fails, we might find some regions making hard decisions about their future relationship with ABCUSA. In many regions, it seems that churches from time to time feel a stronger bond with their regions than with the national offices because regions have a stronger value added component for the churches than do the national offices.

It was made clear in many instances that some of the comments were not personal attacks on the people at the national offices, and some good work is coming out from some of the national offices. It is time, however, to put everything on the table and examine how the denomination should be structured. The proposed structural change, the one voted down at the 2009 Pasadena Biennial, does not essentially address the direction ABCUSA needs to take at the moment.

**ABCUSA needs a vision that drives structure, not vice versa.** Some of the incremental changes over the years have not been productive. We need to create a new model for the future. We are still catering largely to the Builders and Boomers, but we are losing our younger donors who want to give in new ways. The system has to be flexible enough to appreciate the needs, wishes and passions of all our constituents, including non-ABCUSA appeals, such as Habitat for Humanity.

*“We are in a new period of church life,”* says Jill M. Hudson in her book, When Better is Not Enough: Evaluation Tools for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Church. *“Approximately 50 percent of any community in the United States is basically unchurched.”<sup>3</sup>* And citing Loren Mead, founder of

the Alban Institute, she wrote, “*We are at the front edge of the greatest transformation of the church that has occurred for 1,600 years. It is by far the greatest change that the church has ever experienced in America; it may eventually make the transformation of the Reformation look like a ripple in a pond.*”<sup>4</sup>

In his book, The Postindustrial Promise: Vital Religious Community in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, Anthony Healy supports the point by saying that “*Religious communities are being called to engage with people and society in new ways that are valuable and essential in this disordered and postindustrial landscape.*”<sup>5</sup> Robert Wuthnow agrees with both and adds that there will be “*a strong sector of the American population that will remain firmly committed to the churches and wants a society in which moral values are respected.*”<sup>6</sup>

We must add here that at present the larger religious landscape gives indication that ABCUSA is facing some of the same financial challenges as are many other, if not all, mainline Protestant denominations. In the course of conversations with our executives, information was obtained from several denominational bodies that reflect the widespread nature of our economic challenges. (See Appendix III for denominational submissions.)

In addition, J. Clif Christopher in his book, Not Your Parents’ Offering Plate: A New Vision for Financial Stewardship, commented that, “*in 2006, for the first time in recorded history, gifts to religion fell below 33 percent of charitable giving. Just 20 years ago gifts to religion amounted to 60 percent of all charitable giving. Not any longer. Every year, religion continues to get a smaller piece of the pie.*”<sup>7</sup>

In Passing the Plate: Why American Christians Don’t Give Away More Money, the authors, Smith and Emerson, add that “*the vast majority of American Christians give very little to church, parachurch, or nonreligious charities.*”<sup>8</sup> It seems clear that we are not isolated from the current financial realities facing the religious community in our country, and at the same time there is a wide space open inviting us to participate in some new and creative ways.

There are, however, signs of hope, and our executives believe that we can turn ABCUSA around. For example, at times of compassion giving involving national and international disasters, our people step up to the plate and give. In response to the Asian Tsunami, we collected over \$6,000,000. For Hurricane Katrina, we collected close to \$3,000,000. For the recent earthquake in Haiti, the projection is that we will collect around \$4,000,000. These are indications that people are willing to give and money is available. **The problem is not primarily a money problem.** (See Appendix IV.)

In addition, ABCUSA is at its best when it responds to missions—that is what is in our DNA. Many churches are arranging their own local and international mission ministries, with or without the assistance of the Board of International Ministries, and increasing numbers of churches are making larger contributions to mission projects they have initiated while redirecting their giving away from the American Baptist Mission Support (ABMS) streams to mission projects of their own choosing. People are committed to giving. “*We are a messy family, but we still have a lot going for us,*” remarked one executive.

The conversations with regional executive ministers coalesced around ten themes, generated from five questions distributed to the regional leaders in advance of each session. (See Appendix I.) These themes are presented in Section II along with general recommendations. A more exhaustive, compiled record of what regional executive ministers said in their own words is found in Appendix II in nine conversation areas.

Section III contains **KEY RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMMEDIATE ACTION**. These are grouped as ABCUSA Vision, Mission and Missionary Work, ABCUSA and the Regions, and United Mission.

## SECTION II

### **Emerging Themes and General Recommendations**

The following points represent the ten themes that emerged from the cluster sessions. It is hoped that special attention be given to these themes by appropriate ABCUSA entities in a timely manner to improve conditions in mission funding in ABCUSA.

- 1. The average local church member in the pew has little or no perception of the value of the national offices to her/his local church ministries, nor does this member understand the relationship between the national partners and the regions. At the same time, there are many pastors and congregations that are not engaged with or committed to the denomination. This condition of estrangement impacts mission funding.**

#### **Recommendation**

The national partners in cooperation with the regional executives, through a series of intentional and focused conversations across the country, take the initial step to span this divide. These conversations must include the five “common criteria” for cooperating churches in ABCUSA. These are delineated in Standing Rule 5.1.1. Among them is the expectation to “financially support the mission of the American Baptist Churches USA at a responsible level.” At the same time, denominational leaders need to make a case for the denomination’s value to local churches and pastors.

- 2. Many of our churches, including some of our largest givers, are trending away from UM and are redirecting their contributions elsewhere. At the same time, many of our churches are shrinking in size, have aging congregations, and find that the salaries, buildings and programs consume all their resources. Many of these churches are not giving to anything related to ABCUSA.**

#### **Recommendation**

Together with the Regional Executive Ministers Council, the national leaders conduct a study of congregations that need attention as indicated above and provide a plan to address these kinds of congregational issues.

3. **ABCUSA needs to work more effectively with pastors new to ABCUSA, while recognizing that some of our strongest ABMS supporting pastors come from non-ABCUSA backgrounds. Many of these new pastors do not exhibit a strong relationship and commitment to ABCUSA, and they do not possess adequate knowledge of ABCUSA polity. Many have little or no theological training. A growing number are bi-vocational and as such their energies have multiple competing forces. In many instances, the congregations involved do not grow into strong and mature ABCUSA congregations that contribute to ABMS. In addition, the American Baptist Personnel Services (ABPS) has a shrinking pool of applicants, and some regions bypass ABPS altogether in searching for new ministers. Many of our young pastors are not using ABPS.**

**Recommendation**

National and regional leaders become more intentional about mentoring and orienting pastors new to ABCUSA. In addition, we need to investigate ways of enriching the ABPS pool of candidates.

4. **The total giving structure of ABMS needs to be revised and simplified. The central question is: *How do we fund essential core activities that historically have depended on UM?* Some of the related questions will be: *Are we at the point where we need to consider giving OGS a flat percentage of all offerings for administration and the Representative Process—perhaps ten percent? Should America for Christ and Love Gift be moved to ABHMS and AB Women’s Ministries, respectively, with 10 percent of the total going to OGS?***

**Recommendation**

ABCUSA assembles a task force with representation from appropriate areas, with input from the Treasurers Council, to refine and simplify the ABMS giving structure.

5. **The relocation of the national offices is critical to the vision, mission and ministry of ABCUSA, and denominational leaders should seek to communicate and involve the ABCUSA family directly in aspects of the relocation process to garner the feeling of ownership and identity.**

**Recommendation**

The Building Committee, or whatever group is responsible for the relocation process, seeks to communicate periodically to the ABCUSA family progress regarding the relocation process. The committee should also engage the ABCUSA family in specific aspects of the process with activities like competitions and electronic conversations. Special attention should be paid to engage children and youth to have input in various aspects of the building and its landscape features, as appropriate.

6. **The current emphasis on ABHMS' Missional Church Leadership Experience (MCLE) was highly praised and is perceived as being very effective because it is having a direct, positive impact in local churches. However, other programs and ministry emphases of ABHMS are having little, if any, impact because they are too disconnected from what**

**God is doing through our churches. Some of these other programs or emphases are important but could benefit from increased partnership with regions and connection with the churches.**

**Recommendation**

ABHMS continues to resource local churches (and therefore, regions) through MCLE. In addition, regional leadership would welcome stronger ABHMS ministry emphases that directly strengthen and resource congregations, while providing relevant connections to their local contexts of ministry and mission.

- 7. The General Secretary, in particular, and his office have been at the center of a prolonged period of distress in the ABCUSA family. Because of his visibility and central role in the ABCUSA structure, he has unfairly carried the giant share of the burden and blame for the ongoing family quarrels in many instances.**

**Recommendation**

An appropriate moment in a denominational gathering or setting be created to recognize and affirm the ministry of the General Secretary. The regional executives should take the initiative to bring this matter to the General Board to work out details.

- 8. ABCUSA should be thankful for and celebrate its gift of diversity as one of its major strengths and distinctiveness as a mainline denomination. The largest segment of its diversity is its growing African-American community, now at 53 percent of all resident members. Yet, the core programs and direction of the denomination have remained largely Euro-centered, and the denomination has not yet found a way to work effectively with its African-American members. (See Appendices V and VI.)**

**Recommendation**

Through appropriate boards and committees, ABCUSA should engage in discussion with its African-American community to determine how ABCUSA's future can be more greatly enriched by the presence and contribution of its African-American sisters and brothers. The ongoing work of the McKee Consultation could be helpful in this matter. At the same time, efforts must be made to encourage greater participation by more African-American congregations. Whether singly, dually or triply aligned, in the total life of ABCUSA. The current reporting form seems to be one of the stumbling blocks to facilitating ease of reporting and making financial contributions to the denomination by African-American congregations.

- 9. The presence and contribution of other racial, ethnic and immigrant groups need to be given greater attention in total ABCUSA family life. Groups like Hispanics, Haitians, Burmese, Native Americans and others need to be able to tell us how their particular ministries and cultural backgrounds can be more helpful to ABCUSA, and ABCUSA to them, with regard to stewardship and other matters.**

### **Recommendation**

Regional executives create a task force which includes representation from caucuses to begin focused and intentional conversations with the above-mentioned groups to improve their participation in and contribution to ABCUSA life, including matters like stewardship and ABMS.

- 10. In many instances, it seems evident that American Baptist pastors are reluctant to or choose not to make stewardship and other financial matters an important part of their ministries within their congregations. This is a complicated matter embedded in sensitive pastor-congregation relationships. Some persons who write about the pastor's role in congregational stewardship offer various points of view. For example, J. Clif Christopher comments that *"if pastors choose not to know how their members are doing in financial stewardship, I believe they are committing clergy malpractice. They are denying themselves a tool that could help diagnose a person's spiritual condition, and that should be what all pastors are about."*<sup>9</sup>**

**It also seems that younger clergy particularly have financial burdens themselves, arising in part from seminary costs; this increases the difficulty in engaging congregations in matters of financial stewardship. In addition, some pastors remain disengaged from the process of congregational submission of remittance forms and UM contributions from their congregations. It also seems that many of our churches are one committee member and one crisis away from financial disengagement in the denomination.**

### **Recommendation**

Regions, with the help of the national offices, explore how ABCUSA can work more effectively with pastors on matters related to financial stewardship in their congregations. It seems clear that pastors need to be more directly involved in this aspect of ministry. At the same time, younger clergy should be engaged in conversations around the financial burden that they carry as new clergy.



## SECTION III

### **KEY RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMMEDIATE ACTION**

The executives requested that a set of recommendations with action steps based on this round of conversations be included in this document. They believe that the current condition of ABCUSA life has a direct impact on mission funding. As such, the denomination needs direction to be engaged in urgent and intentional action that will produce sustained improvement in the most critical areas of denominational life. The regional leaders seem ready to do what it takes on their part to move the denomination forward. They understand that they, too, participated in shaping the current reality and take this step to invite the national leaders to shape a new direction for ABCUSA. Comments included the following:

*“In the past 12 years, we have had three highly paid consultants who have told us that ABC is full of corporate denial and arrogance. ABC has not listened. Today we are living with the consequences of failing to act like a family.”*

*“We may not like the results of what comes out of these conversations, but it would be better than a slow death.”*

It seems clear that recommendations accompanied by specific actions that address some of the current conditions identified in these conversations about ABCUSA are unavoidable. These recommendations and action steps are created on the basis of listening to the urgency expressed during the conversations with the executives.

This section contains four key recommendations presented in the form of **Realities**, **Recommendations** and **Action Steps**. These are key concerns critical to the denomination’s future. They call for immediate action.

**Reality #1: ABCUSA Vision**—ABCUSA needs a new and compelling vision that unites the ABCUSA family. This vision should be one that can be embraced by IM and ABHMS. This vision involves the denomination’s brand and the denomination’s understanding of the Gospel message that inspires and creates a passion for ministry as a missional people. One executive expressed the point that we need an initiative *“that compellingly signals to the churches and the folk that they are part of something together with other churches and folk that have both direct local consequences and far-reaching impact. That is, we need an initiative that appeals both to self-interest (addressing the survival syndrome and the yearning for a renewed sense of vision and energy) with other-interest appealing to the key message of the Gospel that loving others—especially those in need, whatever that need may be—is the way of serving God.”* Vision and branding are critical to helping us follow the evangelical appeal of the Gospel.

**Reality #2: Mission and Missionary Work**—American Baptists have always been a people of mission. But “mission” has changed! It is time to discuss how we do mission and missionary work together. The new focus of IM and its MPT program needs to be re-examined in this light. Though achieving a measure of success for IM, the program is having

a serious impact on congregational and regional life, and there are some unintended consequences, which are affecting our ABMS giving.

**Reality #3: ABCUSA and the Regions**—This assumption addresses the regional executives who are, in one way, the closest connection to our local congregations. We acknowledge there is brokenness in the relationship between these colleagues and their national partners, and that healing is needed. Both groups need to acknowledge their role in this brokenness. In addition, the national leaders need to value the unique and important role of the regional executives, and work with them to develop a mutually supportive and effective working relationship, while at the same time seeking ways to empower and help these executives prepare for ministry in these economically challenging times.

**Reality #4: United Mission**—Many of our historically most supportive churches have severely cut back on giving to UM. In fact, some have stopped completely. Overall, of the top 50 churches, their UM giving has fallen off 37 percent since 2005. Of those 50 churches, 40 of them have decreased their giving to UM. Only ten churches in that group increased their UM giving. In these five years, year-to-date giving has dropped to \$940,000. In this same period, Specifics has increased 78 percent to \$216,000. Targeted Giving has increased 456 percent to \$153,000.

Let us look at the situation another way. **As of July 2010, 42 percent of our churches have given nothing to UM in the last three years or more.** (See appendix VII.) If those 2,277 non-giving churches were asked to contribute only \$200 each to UM, the total would be \$455,400. If the 632 churches that have lapsed for two years and the 252 churches that have given nothing for a year were asked to give \$200, their total giving to UM would be \$176,800. This would result in \$632,200 just from non-participating churches. If those 1,834 churches that have decreased their UM giving, together with the 157 churches that have increased their giving, and the 107 churches that have remained at the same level (using the three-year scope of the data from 2008-2010), were asked to give \$500 extra to UM, the total would be \$1,049,000. In effect, in one year, we could collect approximately \$1,681,200 for UM. This amount would reverse the YTD drop of \$447,000 by a wide margin. However, under current conditions in ABCUSA, it is impossible to make this appeal. We do not have the unity to accomplish such a one-year initiative, although we need something as strategically significant and bold to arrest the steady drop in UM while we transition to a new means of funding core denominational ministry.

In his report of November 14, 2007, to the General Executive Council, Dr. Lloyd Hamblin, Jr., acting treasurer and associate general secretary for finance, said, *“While United Mission will continue to be a source of funding for the denomination, there must be some alternative plan developed for our common life together. Without dealing with the funding issue, we will be preparing the way for another financial crisis similar to the one we are currently facing.”*

It is with these four Realities in mind, as expressed by our regional executives, that this section of Key Recommendations for Immediate Action is presented.

### **Reality #1: ABCUSA Vision**

If ABCUSA is to effectively conduct its God-given ministry that has distinguished it over the years, to harness and sustain its historic strength, and to be at its optimum in its future mission and ministry, ABCUSA needs a clear and compelling vision that unites the denomination and binds it together as a missional family. The national partners and their regional colleagues as well, seem stridently out of alignment with one another. This lack of cohesiveness and the failure to own a denominationally-embraced vision negatively affects mission funding and requires immediate and intentional action. The final Recommendations of the Campbell & Company Report of November 1997 identifies this quote from constituents: *“The ABCUSA needs to ‘decide who we are’ before setting out on ‘who and what we are going to be.’”*<sup>10</sup> This need still persists.

#### **Recommendation**

While recognizing the proprietary role of the national partners and each of its 33 regions, ABCUSA creates a unifying and compelling vision that describes its uniqueness and identifies who we are and what it means to be ABCUSA. This vision, accompanied by the search for a branding identity, must celebrate who we are together as an ABCUSA family, our interdependence on one another, and what we can and cannot do alone. This enterprise embraces a ministry initiative that is bold, imaginative, and Gospel-centered to “fire up” our churches to do ministry together and causes individuals to be involved in local community and national settings.

#### **Action Steps**

- ABCUSA brings together a group of persons, including persons from the grass-roots level, to discover a Gospel-based initiative that could stir up the passion and imagination of individuals and churches to respond to God’s message of grace and love in Christ to transform a fallen world.
- ABCUSA assembles another broadly representative group of persons from among all its major entities to create a brand identity that celebrates who we are as an ABCUSA family.
- The urgent nature of this key reality has immediate and direct bearing upon mission funding and in bringing alignment to ABCUSA’s mission and ministry. As such, these groups should receive budget allocations to assist them in securing the best professional help to achieve their goals. (Note: The work of these groups should intersect with each other, or there could be one group divided into two sub-groups. The timeline for completion of the work should be 18 months.)

### **Reality #2: Mission and Missionary Work**

ABCUSA has historically been a denomination that has carried mission in its DNA, and its missionaries were called to missionary work without the added responsibility of fundraising. The current MPT program in which International Ministries is engaged, though experiencing some measure of success, has embedded in it some unintended consequences and has created confusion in ABMS giving categories, particularly in UM giving. The program does not seem to have strong acceptance in many ABCUSA regions.

### **Recommendation**

The current MPT program being conducted by International Ministries needs to be re-examined and clarified to address its impact on mission giving (including WMO), the role of its missionaries with fundraising, and the role of regions and churches.

### **Action Steps**

- The leadership of International Ministries meets with regional executives as a group to clarify, adjust, and seek input on the current MPT program.
- International Ministries clarifies for the denomination its long-term strategy with its missionaries.
- International Ministries clarifies its position within the parameters of the Budget Covenant and identifies in appropriate publications that it is an ABCUSA entity.
- International Ministries implements a clearer and more timely reporting system for the funds it collects from its MPT program and from donations to assist in national and international disasters.

### **Reality #3: ABCUSA and the Regions**

**As middle managers of the 33 regions of ABCUSA, regional executive ministers provide a key link between the national offices and local congregations and are vital to the effective programmatic and structural functioning of ABCUSA. The trust relationship between the national offices and the executives is severely fractured and needs to be repaired. In addition, executives need to be more fully prepared to do ministry in a new economic environment.**

### **Recommendation**

The national partners, through the National Executive Council (NEC), seek to rebuild the broken trust relationship with its regional executives through a series of focused and intentional conversations. Such conversations may need outside facilitators. These conversations will be more productive as attention is focused on experiences that facilitate healing of the brokenness and on equipping executives with the skills necessary to function as fundraisers in their respective regions.

### **Action Steps**

- The NEC takes the initiative to create an environment where meaningful and open conversation regarding trust issues with regional executives can take place and lead to spiritual restoration and celebration of ministry together. This is the initial action for this recommendation and should be undertaken with careful thought.
- Regional executives receive more formal preparation in training sessions to help them function more effectively as CEOs in their regional roles.
- Regional executives receive specialized training in the area of development, especially since fundraising skills are becoming increasingly important in these economically challenging times.
- Foundations, large and small, across this country provide funding in a variety of areas to non-profit organizations. National leaders and regional executives explore the

development of grant-writing skills among regional executives to benefit new and ongoing ministries.

- Regional executives embrace the responsibility and challenge to determine how their individual regions engage in ministry. They adopt the leadership position to think strategically to prepare their regions for a postmodern world in terms of congregational health, transformation and pastoral leadership.

#### **Reality #4: United Mission**

**The continuing decline in United Mission giving negatively impacts the effectiveness and longevity of the mission and ministry of ABCUSA within its churches and regions. One consequence is the increase of a competitive mode among the partners to support their own ministries. ABCUSA needs to decide as soon as possible whether to keep or eliminate UM and to make that decision public. (The majority of our regional executives is committed to and support UM, but in this group there are many executives who understand that UM needs serious attention and that the denomination needs to explore an alternative method of mission funding.) In the interim, ABCUSA needs a major emphasis to undergird UM through the national office, with the full participation and cooperation of the leaders of the national boards (IM and ABHMS) and regional executives.**

#### **Recommendation**

The Office of the General Secretary assumes primary responsibility as the “face” of United Mission for the denomination, in order to promote and support UM giving with specific action steps among pastors and congregations as a special emphasis over the next two years. UM is desperately in need of ownership at the highest level of the denomination to shock it out of its continuing decline over the past ten years. (See Appendix IX.)

#### **Action Steps**

- The General Secretary, or his designee, becomes the face of the denomination as the UM Fundraiser-in-Chief.
- The direct involvement of the other national partners, IM and ABHMS, is critical to provide a team approach, in order to sustain a clear and coherent message, and to demonstrate that “we are united in mission” as a new direction for ABCUSA.
- This new approach is established with a comprehensive two-year plan that includes accountability, goals, regular reports, a value-added component, a method of recognizing churches, and the like.
- This approach includes small teams of regional executives and UM Advocates to assist in this endeavor.
- ABCUSA regions receive approximately 64 percent of gross UM and are UM dependent. As such, regional executives become prepared to assume the leadership role in UM promotion in their regions and create appropriate strategies with the national office to move in this direction.
- Postmodern giving trends do not give UM a favorable longevity. Therefore, the denomination assembles as soon as possible a capable team of persons well disposed to seeking an alternative method of mission funding for ABCUSA.

## **EPILOGUE**

This experience was a significant one for me as a participant-observer. I valued the opportunity to meet with the ABCUSA regional executives. There were, for me, over 33 hours of air travel, more than ten hours of land travel, around twenty-three hours of face-to-face conversations and over 100 hours spent in preparing the final document (and these figures do not include staff involvement). After each cluster session, the transcribed notes were returned to each group for comments or clarification. The revision was then returned to the group, and to all the other groups. This qualitative study was intended to be a collaborative process, and every attempt was made to maintain objectivity.

The cluster sessions were a success for me, as they were for the executives, by their own admission. There were some uncomfortable moments as the groups shared some difficult stories of our life together as a denomination. The executives were honest and open in their reflections. We all experienced these moments as an opportunity to move forward and to grow in our ministries at ABCUSA and to be more radical disciples of Christ. There was also the suggestion to have similar cluster sessions on mission funding with other ABCUSA groups. This experience will not only broaden the conversation, but could also support how major themes are being reinforced or not, while assisting in implementation of some of the recommendations.

It is evident that ABCUSA has been struggling with the same core themes for a number of years. It may be that today we are the ones being invited by the Spirit to break old patterns and find new and creative ways to honor this gift of ABCUSA which is ours. In reflecting on their adjustment to current economic challenges with mission funding, the regional leaders were in agreement that when they have to cut their budgets, it is not about money only; it is about fracturing a community, it is about losing cohesiveness as an ABCUSA family, and it is about cutting back on being able to effectively do ministry. The situation is urgent; the challenge is real; the invitation is to find a new way forward together.

## **Expressions of Thanks**

This report could have not been possible without the generous assistance of the Mission Resource Development staff who dedicated many hours to transcribing the conversations and preparing the final document. We must specifically mention Lorie Smith, Beth Fogg, Bridget Holmstrom, Soozie Whitten Ford and Joyce Lake. We are also grateful for the participation of Judy Flora from the office of the executive minister in Portland, Oregon; Maureen Morrissey from ABCIS; and Marilyn Tyson from the office of Regional Ministries. In addition, the participation of some executive ministers extended to preparing a comfortable space for the conversations and generous meals, and to providing additional comments on the dynamic process leading to the final document.

## FOOTNOTES

- 1 Skystone Ryan, Inc., ***Directional Feasibility Study Report: American Baptist Churches USA, for the Proposed New Covenant Campaign, March 1, 2003, p. 17.***  
This report was presented to the General Board Executive Committee in Kansas City, MO. The purpose of the study was to determine the denomination's readiness to engage in a denominational campaign. Internal conditions at ABCUSA were not conducive to such an initiative.
- 2 McConkey/Johnston International, ***"Get It Together": A Fundraising and Organizational Assessment. A Report to the American Baptist Churches USA, January 2005, p. 2.***  
Among other things, this report indicated that the window of opportunity is closing for the denomination to correct its internal issues.
- 3 Jill M. Hudson, ***When Better Isn't Enough: Evaluation Tools for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Church. Herndon: Alban Institute, 2004, p. 14.***  
The world has changed; the church has not.
- 4 Hudson, ***p. 14.***
- 5 Anthony E. Healy, ***The Postindustrial Promise: Vital Religious Community in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. Herndon: Alban Institute, 2005, p. 21.***
- 6 Robert Wuthnow, ***Christianity in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century: Reflections on the Challenges Ahead. New York: Oxford University Press, 1993, p. 166.***  
Wuthnow raises the question: Will the church be an ethical force in the 21<sup>st</sup> century? He believes so. At the same time, he sees the church as worried, but not as concerned as it should at the significant trends influencing change in society.
- 7 J. Clif Christopher, ***Not Your Parents' Offering Plate: A New Vision for Financial Stewardship: Abington Press, 2008, p.8.***  
People give to church when we offer them a compelling vision of the good their giving will achieve.
- 8 Christian Smith and Michael Emerson with Patricia Snell, ***Passing the Plate: Why American Christians Don't Give Away More Money. New York: Oxford University Press, 2008, p. ix.***  
A lot of charts, figures and statistics to make the point about the reasons that Americans are not giving as much as they should and could.
- 9 Smith, ***p. 8.***

10 Campbell & Company, *Philanthropic Market Study Report and Recommendations: American Baptist Churches USA, November 1997.*

This report was focused primarily on the feasibility of a fundraising campaign for the denomination. It suggests that the national partners must show commitment to work together with a clear and focused vision as a first step. Almost 13 years later, this condition has not been satisfied and indications are that the current financial challenges of the denomination are widening the gap among the ABCUSA partners.



American Baptist Churches USA  
**Mission Resource Development (MRD)**  
Cluster Meetings with Regional Executives  
of ABCUSA



**Purpose and Objective**

There are observable societal forces and denominational challenges at work that adversely affect mission giving. Clusters of region executives will reflect on these challenges with MRD and offer direction for consideration in future changes in regional and denominational funding.

**Method and Scope**

MRD will meet with small clusters of ABCUSA regional executives to garner information, wisdom and insights related to their experience of changing patterns of mission funding. Gatherings will be scheduled throughout 2010 in various locations around the country.

**Questions for Cluster Sessions**

1. How have changing patterns in mission funding directly affected your region and churches?
2. What are the negative factors affecting mission funding in the region? What are the signs of hope?
3. What specific resources are needed for pastors and churches to be generous disciples?
4. What must be considered for future funding streams in your region and within the ABCUSA?
5. How do you envision a future funding pattern for your region? For ABCUSA?

**Results and Looking Ahead**

The information gathered will be shared with regional executives and will help shape the future direction of mission funding streams in ABCUSA.

## Appendix II: *Listening to Regional Executive Ministers*

### Focusing Questions

In preparation for the meetings, participants received the following five questions. Their responses during the meetings provide the corpus of this report:

1. How have changing patterns in mission funding directly affected your region and churches?
2. What are some negative factors affecting mission funding in your region? What are signs of hope?
3. What specific resources are needed for pastors and churches to become generous disciples?
4. What must be considered in future funding streams? Are there non-traditional funding streams that can be tapped?
5. How do you envision a future funding pattern for your region? For the ABCUSA?

A final question, not on the above list, was presented to the groups immediately before each session ended: *“What would make this day or make your time spent in this gathering a successful experience for you?”*

Each cluster conversation was transcribed. We were committed to open and honest dialogue. We were also committed to protect attributions. While the insight of the executives is apparent, it is also evident that comments were not the result of scientific research but were narrative and experiential. Sometimes, conflicting opinions and observations were made. The report falls more strongly on the side of including those comments that had some measure of agreement within the group, even though the thoughts were being expressed by one person. It is also interesting to note that many of the same points were expressed in more than one cluster session. We are extremely grateful for the scribes who took notes at the sessions. We offer our deep appreciation to Judy Flora (ABC of Oregon), Beth Fogg (Mission Resource Development), Soozie Whitten Ford (Mid-American Baptist Churches), and Lorie Smith (Mission Resource Development).

Comments by regional executives that seemed to express some measure of consensus were categorized and compiled in the following nine conversation areas:

- Current Conditions in the Regional Context
- Reflections Regarding the National Offices, meaning the Office of the General Secretary (OGS), American Baptist Home Mission Societies (ABHMS), International Ministries (IM)
- Comments Regarding Missionary Partnership Teams (MPTs)/IM
- Comments Regarding American Baptist Home Mission Societies
- Comments Regarding the Office of the General Secretary
- Comments Regarding African-American/Ethnic Churches
- Resources Needed to Assist Regions and Churches in Ministry
- Positive Statements/Signs of Hope
- Other Matters of Concern

**Current Conditions in the Regional Context**

Executives spoke about the regional environment with regard to mission funding:

- The current financial reality is causing a dramatic reduction in regional staff, which is the only place left to cut budgets. The loss of regional staff contributes to the continuing dissolution of relationships in the ABCUSA family. This strong ABCUSA bonding is a significant value-added component of being ABCUSA. In some regions, budget cuts not only reduced staff, but also downsized or eliminated dedicated office space in an effort to maximize services and programs with reduced staff. There are now only three full-time ministers of mission support in the denomination, and those few persons who have mission support as part of their responsibility share it with other ministry obligations. This situation may be an unintended consequence of the “new” Budget Covenant. There is a sense that the demise of UM is “killing” some regions, since it is the financial cornerstone of regional ministries. An increase in regional offerings and designated giving is helping some regions deal with the decline in UM. At the same time, UM is working well for some regions and not working well in others. But should we get rid of UM? That is the question. The concept of UM was easily sold in the 1950s, but today the mentality of the givers has shifted. Today it seems that people want to give for more specific needs and passions.

The executives identified several contributing factors related to mission funding and the dismal financial picture:

- Churches are experiencing their own financial crises. In some regions, many churches are losing their larger givers, and it is sometimes taking five new givers to replace each former (older) one.
- In some regions, the budget is dependent on a small number of churches for UM giving. If only one or two of these churches change their giving pattern, the results are obvious.
- Demographic and cultural changes are significant. Younger people are not tied to the denomination and have little or no sense of the larger family. Attitudes about stewardship and mission have changed dramatically, and not for the better.
- Churches are increasingly defining mission locally and putting money into poverty relief and needs in their local community. In addition, there are many churches that select their own missionaries and mission projects. Giving to the national office is not often considered when these decisions are made.
- There is a growing desire among churches to give to the regional rather than to the national office. Churches are reducing their giving to UM while maintaining or increasing their support to other partners, including regions. Often regions provide greater value added to the churches than churches see coming from the larger denomination. Churches/pastors see a high value in regional life and many regions are intentionally building on that. In some regions, the regional offering is growing

- significantly without much promotion. The growth of regional offering (which may surpass UM in some regions) reflects both the positive and negative effects of designated giving. Some regions are observing that the decrease in UM giving is roughly equal to the increase in Targeted giving. Because UM has become a declining part of the total regional budget in some regions, less attention is given to promoting UM giving as a matter of survival.
- There are many churches that have never supported UM. There is an impression that some of these churches came into ABCUSA in the 1960s to join MMBB. These churches remain a part of the region, but they do not have any meaningful life or maintain any contact with the region.
- Pastors are one of our weakest links to UM and do not see the relevance of the national structure. Many pastors are no longer making the case for UM. Pastors' indifference to UM may include the fact that denominational communications focus mainly on appeals for money. Another economic reality is the funding of pastors' salaries and health insurance versus advocating for UM (or any other mission giving). Declining church attendance and tight budgets are taking their toll on churches. Some regions are experiencing a problem with pastors who lead their churches away from the denomination. Often these churches are sometimes weak or already giving elsewhere. However, we must acknowledge that even some pastors with an ABC background are leading churches away from the denomination. This is a bigger concern than mission support; the entire future of the denomination should be the concern here.
- The lack of trust in the ABCUSA leadership and the uncertain direction of the denomination have resulted in some executives talking more about family loyalty in their own region as a way to promote giving to UM. However, the effectiveness of such talk is generationally limited. The national office needs to seriously work on rebuilding trust with integrity with both regions and churches. Regional leaders have the impression that there is little willingness on the part of national partners to promote UM. National partners do not appear to have a method for thanking specific churches for their contributions to UM, or anything else, for that matter. The publication of brochures is inadequate and often counterproductive. No one is really making the case for UM support in the ABC family. Why then should the region take on that responsibility? There is a feeling that Valley Forge has failed the regions in not helping to make a strong claim to support UM. The sense of partnership among us has changed, and it is harder to feel that the national office is in partnership with the regions. UM promotion should be the work of all the national partners.
- It is not clear what the national denomination specifically does for the local church. The denomination does not ask for input, just dollars. Relationships are important and must be cultivated. We need a new and holistic way of working with our churches. The nature of the church is changing; the denomination is not. One executive said, *"We are in a state of flux. God is in the midst of it, but there is no clarity yet on where exactly we are going. Just trying to hold on to what we have may not be very productive."*

**Reflections Regarding the National Offices (ABHMS, IM, OGS)**

- The national partners would do well to consider that a healthy region breeds a healthy constituency—and we all are dependent on a healthy constituency. There are two major things needed in any organization: competency and delivery of product. Local churches do not see either coming from ABCUSA. The system became broken in the 1980s. Churches give where the accountability lies. They do not feel there is accountability in our national system. We see that some churches are protesting the actions (or inactions) of Valley Forge by choosing specific giving rather than giving to UM. *“If the horse is dead,”* said one executive, *“you don’t buy bigger spurs. Why would churches keep paying for services they do not get?”*
- The sense of partnership among us has changed. It is harder to feel as though the regions are partnering with the national boards. We still haven’t learned to tell our own stories in a cooperative way. As we compete with our stories to raise funds, designated giving has increased while support for the whole family has declined. ABHMS and IM should take a lion’s share of the responsibility for not enthusiastically promoting UM and for its decline. We are thirty-something separate corporations loosely tied together by a covenant, but not by a common purpose and vision. Regions are asking for greater partnership relationships with the national offices. The terrain is changing, but not in the direction that is helpful to regional life. There needs to be an honest effort for the partners to get real with each other. We need to stop playing games and just decide whether we want to work together or not. Once the decision is honestly made, we can begin to move forward. There are two areas calling for a change: Love Gift (LG) and America for Christ (AFC). It is a very disturbing suggestion that all of Love Gift goes to AB Women’s Ministries. *“If that happens,”* said one executive, *“I will not vote for it to be called Love Gift any longer.”*
- There is a feeling that “Valley Forge” does not care. There is a sense in the churches (and regions) that the denomination is not responsive to their concerns. Churches do not trust them (us!). It feels like you are just sending money to the government. The attitude seems to be one of entitlement. People care about needs, but don’t care if ABCUSA exists. Valley Forge (all offices) is increasingly unable to make a credible claim that it adds value to the lives and ministries of our people and their congregations. The information flow from Valley Forge is virtually nonexistent. The average person does not see any compelling reason to give to Valley Forge. Churches are getting less and less contact and fewer resources from national. The fact that there seems to be no central responsibility for UM has allowed IM and ABHMS development teams to be the voice because there is no one voice. *“But instead of giving up, let’s at least engage in the battle,”* said one executive.
- A clear identity is critically important. We need to leave our silos and become united. We need to think in terms of “we” in order to move beyond survival fundraising. If we cannot become “we,” we must be honest and drop the budget covenant, leaving each group to fend for itself financially. We need a unified reality, but some of the ABCUSA partners are unwilling to participate in finding this unity in our combined ministries. We all need to

clearly understand that national ABCUSA exists to serve the regions and the regions exist to serve the churches. Local ministry is becoming increasingly more important in some areas than denominational values and programs. We have not done a good job of teaching what we believe as a denomination. There is no brand loyalty. There has to be some way for national folk to understand where the surge is. Regions do all the footwork. There is an initial commitment from national and then there is a fall-off. People become cynical.

- We have not yet addressed the looming problem of the 2011 Biennial and the concerns about the proposed new structure. There is a toxic atmosphere in the regions surrounding these concerns, and they are not being listened to. The concerns regarding restructuring are among the reasons many persons are avoiding the larger denomination. We need to talk first about vision, not structure. In addition, people do not see the relevance of restructuring to their own lives and ministry. The connection is not being clearly made. We presently have General Board members coming from churches not supporting UM, and the proposed uncoupled structure will create even less accountability.
- There is a lot of confusion about the purchase of the building by the partners. We need to be careful of the imagery and perception surrounding this. National carries the burden of being perceived as “east coasters,” and this may be the time to change that mindset among many of our people. The space in which we are finally housed must not drive the future. Mission must drive our search for new space and our future as a denomination. How are our local churches going to have any input in any new facility?
- We need to ask hard questions about what we are willing to pay for as a denomination. We must examine all of our administrative functions. Why are there three treasurers in Valley Forge? OGS is a poor name for our central denominational unit. The name does not communicate the range of services there. OGS is really the office that has been hurt the most by the decrease in UM and by the budget covenant. We should move past the discussion in GEC/REMC of the need for the OGS office. We need that office. There is more pain there than anywhere else. Part of the problem is that OGS serves as the face of the denomination, not for the good things, but for the negative things that get dumped there. The good things get credited to ABHMS, IM and regions, etc. We need to create a model for OGS to be credited for the good things.
- Valley Forge has failed us in not collectively making a compelling case for UM, so it is unfair to leave it to the regions to build support for UM. No clear voice is offering the case to the ABC family for UM support. A UM brochure published some months ago was helpful to some, but completely unhelpful to others. Why should the region make the case for everyone else when Valley Forge is not making the case for the regions? There is no willingness from the national partners to make the case for UM.
- The national partners never thank churches for UM or anything else. All the offering money and all their legacy money come from American Baptist churches and individuals. When progress is made, it helps to know that someone (nationally) is paying attention. Instead, there is either no message or a rather negative message coming from national. There is no sense of accountability even on this level.

**Comments Regarding Missionary Partnership Teams (MPTs)/IM**

IM's MPT strategy is problematic for a number of reasons:

- Some of the missionaries themselves are unhappy and frustrated with the program, and they are speaking about their unhappiness. They responded to a call to missions, not a call to raise money. If they become faith missionaries and have to raise their own funding, why stay with IM? But some other missionaries are successful and aggressive. Some missionaries are setting up their own 501(c)3 corporations with little or no accountability to the American Baptist family. For years we used our mission structure as a selling point; our missionaries were able to spend all of their time and effort on the mission without worrying about fundraising. There seems to be a disparity that the missionaries are being called upon to raise their support. But the mission money in IM's endowment was collected for missionaries. We do not see IM's national staff raising money for their salaries. Mission has been in our DNA, but this is no longer the case. Our identity used to be our missional face. As IM has pulled that in, all have suffered. The problem with MPTs is symptomatic. As the ship has begun to leak, folks have not patched the leaks, but started building lifeboats. They do not realize that as the ship sinks, their lifeboats will be sucked down along with it. The donors are not postmodern, even if IM thinks this is the way to go.
- Churches are receiving mixed messages. They are led to believe that missionaries are asking for money, and if the missionaries do not receive the money they need they will have to come home. Churches, therefore, are giving to the missionaries. The plea from IM is pulling emotional strings, but the MPT program is not cooperating well with the regions. However, the campaigns over the last few years have completely undermined UM and WMO. In going after ABCUSA individuals, they have cannibalized mission support and created confusion. Many churches have shifted from the national offerings to supporting a particular missionary because it is more emotionally satisfying. The budget covenant is being ignored, especially by IM, and there is no accountability. What will WMO be used for now? What happens to those missionary dollars that are raised that are over and above what is needed for their support? No one is really clear about the extra dollars raised. What does the 100% goal really mean? It is not clear what percentage of the MPT giving goes to administration. If it is the 20 to 25 percent we are hearing about, some people would be very upset.
- There are lots of unintended consequences to the MPTs. It has created confusion resulting in a loss of giving and a change of allegiance. Ironically, some have come to trust MPTs, but don't trust IM any more. UM does not have a bad rap, but it is hard to compete against MPTs who are there in the flesh asking for dollars. We have historically exploited IM stories to promote UM; now we are paying the price for that. One flaw of IM's model is that they did not recognize that a core part of our ABCUSA identity is that our ABCUSA missionaries did not have to raise their own funding. We have to re-think or re-establish our identity. They changed a value! And they did it with NO discussion! Maybe with our current discussion on structure, we need to spend some more time talking about the core values of the ABCUSA family that we need to embrace as we look to the future.

We don't get info from the other missionaries." This seems to feed into the consumerism mentality.

- Participation has been uneven, and some people feel left out. Some regions have experienced an increase in the number of persons participating in Missionary Partnership Teams (MPTs). People participate in and give through MPTs because they are tangible. MPTs are causing a dramatic realignment of church giving in some regions. But in other regions, the impact has been minimal. IM has made a strategic fundraising decision, and they have gone to a new place, and it has impacted the whole system in unpredicted and unintended ways. Small churches in particular feel "carved out" of the mission enterprise and receive little communication from missionaries.
- The exclusive focus on overseas missions being promoted in some churches is undermining our ability to perceive and respond to the missional needs around us. We don't like to admit that we have needs in the US. Our people are more prone to doing missions overseas. The emotional impact of overseas missions is clear. In some regions, missionaries just have to appear, and people in some churches will give.
- One downside of the new Budget Covenant is that it has allowed the national boards to directly solicit in the regions. Now the region staff is often not even informed when various national representatives are coming into regions—but churches still expect regions to know and be able to explain what is happening. Some regions have intentionally tried to support and work with the MPT system, but have found themselves "cut out of the loop." Executives are blindsided and are at a loss to explain to church members who may inquire, and this further confuses relationships for all of us. If mission agencies are autonomous, we must acknowledge that and move on. We are all paying a financial price trying to support an unsustainable structure.
- Giving to the MPT program today is a more generationally appropriate way of solicitation, but the price is the huge amount of energy each missionary spends competing with other missionaries for funding. Where is the balance point? Shrinking regional staffs combined with the increased emphasis on MPTs is making a big impact on the perceptions of the local church. Some churches then ask, "*Why do we have to give to Valley Forge?*" These churches sometimes respond by redirecting their giving away from UM, WMO and AFC.
- MPTs and Targeted Giving can cut both ways. Natural Church Development theory says that, when a church focuses on improving its one or two weaknesses, all stages will rise. Past experience indicates that when giving to a specific need touches hearts, all aspects of giving increase. Both giving and volunteer energy can be affected.

### **Comments Regarding American Baptist Home Mission Societies**

- As an ABCUSA family, we are all impacted by what happens to others within the family; the whole family is suffering. In our system, ABHMS is supposed to help our churches,



but they are not helping. The system makes no sense whatsoever. We cannot function on the old denomination model. There is no accountability. We are a collection of mission agencies that serves where they are supported by the local church. Corporate models do not work; ABHMS will do what they want to do until they figure out no one is looking. We are culturally different in regions of this country, as well as in the different regions of the churches. ABHMS needs to respond to this reality.

- A question we are hearing is: “*What is ABHMS doing for us and why should we support them?*” The demise of Educational Ministries has been problematic for many churches. It was consumed by ABHMS, and it is now gone. Our churches now go to parachurch publishers and organizations for resources and other needs. The social justice edge of ABHMS seems to have disappeared. Except for the missional church project, MCLE, there is no face to ABHMS. We need a stronger partnership with ABHMS.
- There are “no teeth” to ABHMS’ Children in Poverty issue. We have churches that are concerned with other matters beyond this one. The Children in Poverty initiative is not working well. There is not much support for it across the regions. Some regions tried, but found that they were left on their own. For this reason, they have been reluctant to sign on to the Penny Project. Projects just seem to be cropping up but they are not given the support they need.
- It is really more than the economic issues within the congregations. The concern is that ABHMS and IM sort of stockpile OGHs money. We do not really have a clear and timely reporting system for how the money is being spent.
- Both ABHMS and the region need to see what God is doing in local churches and join the churches in these efforts. It cannot be top-down. It also needs to be easier to participate. A three-year commitment to serve on a committee should not be a pre-requisite for ministry. People are not motivated to embrace long-term committee assignments.
- We are hearing about the two areas that seem to be on the verge of claiming their offerings—Love Gift and America for Christ. ABHMS has said that they should have “their own” offering. If that is the case, that offering can no longer be called America for Christ. They do not seem to have a clue if they think they have seen decline so far. If Love Gift gets all of their offering, the name should also be changed.
- ABHMS should continue the national youth gathering; that would be very helpful. In addition, there needs to be more communication between ABHMS and the Green Lake Conference Center because the Quest youth program draws a lot of young people who are American Baptists.
- At the beginning of New Life 2010, one could trace strong AFC giving because there was a focus. That focus seems to be lost; it may have some potential with the new “the hands and feet of Christ” theme, but that is if we could ever get better cooperation and partnership.

**Comments Regarding the Office of the General Secretary**

- General Secretary Roy Medley is the right person for this moment in ABCUSA. Some of our pastors really respond to Roy's leadership. Some of us should create a way to support and care for the General Secretary, who should be loved and trusted. Roy is a valuable commodity to us. We have a stake in that office. We should rally around him. He has a heart of commitment.
- Roy's extensive travel overseas and locally helps to provide the vision of who we are as American Baptists. We are about mission, and Roy helps us in that role. It is a very hopeful sign that Roy can now take the time to be present elsewhere in the world. He is a wonderful representative of who we are, and we should find a way to affirm his presence among us and in those settings. Some of those people who are most critical are perhaps simply jealous. We affirm the work he is doing.
- OGS is not now recognized in the regions as the primary UM fundraiser. We are not blaming anyone; this is our current reality, and we know that the condition of UM is very important to the General Secretary. We are not thinking that mere letter writing, though important, would solve the UM problem; that is a tactic. In our system, we have intentionally created a system where no one is responsible. We need to re-examine our structures. We are making the appeal here to "change direction."
- We would like to see Valley Forge take ownership of UM. The General Secretary has to become the fundraiser-in-chief to promote UM—and to own whether it succeeds or fails. So far, it has been interpreted by churches as a lack of interest. There should be an intentional ten-year effort on the part of General Secretary to take it on—to set goals and be held accountable for them. IM, ABHMS and all regions must become involved, with the General Secretary in charge. We have to win back the denomination for UM. Unless at highest level it is owned, UM will continue to slide. We need a fundraiser-in-chief right now. UM is a national offering, and no one is in charge. If someone is not responsible, it is not going to get turned around. We either turn it around, or we are going to be in deeper trouble. Someone has to set a goal, rally the troops, etc. The General Secretary is the key person—he is the only person who can turn it around, even if that means that there is a readjustment of responsibilities. The consensus among the executives is that it would "really help" if the General Secretary was "out there" at this critical time with a primary responsibility of promoting UM. We need something different to get through this time and stop the continuing slide downward, and everybody at national has to get involved.
- There does not seem to be a strategy of intentionality in terms of presence by the General Secretary to visit regions, especially with regard to his ecumenical and travel responsibilities. We send our dates in for regional events, so someone should be making sure that he is around and visible. It seems that he spends too much time and energy on his role as head of communion and not enough on local church issues. (See Appendix XI for General Secretary's response.) Other executives expressed some dissatisfaction with his pastoral style of leadership. Still others indicated that these observations may have

more to do with the system and structures which we have created, and which need to be re-examined. The larger point is that most of the people at Valley Forge, including the General Secretary, are doing some very good work.

**Comments Regarding African-American/Ethnic Churches**

- ABCUSA has a lot going for it. In 2010, the ABCUSA is the most diverse denomination in the US. By 2042, the population of the United States will look a lot like ABCUSA, which will be less than 50% Caucasian. In order to get ahead of this curve, we need to allow people of color to lead. They need to have a stronger voice and to be more balanced in their inclusion. But if we get new strategies with the same approach, it will not work with African-American groups. Our biggest challenge, however, is working with our African-American churches and pastors. We have not faced up to the reality that we are largely African-American. Someone has to take some ownership. But it is not only about money coming to the region. At the same time, we should be mindful about not cutting off the old, white people with money. We need funding for any transition that may take place. At the Biennial, the initiative failed because someone wanted to take out any kind of guarantee of ethnic diversity.
- In some regions, it is the African-American churches that are pulling the most weight, although African-Americans have nationally been the most impacted by the recession.
- In many regions, we need to find a way to communicate to other than old Euro-Americans. Our stewardship education has to address a variety of cultures. The emerging and growing segments of ABCUSA must share in the costs. The challenge is how to address this problem without bigotry, either racial or generational. If this is a family, we must all support it.
- Part of the problem is that ethnic and immigrant churches do not have the mindset of funding the denomination. Our historic white congregations are used to the pattern of centralized giving. Ethnic churches have a whole different mindset. Immigrant churches have encountered an existing denomination; it is there and they do not have to support it. They really do not know that they share responsibility. African-American churches are often dually or triply aligned, so they have numerous demands on their mission dollars. They are locally involved, and the leadership of some of these denominations exists with a small central staff. These churches are our future, but they are not providing funding through our existing structure.
- We cannot find one pattern to fit all situations. Our giving system is geared to the Anglo church and is not flexible. We need a hybrid system. We can encourage some churches to give from their budget; others might give monthly or quarterly. For example, a church might devote the offerings from the 5<sup>th</sup> Sunday in any month. In one case, a group of ethnic churches combine their denominational gifts and send them through one church. We need to be open to any system that meets the culture of the congregation. We also

need to change the forms that churches have to use to report their contributions. Those forms have served their time and are confusing and not helpful to the whole ABC family.

- In one small Haitian church, the pastor receives no salary, and expenses are kept very low. However, they were motivated by the crisis of the earthquake and gave very generously. How do we encourage people to give beyond the crisis?
- African-American congregations do not go to their region or to Valley Forge when they need help, but to each other. There is no intent to be disloyal to ABCUSA, but they have a well-developed network. They do not come to regional executives for pastoral searches.
- Maybe there is not one system that fits all. This denomination has gone through huge changes in my lifetime to being a non-majority denomination. And it's remarkable that we've survived. We have basically embraced the change, and find it positive. In some ethnic churches, there are kids and adults. In many of our Euro churches, there are mostly adults. And yet we are operating as an old main-line Caucasian denomination. We need new strategies for the white churches, for the African-American churches, and for the Karen and other ethnic churches.
- Some regions have been experiencing good success in working within immigrant communities, which make up a majority of the populations in some regions. This growing immigrant situation could change our willingness to not touch hot button issues. But we should not shy away from issues regarding immigration, an important matter in our country today.
- We need to do a study to see if there are differences in stewardship education among ethnicities. We need to find out what strategies are necessary in the regions to provide stewardship education for the variety of ethnic groups represented in ABCUSA. Also within individual churches, the dynamics are entirely different. How does stewardship fit into a variety of settings? We need to learn to give pastors tools that work in the setting of their churches.
- We have completely missed the boat on stewardship with our Native American churches. They do not have a clue. If they give, they give to their own. Regarding Native Americans, if they got money together, why would they give it to us? There are historic issues in this situation surrounding the dominant culture. The reason the Karen give is because they were educated by white missionaries. We also need an answer to that (Why would we give it to you?) in the Euro churches as well as in ethnic ones. Perhaps we could create a video with pastors from a variety of racial/ethnic backgrounds sharing their testimonies.
- It would be nice to have a sharp DVD with African-American pastors and leaders talking about giving. It may just have a different kind of impact hearing from peers. African-American pastors need a DVD/brochure explaining giving. Such a project would be easier to accomplish and more cost-effective if we can work together as a denominational team with a clear mission.

**Resources Needed to Assist Regions and Churches in Ministry**

- We need to find new ways to respond to the needs in our regions. Our churches are getting smaller, and we have an aging population who wants things to be as they were in the 1950s. There is an increasing number of young people among us; we have to re-craft our image. What exists now is an old society model. We need a whole new learning process. We are no longer able to sell the institution; we must sell the passion for the mission and ministries. The system needs a shift. Where is the system in place to help the churches? There seems to be no accountability among us.
- Executives need to encourage their individual pastors to place more emphasis on stewardship, but most pastors need help and resources to feel more comfortable talking about money. The bigger challenge is getting people in our congregations to become more comfortable in discussing money and stewardship. We need “pre-resources.” Perhaps we could find a way to share the resources that we create regionally.
- A part of stewardship is also dealing with finances, and there are some good resources out there that people are using. The ABCUSA Web site could really be a help here and provide that. Churches would use it; however, it needs to be downloadable and FREE. Sometimes the best resource is to list them all: here is what is free; we bought a license; you can go ahead and use that. Then they can see that your motive is to “serve” not to just ask for money. Positive stories should be added to the Web site as well as region success stories.
- Region newsletters, where possible, need to be sent to MRD, and a region news corner be created on the ABCUSA Web site. We should facilitate networking among ourselves more than develop resources. We need to develop and share resources with one another, not programs. Maybe it would help to bring new young leadership together to talk about developing resources for the younger generation.
- Regions are responding well to the new Stewardship Facilitator. The use of the term “generosity” instead of “stewardship” is a refreshing change, and many persons have signed up to receive the new GENERO\$ITY e-newsletter.
- Regions seem to be trying to figure out how to do fundraising. It may be a good investment by ABCUSA to get area ministers teamed up with key lay persons to do fundraising training and fundraising together. Executives also need help to know how to develop donors in their regions, plus how to create an annual fund. The denomination should also invest in helping executives become competent in the whole area of philanthropy. It is also becoming clearer that fundraising is a skill needed for this job of being a regional executive. There is a HUGE need for training. We have a disaster in the making when we have people doing the job without the training or skills that they need. As a denomination, we need to do a strategic investment in leadership development on grant writing. There is a huge need here as well. It would also be a terrific idea if a national entity would call, let’s say, five executive ministers together to talk with specific foundations.

- There needs to be recognition of every gift. We need to present an annual certificate to each church because churches display them with pride. We need to do better with making our churches feel that they are doing good work when they give to ABMS.
- We need some resources to help us in our interpretation, stories around UM so that UM is always lifted up on the ABCUSA Web site, e-newsletters, and so on. We need Stories! Stories! Stories!
- ABCUSA should work on video tools that could be translated into a local context. That would be helpful. The time has also come for us to make use of national advertising campaigns and public access media, YouTube, etc. It is best if it is done nationally to promote the brand of “serving as the hands and feet of Christ.”
- As older members are dying out, we need to create new relationships to the family. We need to promote family. We must keep the focus on loyalty and membership in the family.
- We need resources dealing with personal finances. We need trained people to present these, and people who would train volunteers in regions. Paperwork is not enough; we need people sitting together in conversation. In addition, we may be able to get some good results using Mission Advocates.
- Pastors are not good with talking about money and stewardship. We need to help them become more competent. We need reference points. What is a fair salary and benefit package for a pastor? Once conversations begin, doors open. We also need to understand the pastoral weakness in promoting stewardship and provide help and training for pastors. We need training on every level—national, regional and local. Financial professionals tell us that we need to make the ask, but that can be a challenge without appropriate training. A reading list for pastors on stewardship and generosity would help. (Note: A reading list has been published by the Professional Ministry Team.)
- We need to be intentional with leadership development and mentoring. That is a good way to invest time and at the same time build denominational loyalty. We need to be coaching new pastors. This will take time, but if we are loyal to them, they will be loyal to us. The benefits of mentoring go both ways. We should develop volunteer coaching pastors who can work in their own ethnic groups. We can identify key pastors to train to be coaches of smaller groups.
- We could have a competition with an attractive prize for a YouTube type video promoting UM. We could also publish a handbook, “We Are United in Mission.”

**Positive Statements/Signs of Hope**

- Immigrant communities, which make up a majority population of some regions, are contributing to the significant growth in some regions and show signs for a good future for ABCUSA.
- One region overlapped a capital campaign for capital improvements with its camping ministry. This was new money, so it did not impact mission funding or quarterly offerings. In another region, Targeted Giving increased because of Missionary Partnership Teams and their programs, and Targeted Giving and mission giving raised ABMS. One region's largest church is in a full-blown campaign to finish building needs. In addition, a new church joined and positively impacted giving to the region. Another region enjoyed a 90% success rate in the years 2002-2009. The executive minister attributes this success to the church planting they have done. Church Planting is the biggest funding stream there is if done correctly, and it is also a discipleship plan. In another region, the churches have had very benign stewardship practices, and it shows. Their second annual stewardship training event offered detailed fundraising and stewardship workshops, and people are starting to adopt what they have been learning. The response has been very positive. A lot of lay people look forward to the event. It is a sign of hope that people are eager to be trained in stewardship.
- The denomination should be proud of its racial and ethnic diversity. In 2010, the ABCUSA is the most diverse denomination in the U.S. By 2042, the population of the United States will look a lot like ABCUSA, which will be less than 50% Caucasian. We should capitalize on this diversity and represent it as one of our strengths. Many other mainline denominations do not come close to our diversity.
- The culture is moving toward non-specific places of worship, like the ball field after a football game in Livermore, CA. This suggests that if we are creative, the people will come.
- ABCUSA continues to provide good materials for stewardship. The packets that come with a specific offering theme are very good; the churches are thankful for that.
- The redesigned ABCUSA Web site is very helpful with lots of good information on stewardship, and it is a good place to direct people. It has created an opening to talk about the importance of the national office and stewardship. We need to encourage pastors to visit the Web site and to talk more about stewardship.
- ABCUSA has, over the years, done a wonderful job in doing God's work. Although we need to do a better job of alignment, we have some very exciting ministries going on in many of our regions. There are many good persons in Valley Forge who are doing some good work for ABC, and they are to be applauded.
- The regions often hear about reviving the association model. This should be a task for the local churches, not for the region or the denomination. There is strength and joy in

working together, but that cannot be directed from the top down. Something terrific happens when churches work together. Partnership is both theologically and functionally good, and many of our churches, some in rural settings, are joining in strong partnerships in ministry, and they are proud to be associated with ABC and joyfully support ABC.

- The hiring of a Stewardship Facilitator has been very helpful. Her presentations are very practical, usable and friendly. She is a good listener, not just a talker and is effective in her presentations. Comments indicated that she was down-to-earth and spent time listening and asking questions. This was a good step for MRD and a sure sign of hope with our stewardship ministry in the regions. Her GENEROSITY newsletter is a breath of fresh air.
- Resurrection is not a bad Christian concept, and death is not always a bad thing. This, too, can be seen as a sign of hope as we look forward to some resurrection experiences among us. Vacation Bible School is experiencing a resurgence in some regions.
- Other signs of hope include increased giving in times of crisis and giving increases to the region offering. People are able to experience some of the good work being done at a regional level, and this increases their desire to be part of the larger ABCUSA family.
- It was not always the case, but it seems hopeful that our General Secretary can now take the time to be present elsewhere in the world.
- The executives expressed their appreciation for the creation of the spaces to have these conversations on mission funding, and the mere fact of having the conversations was a success in itself. Among other things, they felt heard and valued, but had doubts that any action would result from these conversations, especially considering all the money spent in the past on consultants with no meaningful actions taken. One executive minister said, *"I am here against my better judgment."* Another said, *"I had been calling for these kinds of conversations for years. I am pleased that we are finally having them."*

### **Other Matters of Concern**

1. The matter of accountability was raised in several of the regional clusters. This point emerged in matters related to accountability of national and regional staff and their effectiveness in meeting their responsibilities as an ABCUSA staff person, accountability of certain ABCUSA entities to the Budget Covenant, and accountability of pastors and congregations and their ongoing relationship and commitment to being contributing partners in ministry with ABCUSA.
2. For many executives, the time spent in these cluster sessions was invaluable. The conversations provided a space where they felt heard and listened to, where they could unburden some of the significant issues they are carrying, and where they were able to hear some of the same challenges faced by some of their peers. There were moments of gleeful laughter, tears, joys, celebrations and deeper bonding.



**REGIONAL CLUSTER PARTICIPANTS**

Judy G. Allbee, American Baptist Churches of Connecticut  
Stephen Bils, American Baptist Churches of Oregon  
Paul D. Borden, Growing Healthy Churches, Inc. (American Baptist Churches of the West)  
David L. Carrico, West Virginia Baptist Convention  
Samuel S. Chetti, American Baptist Churches of Los Angeles  
Liliana DaValle, American Baptist Churches of Rhode Island  
Soozi Whitten Ford, Mid-American Baptist Churches / MRD Stewardship Facilitator  
Joan C. Friesen, American Baptist Churches of Greater Indianapolis  
Frank T. Frischkorn, American Baptist Churches of Pennsylvania and Delaware  
Louis E. George, American Baptist Churches of Vermont and New Hampshire  
Susan E. Gillies, American Baptist Churches of Nebraska  
Larry Greenfield, American Baptist Churches of Metro Chicago (in writing)  
Mark Mahserjian-Smith, American Baptist Churches of Pennsylvania and Delaware  
Larry D. Mason, American Baptist Churches of Indiana and Kentucky  
Alan G. Newton, American Baptist Churches of the Rochester/Genesee Region  
Anthony G. Pappas, American Baptist Churches of Massachusetts  
Marcia J. Patton, Evergreen Baptist Association  
Marshall Peters, Mid-American Baptist Churches  
Arlo R. Reichter, American Baptist Churches of Wisconsin  
John E. Simmons, West Virginia Baptist Convention  
Lee B. Spitzer, American Baptist Churches of New Jersey  
J. Dwight Stinnett, American Baptist Churches of the Great Rivers Region  
Lawrence O. Swain, American Baptist Churches of Ohio  
Kenneth Swenson, American Baptist Churches of Massachusetts  
Steven Van Ostran, American Baptist Churches of the Rocky Mountains  
John Williams, American Baptist Churches of the Central Region  
Michael A. Williams, American Baptist Churches of Michigan

**NON-CONVERSATION PARTICIPANTS**

The following persons were not able to attend the conversation sessions, but indicated that they were in favor of the cluster sessions. They read the notes that were distributed and they support the final document coming from the notes:

Walter L. Parrish, II, American Baptist Churches of the South  
James O. Stallings, American Baptist Churches of Metro New York

**RESPONSES TO DENOMINATIONAL MISSION FUNDING**

June 1, 2010 – ABCUSA Document

<p>Keith Mundy Evangelical Lutheran Church in America Email: Keith.Mundy@elca.org</p>	<p>I appreciate the opportunity to respond to your question. We have had two events in the last week to discuss this subject so I wanted to wait until afterward to reply. We have traditionally used a united mission method of funding called Mission Support. This has been and continues to be our primary source of funding on the national level as well as in middle level judicatories. Given the experience of another denomination, which changed their mission funding structure and saw a significant decline, we have been reluctant to move in that direction. This does not mean congregations and middle level judicatories do not give to specific projects. However, we teach an approach that encourages congregations to give 10%+ to the wider church and asks middle level judicatories to give 55%+ to the wider church. This approach recognizes financial gifts to the ELCA as part of the lifeblood of our work together. As reference I am attaching a document with specific statements affirming our approach. (See pages 36-371)</p>
<p>Kenneth E. Neher, CFRE Director, Stewardship and Donor Development Church of the Brethren Email: kneher@brethren.org</p>	<p>The Church of the Brethren still relies on congregational giving for the national budget to the tune of almost \$3 million annually. Individuals also give directly an additional \$ 3/4 to 1 million annually. We also have an Emergency disaster fund, a Global food crisis fund, and an Emerging global missions fund that each receive gifts from congregations, individuals, and district fund raising projects. The EDF almost one million a year. The GFCF almost half a million. The EGMF about \$100,000.</p> <p>We have congregations report at the beginning of the year their expected contributions. We invite gifts from individuals via direct mail and e-mail campaigns. We visit donors and personally ask for support. All this has been evolving for about 15 years. No major changes recently except the addition of a robust e-mail communication system.</p> <p>Hope that's helpful. If you have any other questions don't hesitate to ask.</p>
<p>Donn Engebretson ECC Email: donn.engebretson@covchurch.org</p>	<p>Our primary funding in the ECC is still asking church to give to our shared mission and ministry and this is still the bulk of our support. However, we do have very complicated other ways in which churches support our shared ministry. We several categories of missionaries who raise support through churches and special funds and projects to widen the range of appeal to our churches. But the primary is still asking churches to support our mission as a whole and we do our best to communicate with them what that accomplishes with real people in real places.</p>

## RESPONSES TO DENOMINATIONAL MISSION FUNDING

June 1, 2010 – ABCUSA Document

<p>Bill Steadman Executive Minister Financial Stewardship United Church of Canada Email: bsteadma@united-church.ca</p>	<p>In The United Church of Canada, we have maintained and renewed our commitment to a unified fund for denominational program and mission work as of November 2007, and retain a unified approach to fundraising, except for special appeals that the General Council Executive may approve (recently for Haiti relief; before that a national "Peace Fund" in 2007-2009).</p> <p>The second part is that the General Secretary in a report to the Executive being discussed May 1-3, 2010 on planning for the next three years is recommending that we set up a new fund, "United Cares," which will be under the general umbrella of our united Mission and Service Fund, but which will allow individual donors to direct their givings in at least a general way: "justice work," "partnership work," "community ministry" (or some such delineation). The details of the fund is being worked out as I write this, and the recommendation is just that -- a recommendation. It is a public document (On our website) so I have no hesitancy to share the idea; the details are yet to be forwarded as staff are discussing it this week. It may or may not be approved, but it is the first significant movement to having a "crack" in the unified fund in terms of promotion. The new fund will be pitched primarily to those sympathetic to the work of the church but not necessarily congregational members.</p>
<p>Paula Killough Sr. Executive for Advancement Mennonite Mission Network Email: PaulaK@MennoniteMission.net Together sharing all of Christ with all of creation</p>	<p>I do not believe the Mennonite Church, in any of its forms, has ever had a single denominational united mission funding model. Most area conferences, congregations and individuals choose to support mission, with more and more of that support being specifically designated to a particular project, ministry or worker. Our denomination offers a united option with those resources apportioned to all ministries and programs. This is a small part of our annual funding for mission.</p> <p>I believe our high level of support from donor designation based on passion and interest follows the trend in broader non-profit philanthropy.</p>
<p>Gary Marsh Email: garym@mcnp.org</p>	<p>The Moravian Church has long used a formula to assess members of our congregations over the age of 18, a sum close to \$160 per year. This has been the method of our funding "common ministries" for many years. This summer at our synodical gathering, we will be reviewing a suggested change to that method. The one we are looking at is a percentage of plate and envelope contribution income from each church rather than the specific number per member. To be honest, many churches have "cleaned the roles" primarily to "owe" less, dropping those who are inactive but whom the church still "pays" for. I would advocate a hybrid model like some of our ecumenical partners have, a blend of assessment based upon a percentage of income and to be complimented with congregations voluntarily contributing to targeted ministries as they would like. We are not at all voluntary as some denominations are, but a move to % quota/assessment and voluntary makes sense to me.</p> <p>By the way, common ministries would be like your united mission. For us, it includes support of our board of world mission, theological seminary, camping facilities, music foundation, archives, administrative staff, program staff, etc.</p>



**Evangelical Lutheran Church in America**  
God's work. Our hands.

## **Providing for God's Mission in the 21st Century**

### **Mission Support in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America**

As members of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA), we participate in God's mission for the sake of the world.

**A critical component to our participation in this mission is the financial gifts of the members of the ELCA.** These offerings provide for the mission and ministries of the local congregation, as well as mission beyond the congregation.

We give offerings as a faithful response to God's gracious presence in our lives. These offerings represent a portion of our income and financial resources. For many, the biblical understanding of a tithe, or 10% of one's income, defines this giving. For some the percentage of giving may be lower, for others higher. Proportional giving is an important expression of Christian stewardship.

**Mission support income is the lifeblood of the work that God does through the ELCA.**

Mission support is the portion of offerings that congregations share with synods and the churchwide organization for God's mission beyond the local congregation.

**These funds provide 80 percent of the resources** to enable the ELCA to give priority to beginning new ministries and in accompanying existing congregations as growing centers for evangelical mission. These funds also provide the staff and resources for the development of new leaders, partnership with churches around the globe, alleviating poverty, work for justice and peace, and so much more.

Through mission support individuals and congregations provide the resources for the ELCA to support these major ministries and initiatives:

- ELCA World Hunger
- ELCA Disaster Relief
- ELCA seminaries and colleges
- ELCA and pan-Lutheran social ministry organizations
- ELCA campus and outdoor ministries
- ELCA Book of Faith

When members give designated gifts to these ministries, the gifts are in addition to what is provided through the undesignated gifts given through mission support.

The impact of an extended economic recession has affected the jobs and income of many, and total mission support income has declined. The ELCA also now faces the decision of some congregations to withhold or redirect mission support as an expression of their dissent from decisions made at the 2009 Churchwide Assembly. Together, this has caused significant impact on our shared mission as the ELCA.

From the time of its inception in 1988, the ELCA has been understood as one church in three interdependent expressions:

- Congregations
- Synods
- Churchwide organization

This interdependent relationship is consistent with how the mission and ministries of the ELCA are funded. As partners that share in the responsibility for carrying out God's mission, all three expressions share in the responsibility to develop, implement, and strengthen the financial support of this church. This support makes possible all that we do together as the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

### **The ELCA's evangelical and missional witness in this time calls for more generous giving.**

**Congregations are encouraged to increase their mission support to at least 10% of their member giving.** There are many congregations that already give this much or more and they are acknowledged as faithful steward leaders. New ministries and congregations in the ELCA are developed with the expectation that they will share at least 15% of their offerings for mission support. We understand that proportional giving is a faith practice of congregations, just as proportional giving is a faith practice of individuals.

**Synods and the churchwide organization share the mission support resources given by members through congregations.** The 2007 report of the Blue Ribbon Committee on Mission Funding, "Mission Flowing from God's Abundance," affirmed the principle established in the creation of the ELCA that synods would retain 45% of mission support from the congregations in the synod and share 55% with the churchwide organization for churchwide ministries. Synods that are at or above this percentage of sharing are gratefully acknowledged for their example in strengthening the ELCA capacity for mission.

As members of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, we do mission together through our financial giving. As Lutherans, we have a strong tradition of joining hands to do God's work. We do God's work in ways that no individual, congregation, or synod can do alone. God's mission through the ELCA continues. **Our evangelical and missional witness as the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America is needed now more than ever.**

To learn more, visit [www.elca.org/missionsupport](http://www.elca.org/missionsupport).

### Mission Funding Study Among Several Communion of Christian Churches Together in the USA

*Friends, the following information has been gathered on behalf of Roy Medley, General Secretary of the American Baptist Church. As promised, I am sharing the responses with all who were asked for responses. Responses are listed below alphabetically by church.*

*Dick Hamm, Executive Director, Christian Churches Together in the USA (July 23, 2010)*

**Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)** (respondent Robert Welsh, ecumenical officer and former president of the Church Finance Council, [rwelsh@ccu.disciples.org](mailto:rwelsh@ccu.disciples.org) )

1) Does your denomination have a "united mission" form of raising support? Kind of . . . we have a unified fund, but there is a growing attitude of "each participant will define for themselves how the fund is to be promoted and how the distribution will be made."

2) If so, what has its experience been in the past ten years? I see it as a long, downward turn – not a drastic drop in any one year, but slowly decreasing in actual dollars and therefore, in the bigger hit is in real value of those dollars for mission.

3) Are you augmenting it with other forms of solicitation? Yes, but not in a coordinated way. E.g., individual solicitations, special project requests, etc., etc.

4) Thinking of abandoning it altogether? I haven't yet heard talk of that, though there are those who make the prediction that this is where we are heading (and they do so from "positions of authority" in the church that make them sound like they know what they are saying). There is very little language I hear about a trusting in God in any of these predictions.

5) What do you see as the future in your denomination for united mission. I am personally going to fight to strengthen our unified fund because I believe it is the most faithful and gospel-grounded funding system that we can have as a church. And, I am beginning to hear younger adults come back to an appreciation for such an approach that eliminates the competition between our various ministries that they know in their hearts is not appropriate to a Christian approach to funding the church's mission.

**Christian Reformed Church in North America** (respondent John Bolt, Director of Finance and Administration, [jbolt@crcna.org](mailto:jbolt@crcna.org) )

1) Does your denomination have a "united mission" form of raising support?

The Christian Reformed Church in North America (CRCNA) has used what we now call Ministry Shares for more than a century. The denomination raises over \$24 million each year through this process that makes a request of each organized congregation to contribute an amount per active adult professing member. Currently we are asking for just over \$300.

Ministry Shares supports a portion of nearly every mission agency and ministry as well as our college, seminary and administration. Excluding the college which receives approximately 3% of its annual general operating budget from Ministry Shares (which go directly to providing tuition support for students who are members of the CRCNA) Ministry Shares funds about 30% of the remaining budgets.

2) If so, what has its experience been in the past ten years?

Over the past 10 years, the total dollars received from our churches in the form of Ministry Shares has remained about \$24 to \$25 million. The per-member rate has increased at roughly the rate of inflation, but participation has declined in approximately equal levels.

3) Are you augmenting it with other forms of solicitation?

Ministry Shares funds only a fraction of our budgets. We augment this with requests for special offerings from the churches, donations from individuals, and through grants from governmental and other sources.

4) Thinking of abandoning it altogether?

Every few years, there is a request to rethink the Ministry Share program. However, one of the key benefits of Ministry Shares is the nearly zero cost element of collecting the funds. We estimate that to raise a similar amount from individual donors would cost over 10% of the amount raised. A second key element of the Ministry Share program is its inclusion of all members in the joy of funding the mission work of the church. Solicitation of funds from individuals by fund raising groups often skips over those with lower incomes.

5) What do you see as the future in your denomination for united mission.

We are working to better inform the membership of the work that Ministry Shares enables. It is hoped that by increasing the understanding of what the monies do in the world, we will inspire greater participation in this very effective and efficient program.

**Church of God, Anderson** (respondent Ronald V. Duncan, General Director, [RDuncan@chog.org](mailto:RDuncan@chog.org) )

The World Ministries Budget of the Church of God is totally funded by voluntary contributions from individuals and churches. We have suggested amounts for the church, 5% of their basic budget. We have two types of contributions-basic and restricted or donor intent. The basic budget covers all our infrastructure and program ministry costs. The restricted budget is what the donor indicates. The restricted budget over the last ten years grows in donation while the basic budget declines. We have reduced budgets and expenditures due to the economic downturn. It is a constant requirement for us to solicit donations from the churches. On basic budget we average about 50-60% of our total churches supporting with another 15 to 20% supporting a restricted budget. We are analyzing within the church structure how we fund national ministries from a congregationally based polity.

**Cooperative Baptist Fellowship** (respondent Ben McDade and I serve as the Coordinator of Fellowship Advancement, [bmcdade@thefellowship.info](mailto:bmcdade@thefellowship.info) )

1) Does your denomination have a "united mission" form of raising support?

We have a CBF Offering for Global Missions. However, our Field Personnel also raise funds directly for projects not included in this fund and our Affiliate (self supporting missionaries) raise their own support. We also have an undesignated budget that funds the operations of the organization CBF and helps fund many of our partners, but no more than 25% of their operating budgets, and in many instances the funding is much less than 25%.

2) If so, what has its experience been in the past ten years?

Both of these funds have been trending down slightly, but the designated project giving is trending up.

3) Are you augmenting it with other forms of solicitation?

In addition to our Field Personnel raising money directly for their projects and salaries (some), we identify certain items in our budget that have donor appeal and solicit donors to fund them directly.

4) Thinking of abandoning it altogether?

We are not thinking of abandoning any of these. We will be adding at least 8 communities of practice with each containing a variety of subsets, which many donors will find attractive in terms of financial support and personal engagement.

5) What do you see as the future in your denomination for united mission.  
Uncertain, but we will continue to provide value to our churches and individuals in a variety of ways, which should result in continued funding, albeit may look different than it does today.

**Evangelical Covenant Church** (respondent Gary Walter, President, [gary.walter@covchurch.org](mailto:gary.walter@covchurch.org) )

In the main, we are still very dependent on church giving (about 65% of revenues) for unified support, but are working hard at growing our donor stream and other sources. Even in the best of times, church giving is likely to only grow incrementally, maybe at cost of living, but not enough for expansive initiatives. In the two fiscal years impacted by the economic downturn, church giving to our common mission has been off by a total of about 6%, which we have been able to weather at break even with selective cuts, cost containment, and slightly higher donor giving. This fiscal year we are ahead in church giving by about 3% ytd, but at only a third of our fiscal year it is way too early to say it has reversed a trend. As churches get hit, by extension so do the causes they support. My prayers are for you and our sister denominations as we seek to advance the mission of Christ.

(respondent Donn Engebretson, Executive Vice President, [donn.engebretson@covchurch.org](mailto:donn.engebretson@covchurch.org) )

1) Does your denomination have a "united mission" form of raising support?

We do have a united mission – we currently call it our Mission and Ministry Partnership. It is direct giving from our member churches who also give directly to our regional conferences and a variety of other funds and projects. Our direct giving from churches is about 65% of our budget. We have been working hard at making a better missional case with our churches but we are also initiating new and major work on strengthening our giving from individuals.

2) If so, what has its experience been in the past ten years?

Up until four years ago we were receiving annual increases of anywhere from 7 to 3% a year from direct giving to our budget from churches. For the past three years that number has been steadily declining with two years where the amount was a decrease from the year before. This year we are running a 3% increase over last year but we have a long way to go.

3) Are you augmenting it with other forms of solicitation?

We have strengthened our on-line giving but that has mostly been for special causes and natural disasters. We have strengthened our mailed appeals and that has met with some limited success. We are developing an aggressive and fairly well funded development department which will aggressively go after individual donors.

4) Thinking of abandoning it altogether?

No – even in some years of decline our church giving to our shared mission and ministry remains strong.

5) What do you see as the future in your denomination for united mission.

I do not expect significant increases, but I do expect a steady stream for the conceivable future.

**International Council of Community Churches** (respondent Michael Livingston, Executive Director, [icccml@sbcglobal.net](mailto:icccml@sbcglobal.net) )

The ICCC is a very small church body. We do not have a programmatic structure at the national level and do not engage in unified support for mission. I am the only professional employed by the Council. We do engage in appeals when tragedy strikes--as for example, the recent earthquake in Haiti. For the most part congregations give to mission according to their own priorities, though we do encourage giving (through the Council) to Church World Service in particular.

**International Pentecostal Holiness Church** (respondent Ron Carpenter, Sr., [rcarpenter@iphc.org](mailto:rcarpenter@iphc.org) )



- 1) Does your denomination have a "united mission" form of raising support?  
YES! We use a General Church Tithe of each local church sending in 10% of its monthly operational income for the support of the denomination. A % of this tithe is distributed to each denominational ministry.
- 2) If so, what has its experience been in the past ten years?  
Incredible increase annually until 2009. Then we experienced about a 15% decrease in giving and have had to cut our expenditures accordingly for 2010.
- 3) Are you augmenting it with other forms of solicitation?  
Yes. Individual denominational ministries also have annual fund drives in addition to the General Tithe support. This is extremely helpful.
- 4) Thinking of abandoning it altogether?  
NO. We have done the necessary analysis and our system is working well. The problem is not internal; it is external.
- 5) What do you see as the future in your denomination for united mission.  
External economic factors are having an adverse effect upon the giving. When those factors are reversed, the income will go back up. We are optimistic about the future!

**Moravian Church** (respondent Wayne Burkette, [wburkette@mcsp.org](mailto:wburkette@mcsp.org) )

The Moravian Church does have "united mission" funding through our Northern and Southern Province's provincial budget, to which every congregation is required to contribute a prescribed amount annually. The Provincial Share amount allocated to each congregation is based on a formula that uses membership and operating budget as the two determining factors. Participation in the Provincial Share budget is required of every congregation and on the average amounts to approximately 17-18 % of a congregation's operating budget.

Historically, our Provinces have experienced an annual shortfall in Provincial Share contributions of around 5%; however, in the past three years the shortfall has been in the 10% range. A congregation may appeal to our Provincial Financial Board for some relief from their allocated provincial share contribution, and annually approximately 20% of our congregations request some degree of relief, but they must substantiate the circumstances that prompt the request for relief.

We are in the process of restructuring our Provinces, and the assumption is that once the new structure is in place, the average Provincial Share per congregation will be in the range of 10-12% of the congregation's operating budget (exclusive of benevolences and debt service). Our congregations are simply not able to support Provincial Share mission at the level they have in the past.

**Open Bible Churches** (respondent Jeff farmer, President, [Jeff@openbible.org](mailto:Jeff@openbible.org) )

Primary source: While the "person in the pew tithes to his or her local church," all of our credentialed ministers (including pastors of churches) tithe to the denomination. 65% of that tithe money goes to support the national office (all departments except international missions, building, administration, etc.) 35% goes to our five regional offices. [We do have rebate programs for emergency situations in churches, i.e., the church planter sends in his tithe, but we rebate it for the first year to help him get the church launched.]

All chartered/affiliated churches in OBC give 5% of their UNDESIGNATED offerings to support the regional office in which they are located.

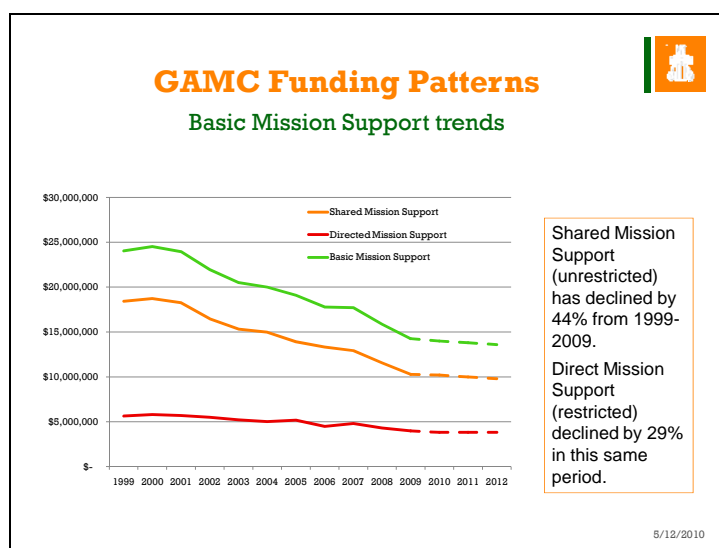
All churches are also expected to participate (at a level they choose) in supporting our World Evangelism Program – 50% of which goes to support our international missions department. Career missionaries are expected to itinerate and raise their own support.

Any department that chooses to may create a fund development program to solicit funds directly from ministers, churches, businesses, individuals, foundations, etc. We believe money follows vision and passion. People give to the vision that sparks their passion(s).

The economy is affecting about half of our churches so far. Wherever there is strong, visionary leadership, however, ministries are still advancing and growing.

**Presbyterian Church USA** (respondent Linda B. Valentine, Executive Director, General Assembly Mission Council, [Linda.Valentine@pcusa.org](mailto:Linda.Valentine@pcusa.org) )

- 1) Does your denomination have a "united mission" form of raising support? Yes
- 2) If so, what has its experience been in the past ten years?



In the chart above, the orange line (shared mission support) reflects undesignated/unrestricted giving to the General Assembly Mission Council of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) from congregations through regional governing bodies. The red line (directed mission support) reflects an opportunity for congregations to designate this form of giving to a particular area within the unrestricted budget. The green line (basic mission support) is the total of the orange and red lines. As noted in the chart, “shared mission support” (undesignated receipts) are down 44% over the past decade.

3) Are you augmenting it with other forms of solicitation? Basic Mission Support (the combination of shared mission support and directed mission support mentioned above) accounts for 13.7% of funding for the General Assembly Mission Council. Other forms of giving are:

- 15.4% -- Churchwide Special Offerings – four offerings per year for designated mission causes
- 25.7% -- Other specific appeals, including Presbyterian Disaster Assistance and Extra Commitment Opportunities (for specific projects)
- 0.9% -- gifts from the Presbyterian Women organization
- 2.7% -- Bequests and annuities
- 24.0% -- Endowments
- 14.1% -- Sale of resources, curriculum, and program services
- 3.0% -- Other sources
- 0.5% -- Unrestricted reserves

The General Assembly Mission Council, therefore, has a variety of funding streams. Each is important for the mission budget of the denomination, but several are in decline. Our experience is that donors more and more seek to designate how their contributions will be spent. Therefore, we are moving to more clearly elevate the value of designated giving, alongside undesignated giving. In 2008, our General Assembly adopted its most recent mission funding strategy paper: “Funding Christ’s Mission throughout the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).” The task force which wrote the report found that:

The Mission Funding challenge facing the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) is not a problem of resources, as Presbyterians are a people with abundant resources.

The primary challenges for the mission funding system of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) are low awareness of Presbyterian mission, a preference for designated gifts, and a complicated funding system which is difficult to understand.

Therefore the task force recommends:

- A raised priority for the communications and funds development activities of the General Assembly Council,
- A revision of the funding system to broaden the availability of designated mission funding opportunities, and
- A new emphasis on simplified giving and accountable processes, so that all Presbyterians might more clearly understand the need for funding and accountability for how the funds have been used.

As a result, the General Assembly directed that the General Assembly Mission Council develop a system of giving which preserves the equal importance\* of both shared and designated mission giving as faithful ways to support Christ’s mission.

4) Thinking of abandoning it altogether? **No.** The undesignated system of giving, while in decline, is still the preferred method of giving for some parts of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). Rather than eliminate a form of giving, the GAMC is seeking to elevate the importance of all forms of giving as faithful ways to support Christ’s mission.

5) What do you see as the future in your denomination for united mission? Every indicator suggests that donors will increasingly seek to designate their contributions to areas in which they have a passion and vital connection. The [Lake Institute on Faith and Giving](#) at Indiana University describes well this paradigm shift in religious giving:

The Old Paradigm	The Emerging Paradigm
Donors give because of a moral obligation	Donors give because of donor cultivation
Institution-centered	Donor-centered
Institutions are to be trusted	Institutional trust must be earned
Institutions are autonomous	Donors are collaborative partners
Budgets are need-driven	Giving is value-driven
Financial focus is insular	Financial focus is global

Giving is a contribution	Giving is creating change
Fundraising is raising money	Fundraising is nurturing generosity
Income sources are limited	Income sources are diverse
The gift as an end to philanthropy	The gift as a means to philanthropy
Different from business	Embraces business principles and practices

6. If you don't have a "united mission" form of giving how do you fund your various ministries and denominational infrastructure? While we do have a "united mission" form of giving, we continue to look at other methods of funding mission within the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), and in correctly allocating the costs of mission. For many years, infrastructure was funded with undesignated gifts, so that 100% of designated gifts could be used directly for their particular designated cause (without respect to the infrastructure that was required to properly receive, account for, distribute and monitor the funds). As undesignated forms of giving have weakened, one of the first areas to feel the impact was infrastructure, jeopardizing our ability to properly use designated funds. As mandated by the 2008 mission funding strategy "Funding Christ's Mission throughout the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)" we have begun to allocate all costs of doing mission to the respective areas that utilize infrastructure. In this way, the cost of doing mission can be more accurately reflected, since it includes both direct and indirect costs.

Presbyterians also have another funding stream for some forms of infrastructure...especially the cost of overseeing the work of the church through committees that provide fiduciary, strategic, and generative forms of governance. This form is a per capita assessment by which each Presbyterian is able to participate in the costs of overseeing the work of the church.

**Reformed Church in America** (respondent Laura DeVries, Director of Development, [ldevries@rca.org](mailto:ldevries@rca.org) )

Denominational funding is a challenge! We are just getting it off the ground for all areas other than Global Mission. I'm not sure what you mean by "united mission fund" but assume the question is about a "general fund" which can take on various names. We launched ours this year. It is called the Great Commission Connection. We set it up as a "designatable" general fund and will be building the donor base over the next 2 years using a modified campaign model. Folks can designate to Multiplication, Revitalization, Leadership, Discipleship, Mission or General. Our staff, budget, communications and even audit, and ends policies align to these same areas so gifts to these areas can support operating costs.

Our next phase will be to create a membership type of club like you might see at a college or seminary - President's Club or something like that. In our structure, Wes is called the General Secretary and I don't think people will be anxious to join a General's Club or a Secretary Club :) so we're going to need to get creative and we will offer some benefits for members.

Our tension will come as specific needs/appeals to individual constituents present. We will need to continually decide which is most important at each given time. For example, at year's end, do we appeal for the well in Africa or the general support. In any case, we will have at least one general fund appeal a year and make a focused effort on individual calls in the last quarter of the year.

Additionally, we are charging a small percentage to every gift to cover the costs of our development efforts (5 FTE development reps who are regionally assigned which is also new for us).

This is freeing up more dollars for infrastructure because development staff will no longer be supported by assessments (dollars charged to each church for denominational support and programs) but be tied instead to contribution income. We will begin our new system in October.

There is another model which we used which might also answer your question. There was a period when the RCA used a Mission as One model which consisted of a grant from Global Missions to the General Fund to help support local mission and infrastructure. This was used for quite some time, and GM was over funded so it worked for a while. GM never really liked the model and when their support began to decline (churches doing their own thing instead of through the denomination) it ceased to be a viable model- probably a good thing because people really did not understand it and it seems to have highlighted some tension and division between local and global.

This whole general fund strategy is really new for us. We implemented it in January and are testing and tweaking as we go. We are seeing some positive signs but effective development takes years to build.

**Salvation Army** (respondent Lt. Col. Mark Israel, National Secretary for Program,  
[Amanda.Collinson@usn.salvationarmy.org](mailto:Amanda.Collinson@usn.salvationarmy.org))

1) Does your denomination have a "united mission" form of raising support?

The Salvation Army does not have a strictly united mission form of raising support. Most support to The Salvation Army comes from external donations. We do however have a World Service fund raising campaign, which most of the funds from World Services go to overseas missions.

2) If so, what has its experience been in the past ten years?

not applicable

3) Are you augmenting it with other forms of solicitation?

not applicable

4) Thinking of abandoning it altogether?

not applicable

5) What do you see as the future in your denomination for united mission.

The Salvation Army does not have any plans for any major restructuring of fund raising.

6) If you don't have a "united mission" form of giving how do you fund your various ministries and denominational infrastructure?

As noted above, most fund raising issues are from external donations. Each level of administrative headquarters is funded by a 10% administrative charge paid upward to the next level of administration.

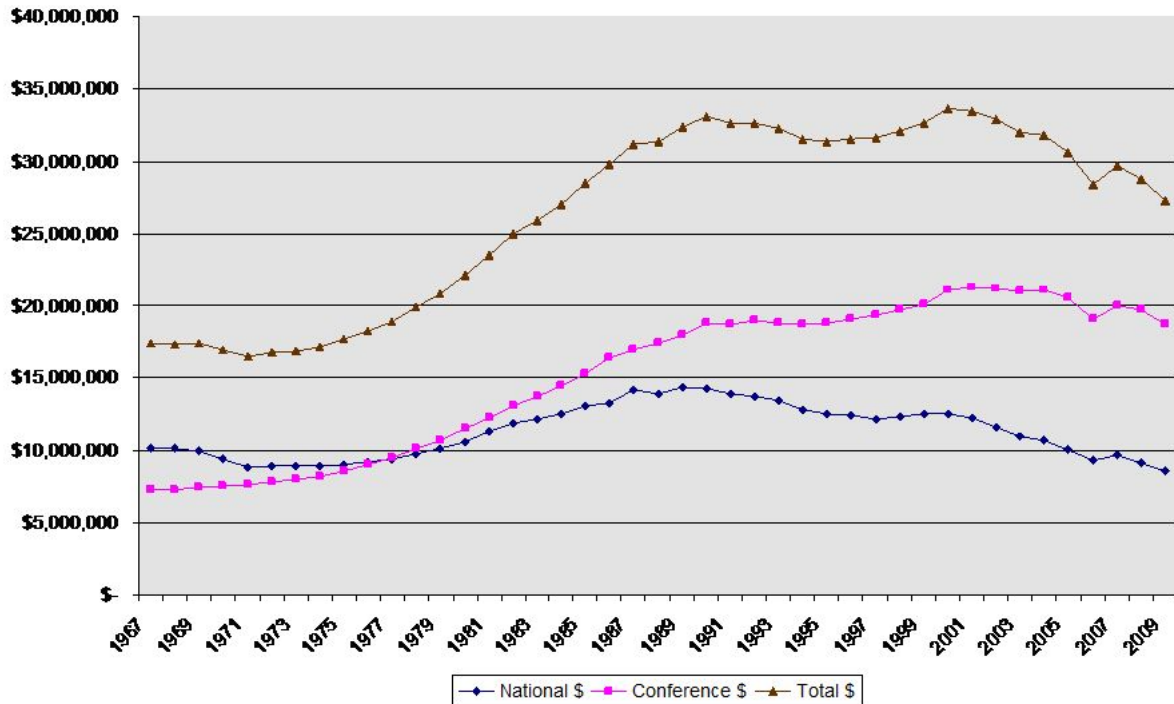
**United Church of Christ**(respondent Jane Heckles, Minister for Our Church's Wider Mission (OCWM) Development, Local Church Ministries, [hecklesj@ucc.org](mailto:hecklesj@ucc.org))

1) Does your denomination have a "united mission" form of raising support?

Since our birth in 1957, the United Church of Christ has had a congregationally based Basic Mission Funding program called "Our Church's Wider Mission." Every local congregation is encouraged to make a voluntary gift for wider mission each year. There is no formula or assessment method used. Local Churches send their gifts for this purpose throughout the year to their regional Conferences. Each conference retains a certain percentage of those gifts for regional mission. It is the Conferences' largest source of revenue. Each Conference sets its own retention rate by a vote at their Annual Meeting. Each Conference then sends on a portion of the aggregate of congregational basic mission funding to the national setting of the church according to that Conference's "sharing ratio." The Executive Council of the UCC then apportions that to across the UCC ministries in national and global mission.

In addition to this Basic Support (unrestricted funds) the UCC also receives 4 "special offerings" each year which are congregational gifts with restricted purposes described in the offering promotional materials. They are: One Great Hour of Sharing, Neighbors in Need, Christmas Fund for Retired Church Workers and Strengthen the Church.

**NATIONAL & CONFERENCE SHARED BASIC SUPPORT**



3) Are you augmenting it with other forms of solicitation?

Both Conferences and the national church are stepping up their fundraising with individual donors. We spend much more time now working with the churches that have the financial capacity to give more, rather than spending equal cultivation with the 50 member church and the 1,000 member church.

4) Thinking of abandoning it altogether?

No, we are not considering abandoning this program!

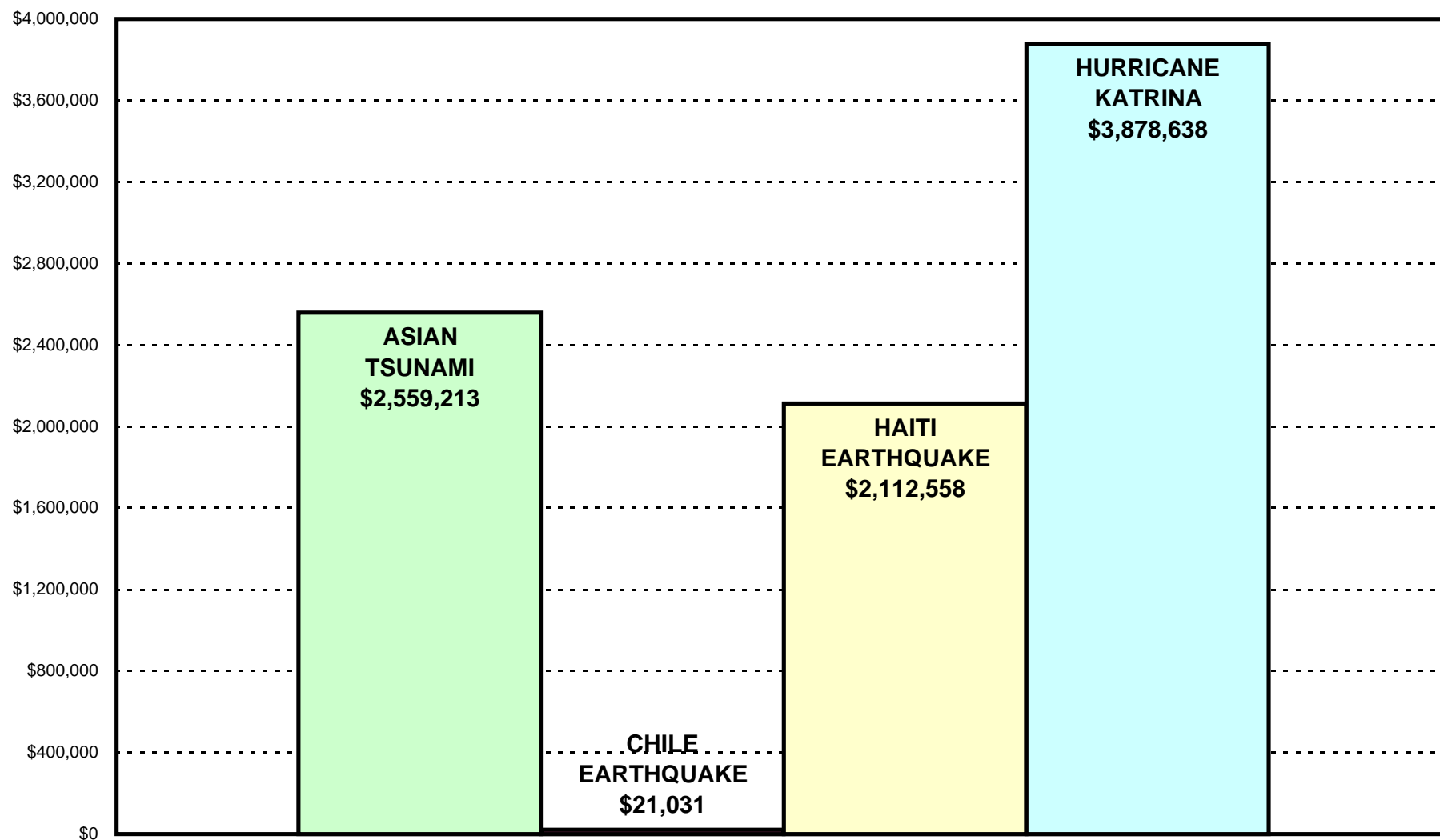
5) What do you see as the future in your denomination for united mission.

We foresee a plateau of congregational giving. The capacity of the current local churches of the UCC is diminishing and so we assume that basic mission funding will continue to trend down. We hope to lessen this impact through stronger relationships with churches of greater financial means. We are working at legacy giving to continue to grow the amount of investment income available in the national and global ministries.

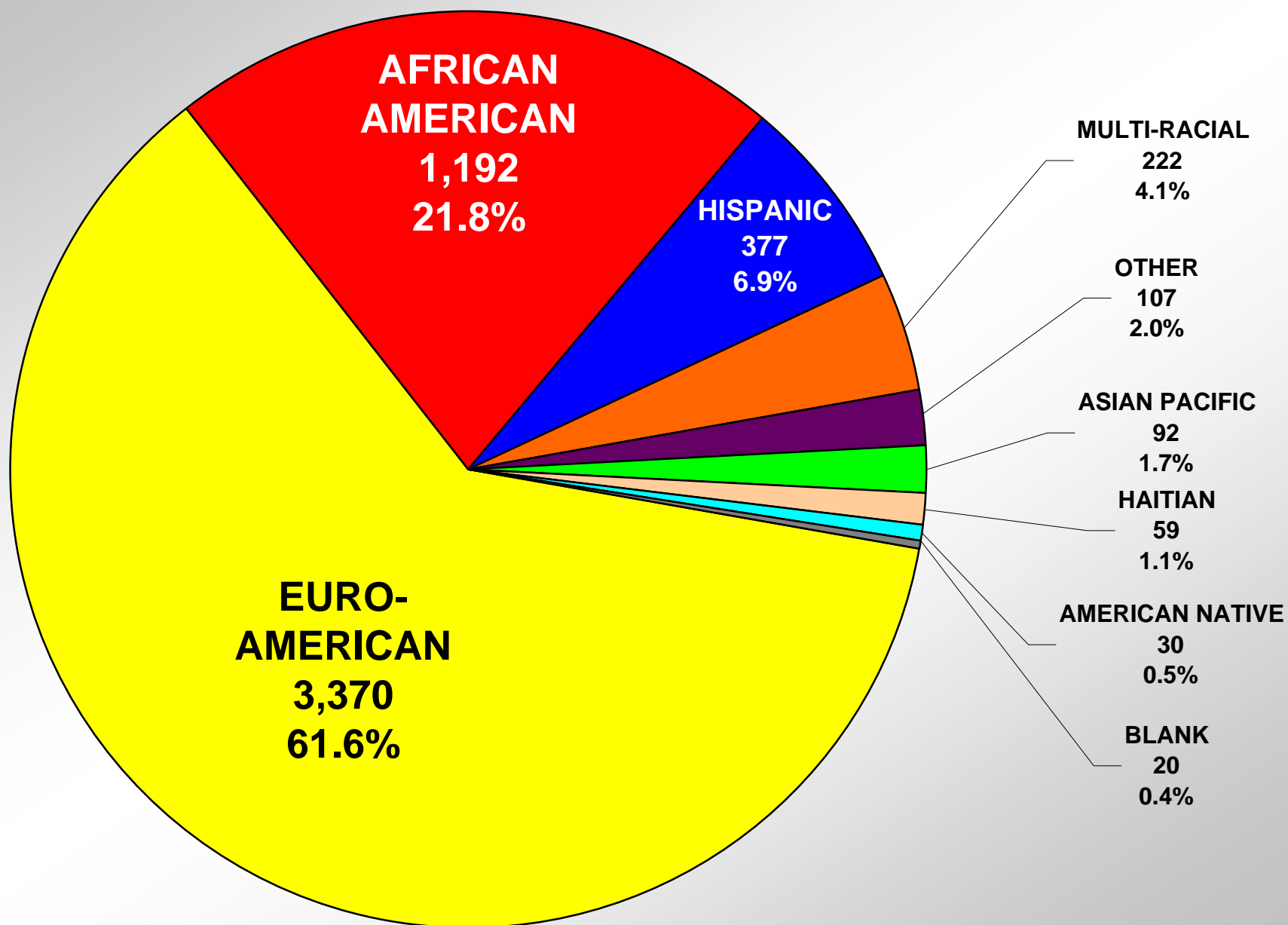
Vineyard USA (respondent Bert Waggoner, National Director, [bwaggoner@vineyardusa.org](mailto:bwaggoner@vineyardusa.org) )

All of our missions fundraising is local church based rather than through centralized giving. This is serving us well.

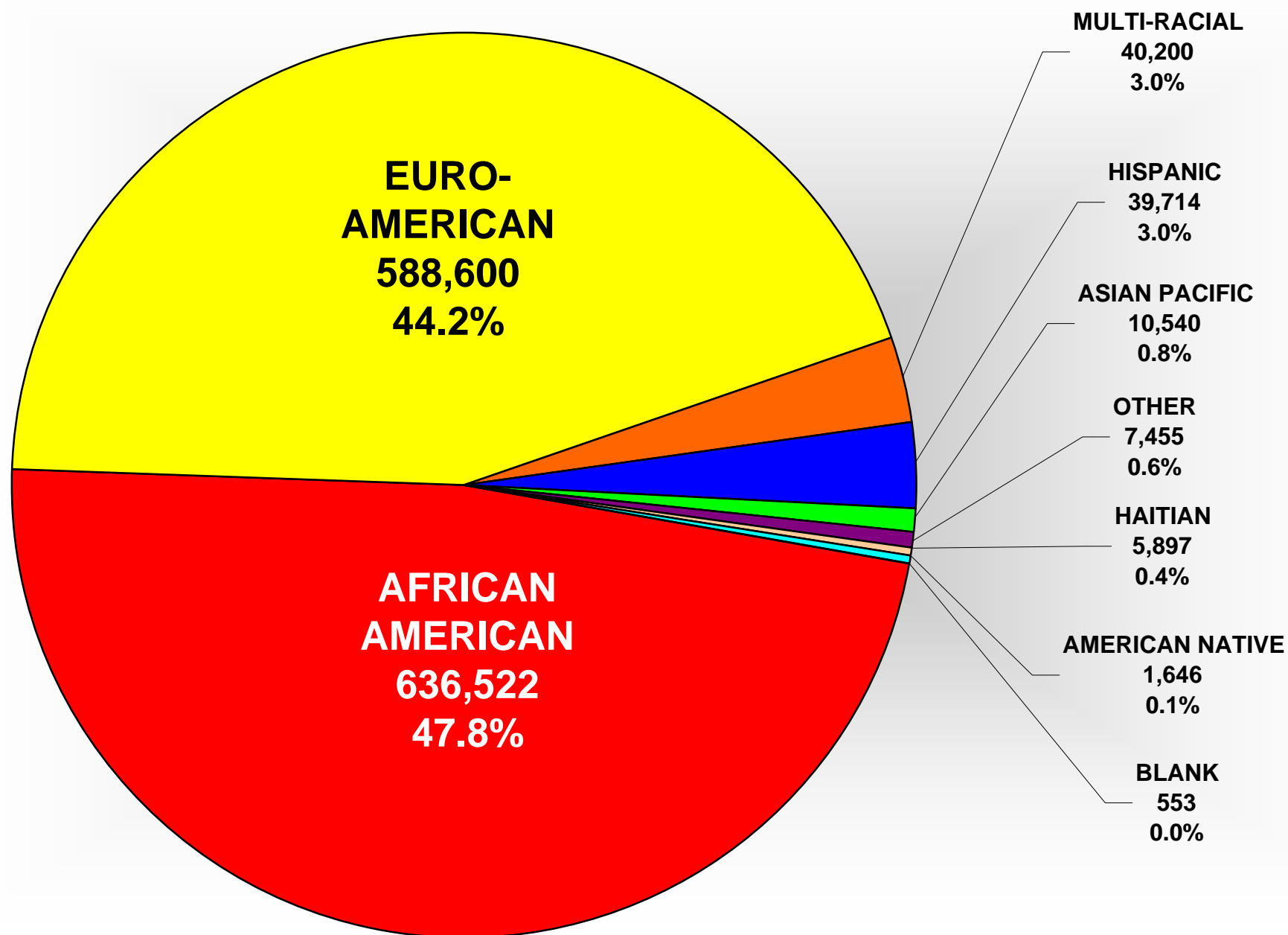
## ONE GREAT HOUR OF SHARING GIVING TO SELECTED PROJECTS



## 2008 ABC CHURCH COUNT BY ETHNICITY





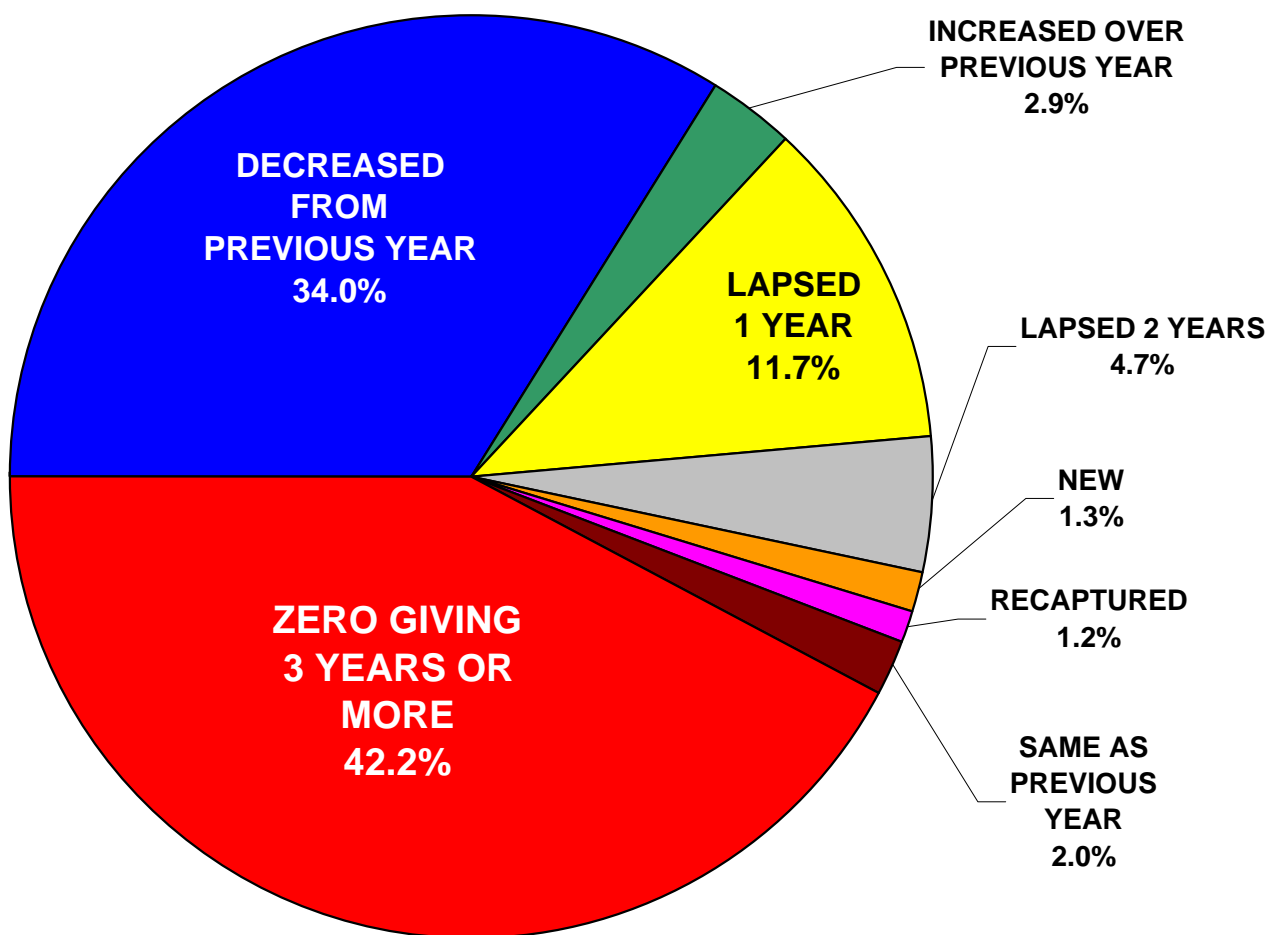
**2008 ABC TOTAL MEMBERS BY ETHNICITY**

## American Baptist Churches USA

### UNITED MISSION BASICS GIVING FROM CURRENTLY ACTIVE CHURCHES

<u>CATEGORY</u>	<u>CHURCH COUNT (BY 2010 GIVING)</u>	<u>% COUNT</u>	<u>2008 Full Year Giving</u>	<u>2009 Full Year Giving</u>	<u>2010 Giving YTD thru JULY</u>	<u>\$ DIFF. 2008 to 2009</u>	<u>% DIFF. 2008 to 2009</u>
DECREASED FROM PREVIOUS YEAR	1,834	34.02%	\$9,898,667	\$9,811,837	\$4,973,194	(\$4,838,643)	(49.31%)
INCREASED OVER PREVIOUS YEAR	157	2.91%	\$384,705	\$270,653	\$405,401	\$134,748	49.79%
LAPSED 1 YEAR	632	11.72%	\$1,014,416	\$1,011,224	\$0	(\$1,011,224)	(100.00%)
LAPSED 2 YEARS	252	4.67%	\$337,469	\$0	\$0	\$0	0.00%
NEW	70	1.30%	\$0	\$0	\$33,532	\$33,532	100.00%
RECAPTURED	62	1.15%	\$76,800	\$0	\$62,356	\$62,356	100.00%
SAME AS PREVIOUS	107	1.98%	\$198,658	\$141,959	\$141,959	\$0	0.00%
ZERO GIVING 3 YEARS	2,277	42.24%	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	0.00%
<b>TOTALS:</b>	<b>5,391</b>	<b>100.00%</b>	<b>\$11,910,715</b>	<b>\$11,235,673</b>	<b>\$5,616,442</b>	<b>(\$5,619,231)</b>	<b>(50.01%)</b>

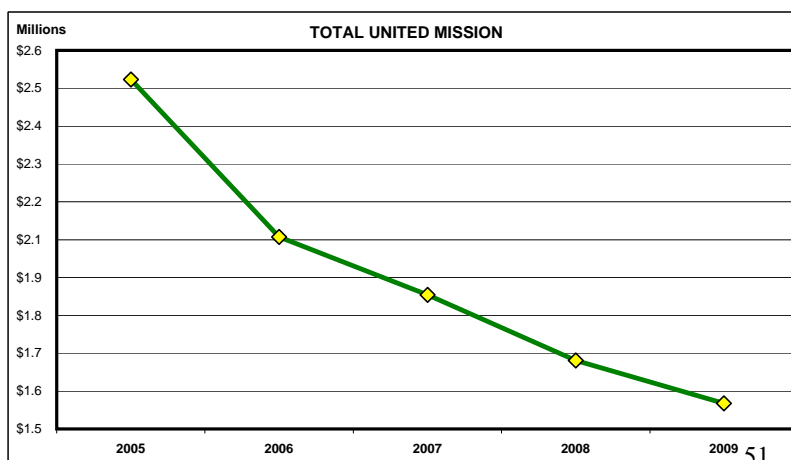
### 2010 UNITED MISSION YTD THRU JULY



## 2005 TOTAL UNITED MISSION

## TOP 50 CHURCHES (excepting Puerto Rico)

CHURCH DATA						TOTAL UNITED MISSION						
RANK	REGION	PIN	CHURCH	CITY	STATE	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	\$ DIFF. 2005 - 2009	% DIFF. 2005 - 2009
1	CEN	3121	Prairie Baptist Church	Prairie Village	KS	\$119,039	\$77,616	\$118,093	\$91,558	\$80,416	(\$38,623)	(32.4%)
2	CHI	2295	North Shore Baptist Ch	Chicago	IL	\$106,607	\$62,808	\$97,614	\$36,798	\$89,604	(\$17,003)	(15.9%)
3	GRR	2265	FBC - Champaign	Savoy	IL	\$86,270	\$68,717	\$75,060	\$81,867	\$50,132	(\$36,139)	(41.9%)
4	WV	5811	South Parkersburg BC	Parkersburg	WV	\$76,855	\$77,207	\$67,949	\$71,158	\$71,703	(\$5,152)	(6.7%)
5	RMT	6375	Calvary Baptist Church	Denver	CO	\$74,660	\$81,071	\$69,363	\$23,880	\$22,917	(\$51,743)	(69.3%)
6	WV	5738	Fifth Avenue BC	Huntington	WV	\$71,341	\$71,318	\$75,087	\$82,958	\$89,003	\$17,663	24.8%
7	PHL	5078	First Baptist Church	Lansdale	PA	\$70,572	\$71,556	\$21,646	\$12,626	\$12,872	(\$57,700)	(81.8%)
8	CEN	3100	First Baptist Church	Olathe	KS	\$64,679	\$68,986	\$70,571	\$62,304	\$56,425	(\$8,254)	(12.8%)
9	WV	5673	Baptist Temple	Charleston	WV	\$64,536	\$72,200	\$66,214	\$61,253	\$58,363	(\$6,173)	(9.6%)
10	WV	1468	First Baptist Church	Saint Albans	WV	\$63,532	\$64,040	\$63,831	\$67,952	\$68,807	\$5,275	8.3%
11	WV	5745	First Baptist Church	Hurricane	WV	\$61,715	\$8,062	\$8,077	\$8,030	\$7,750	(\$53,965)	(87.4%)
12	WV	1444	Crab Orchard Mssnry. BC	Crab Orchard	WV	\$57,958	\$1,893	\$1,571	\$1,343	\$1,724	(\$56,234)	(97.0%)
13	PAD	2136	Calvary Baptist Church	Newark	DE	\$55,562	\$58,268	\$56,278	\$60,654	\$52,522	(\$3,040)	(5.5%)
14	WV	5676	Emmanuel BC	Charleston	WV	\$54,906	\$28,891	\$28,914	\$27,920	\$28,077	(\$26,829)	(48.9%)
15	MI	6215	Hartford Memorial BC	Detroit	MI	\$54,150	\$54,125	\$54,020	\$45,035	\$4,700	(\$49,450)	(91.3%)
16	INS	2730	First Baptist Church	Plainfield	IN	\$53,664	\$38,675	\$29,454	\$21,304	\$28,557	(\$25,107)	(46.8%)
17	DAK	5412	First Baptist Church	Sioux Falls	SD	\$51,858	\$48,714	\$45,394	\$47,806	\$42,839	(\$9,019)	(17.4%)
18	CEN	2974	First Baptist Church	Chanute	KS	\$51,386	\$50,900	\$51,385	\$54,237	\$43,195	(\$8,190)	(15.9%)
19	PAD	4964	West Shore BC	Camp Hill	PA	\$49,762	\$60,091	\$54,537	\$46,088	\$54,736	\$4,974	10.0%
20	WV	5660	Simpson Creek BC	Bridgeport	WV	\$49,541	\$20,719	\$0	\$0	\$0	(\$49,541)	(100.0%)
21	IN	2670	First Baptist Church	Madison	IN	\$49,041	\$33,631	\$36,610	\$42,988	\$43,523	(\$5,519)	(11.3%)
22	WV	5807	Emmanuel BC	Parkersburg	WV	\$48,240	\$47,602	\$33,912	\$32,822	\$33,100	(\$15,140)	(31.4%)
23	EBA	5592	First Baptist Church	Seattle	WA	\$47,867	\$61,656	\$52,698	\$52,917	\$39,356	(\$8,511)	(17.8%)
24	RMT	691	First Baptist Church	Colorado Spgs.	CO	\$43,805	\$41,630	\$36,187	\$15,023	\$15,025	(\$28,780)	(65.7%)
25	IN	56	First Baptist Church	Vincennes	IN	\$43,425	\$40,455	\$293	\$273	\$236	(\$43,189)	(99.5%)
26	RMT	2036	First Baptist Church	Pueblo	CO	\$43,178	\$9,228	\$3,488	\$9,038	\$3,524	(\$39,654)	(91.8%)
27	GRR	2460	Central Baptist Church	Springfield	IL	\$42,492	\$1,200	\$1,812	\$1,376	\$1,409	(\$41,083)	(96.7%)
28	PAD	4952	First Baptist Church	Bethlehem	PA	\$41,743	\$28,690	\$34,653	\$40,784	\$41,927	\$185	0.4%
29	IN	2624	First Baptist Church	Hope	IN	\$41,561	\$15,257	\$23	\$0	\$0	(\$41,561)	(100.0%)
30	GRR	2364	First Baptist Church	Jerseyville	IL	\$40,829	\$34,928	\$41,977	\$32,541	\$26,192	(\$14,638)	(35.9%)
31	IN	2514	First Baptist Church	Bedford	IN	\$40,808	\$44,042	\$12,112	\$934	\$632	(\$40,175)	(98.5%)
32	INS	2628	First Baptist Church	Indianapolis	IN	\$40,531	\$40,373	\$40,350	\$40,512	\$40,000	(\$531)	(1.3%)
33	GRR	2433	First Baptist Church	Peoria	IL	\$40,378	\$41,806	\$39,703	\$42,700	\$44,406	\$4,028	10.0%
34	IN	2739	First Baptist Church	Richmond	IN	\$39,676	\$38,550	\$40,870	\$42,231	\$33,569	(\$6,107)	(15.4%)
35	CEN	3085	First Baptist Church	Mc Pherson	KS	\$39,058	\$38,500	\$30,000	\$20,000	\$20,000	(\$19,058)	(48.8%)
36	CEN	3070	First Baptist Church	Leavenworth	KS	\$38,518	\$38,992	\$38,733	\$40,215	\$38,395	(\$123)	(0.3%)
37	CEN	3113	First Baptist Church	Parsons	KS	\$38,194	\$37,108	\$34,074	\$31,744	\$25,569	(\$12,625)	(33.1%)
38	NJ	4022	Flemington BC	Flemington	NJ	\$37,892	\$32,809	\$44,191	\$35,921	\$50,451	\$12,559	33.1%
39	WV	5648	First Baptist Church	Beckley	WV	\$37,362	\$37,451	\$8,203	\$2,487	\$2,449	(\$34,913)	(93.4%)
40	OR	4909	First Baptist Church	Portland	OR	\$36,000	\$39,100	\$33,000	\$36,000	\$36,078	\$78	0.2%
41	CEN	3096	First Baptist Church	Newton	KS	\$35,880	\$16,650	\$19,626	\$28,427	\$21,728	(\$14,151)	(39.4%)
42	VNH	3958	First Baptist Church	New London	NH	\$35,582	\$36,455	\$35,879	\$35,684	\$0	(\$35,582)	(100.0%)
43	NE	3878	Benson Baptist Church	Omaha	NE	\$35,502	\$44,870	\$42,782	\$43,701	\$39,080	\$3,577	10.1%
44	OH	4874	Market Street BC	Zanesville	OH	\$35,139	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	(\$35,139)	(100.0%)
45	NYS	4238	United Church	Canandaigua	NY	\$35,065	\$40,725	\$42,025	\$40,000	\$42,446	\$7,381	21.0%
46	CEN	2995*	First Baptist Church	El Dorado	KS	\$34,422	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	(\$34,422)	(100.0%)
47	WI	5928	First Baptist Church	Madison	WI	\$34,280	\$34,347	\$31,094	\$30,693	\$19,069	(\$15,211)	(44.4%)
48	CEN	2983	First Baptist Church	Coffeyville	KS	\$34,118	\$33,779	\$38,705	\$34,814	\$31,340	(\$2,778)	(8.1%)
49	CEN	3033	First Baptist Church	Hutchinson	KS	\$33,276	\$30,243	\$27,030	\$29,328	\$27,325	(\$5,951)	(17.9%)
50	INS	2662	First Baptist Church	Lebanon	IN	\$32,484	\$32,394	\$34,159	\$31,313	\$33,077	\$593	1.8%
TOTAL:						\$2,514,933	\$2,058,332	\$1,889,246	\$1,699,234	\$1,574,246	(\$940,687)	(37.4%)
*FBC, El Dorado, KS withdrew from ABC in 2006.												
# PARTICIPATING:						50	48	47	46	45	# INCR. 10	# DECR. 40



**American Baptist Churches U.S.A.**  
**10 YEARS OF TOTAL UNITED MISSION GIVING**

REGION	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	TOTAL \$ DIFF.	TOTAL % DIFF.
CEN	1,939,601	1,914,907	1,844,315	1,743,787	1,646,763	1,509,689	1,310,490	1,282,846	1,225,623	1,172,372	(\$767,229)	(39.6%)
CHI	151,579	131,121	169,314	128,827	107,935	166,923	117,201	160,424	85,184	154,685	\$3,106	2.0%
CLE	83,959	86,837	87,912	76,504	77,490	72,780	64,586	55,995	50,363	36,386	(\$47,573)	(56.7%)
CT	438,389	429,468	430,701	422,861	383,036	388,514	350,442	365,901	372,457	332,040	(\$106,349)	(24.3%)
DAK	188,152	190,621	185,582	179,512	182,843	181,192	162,067	164,831	165,198	155,515	(\$32,637)	(17.3%)
DC	95,627	78,819	70,703	59,191	37,818	36,759	47,963	29,415	30,512	25,294	(\$70,333)	(73.5%)
EBA	NA	NA	69,136	138,077	133,090	130,058	174,271	160,073	151,258	150,161	\$12,085	8.8%
GRR	1,452,431	1,424,904	1,402,376	1,321,237	1,338,089	1,243,953	977,149	882,932	818,082	763,677	(\$688,754)	(47.4%)
IN	1,759,484	1,740,739	1,772,168	1,749,000	1,651,483	1,455,345	1,116,464	982,951	938,362	913,922	(\$845,562)	(48.1%)
INS	343,447	339,751	350,473	304,460	264,960	245,295	255,591	235,437	247,499	224,036	(\$119,411)	(34.8%)
LA	151,411	170,693	174,710	146,003	138,648	127,830	118,723	146,335	124,631	114,650	(\$36,761)	(24.3%)
MA	811,322	840,071	844,653	782,611	799,081	777,512	688,966	624,757	644,844	568,993	(\$242,329)	(29.9%)
ME	441,220	447,382	431,843	434,425	440,772	423,102	383,839	361,728	330,807	293,259	(\$147,961)	(33.5%)
MI	837,003	882,217	782,590	760,659	711,873	540,481	444,566	409,114	377,667	283,595	(\$553,408)	(66.1%)
MID	566,138	562,568	539,793	488,763	489,825	449,296	408,251	405,229	413,343	374,033	(\$192,105)	(33.9%)
MISC	25,742	19,971	29,639	42,004	34,605	59,609	24,967	21,257	27,381	19,270	(\$6,472)	(25.1%)
MNY	234,165	250,891	265,607	268,717	232,794	247,803	234,066	215,315	170,138	145,681	(\$88,484)	(37.8%)
MTR	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	52,743	101,035	116,055	116,706	\$15,671	15.5%
NE	363,166	352,386	331,188	323,454	311,835	307,212	288,604	296,313	292,247	286,588	(\$76,578)	(21.1%)
NJ	813,844	814,596	817,523	735,146	767,572	669,723	641,879	625,955	610,805	559,473	(\$254,371)	(31.3%)
NW	713,244	643,521	613,174	456,031	173,141	138,112	124,271	183,921	158,253	125,504	(\$587,740)	(82.4%)
NYS	806,708	786,199	810,948	758,092	706,879	687,448	664,490	627,345	625,605	540,110	(\$266,599)	(33.0%)
OH	1,000,554	979,777	942,346	898,137	842,573	739,329	532,568	515,993	426,697	414,829	(\$585,725)	(58.5%)
OR	418,485	390,140	366,568	325,446	285,340	309,437	285,239	302,922	256,021	234,616	(\$183,869)	(43.9%)
PAD	1,423,742	1,402,280	1,314,242	1,168,492	1,158,567	1,024,110	943,015	860,742	836,951	760,030	(\$663,712)	(46.6%)
PHL	364,070	345,586	352,530	351,125	327,092	327,957	318,270	244,075	227,063	190,271	(\$173,799)	(47.7%)
PR	514,768	598,676	622,557	652,976	746,442	743,022	774,768	751,067	737,909	829,412	\$314,644	61.1%
PSW	828,406	748,739	750,685	640,635	414,650	317,742	100,928	NA	NA	NA	(\$727,478)	(87.8%)
RI	275,434	273,438	280,442	245,185	256,126	247,376	245,489	236,107	223,133	215,493	(\$59,941)	(21.8%)
RMT	599,919	572,463	521,421	485,097	429,823	438,141	349,970	295,480	206,806	204,496	(\$395,423)	(65.9%)
ROC	168,894	183,113	174,916	179,411	186,718	181,847	180,493	197,051	177,498	173,714	\$4,820	2.9%
SOU	455,254	445,689	527,300	477,540	467,703	466,865	480,380	524,639	493,319	455,934	\$680	0.1%
VNH	314,118	321,261	316,502	304,149	311,846	284,411	283,217	248,231	265,062	192,584	(\$121,534)	(38.7%)
WI	240,070	231,396	212,444	201,463	196,109	199,135	194,624	173,818	165,556	149,684	(\$90,386)	(37.6%)
WST	688,129	617,984	576,086	583,932	210,485	169,382	144,032	143,315	108,508	91,901	(\$596,228)	(86.6%)
WV	1,976,471	1,985,671	1,948,052	1,903,487	1,792,439	1,608,876	1,220,377	1,095,267	1,069,418	1,071,386	(\$905,085)	(45.8%)
ZAK	11,561	19,447	12,945	9,808	10,464	8,333	11,259	13,390	14,749	11,193	(\$368)	(3.2%)
<b>TOTAL:</b>	<b>\$21,496,507</b>	<b>\$21,223,322</b>	<b>\$20,943,384</b>	<b>\$19,746,243</b>	<b>\$18,266,912</b>	<b>\$16,924,598</b>	<b>\$14,716,219</b>	<b>\$13,941,203</b>	<b>\$13,185,001</b>	<b>\$12,351,494</b>	<b>(\$9,145,013)</b>	<b>(42.5%)</b>

- EBA SPLIT FROM NW IN 2002. 2003 REFLECTS FIRST FULL YEAR OF GIVING FOR EBA AS A SEPARATE ENTITY. REGION TOTALS ADJUSTED ACCORDINGLY.
- MTR EMERGED FROM THE PSW CHURCHES THAT DID NOT WITHDRAW WHEN PSW LEFT IN 2006. 2007 REFLECTS FIRST FULL YEAR OF GIVING FOR MTR. REGION TOTALS ADJUSTED ACCORDINGLY.
- PIT MERGED WITH PAD IN 2006. COMBINED PIT GIVING WITH PAD FOR 2000 TO 2005.
- PSW LEFT MEMBERSHIP WITH ABC IN 2006.

# AMERICAN BAPTIST CHURCHES U.S.A.

## American Baptist Mission Support

CATEGORY	YTD thru JULY 2010	YTD thru JULY 2009	\$ Difference	% Difference
UM Basics	\$5,674,330	\$6,121,969	(\$447,639)	(7.3)
Love Gift	\$297,559	\$340,592	(\$43,033)	(12.6)
UM Designations	\$197,533	\$205,667	(\$8,133)	(4.0)
<b>TOTAL UM</b>	<b>\$6,169,422</b>	<b>\$6,668,228</b>	<b>(\$498,806)</b>	<b>(7.5)</b>
A.F.C.	\$1,210,750	\$1,380,953	(\$170,203)	(12.3)
O.G.H.S.	\$3,747,430	\$1,007,480	\$2,739,950	272.0
W.M.O.	\$966,448	\$1,098,933	(\$132,485)	(12.1)
R.M.M.O.	\$531,570	\$540,084	(\$8,514)	(1.6)
Region Offering	\$758,399	\$675,495	\$82,904	12.3
I.S.P.	\$811,710	\$869,277	(\$57,568)	(6.6)
Specifics	\$3,882,382	\$3,920,869	(\$38,487)	(1.0)
Targeted Giving	\$1,702,532	\$1,891,613	(\$189,081)	(10.0)
<b>TOTAL ABMS</b>	<b>\$19,780,644</b>	<b>\$18,052,932</b>	<b>\$1,727,711</b>	<b>9.6</b>



## AMERICAN BAPTIST CHURCHES USA

*Rev. Dr. A. Roy Medley*  
*General Secretary*

April 2010

Dear Friends:

Leo has shared with me the notes from your cluster meeting. There is much good there to think about and incorporate. Thank you.

There is one section in particular I need your input on. The reports notes: "It seems that Roy spends too much time and energy on his role as head of communion and not enough on local church issues."

It would help me to have some discussion with you as to what a change in this might look like to you. What would be helpful?

Let me share with you some of the things I have done that I think do focus on this area – some of which may be visible to you and some not.

- 1) I am in local congregations almost every Sunday: preaching, meeting with pastors, holding give and take in Sunday School or other sessions
- 2) Every year I make a priority of attending the colloquium and various meetings of pastors sponsored by MMBB as a way of connecting with our key pastors. There I participate not only in the formal processes but in hallway conversations and meetings with the pastors.
- 3) Immediately upon my election I began and still press for a missional church emphasis and the importance of learning how we do church in our changing culture. As I visit churches I often talk about this with pastors and lay leaders. I continue to read in this area and to talk with other denominational church leaders about the experience of their congregations and how they as a denomination are assisting churches in our changing cultural context. Bringing Alan Roxburg to the GEC meeting in April was an action on my part to provide input and assistance to the GEC on how we assist congregations.
- 4) I have encouraged and authorized Jeff Woods to take the learnings of the Lilly studies to our pastors and churches in workshops and other means.
- 5) At the request of the Ministers Council, I have begun to attend the Senate in addition to Jeff Woods.

- 6) I do workshops on spiritual growth, prayer, stewardship, missional church, leadership as often as I am invited to do so.
- 7) The ministers' conference we have held every other year has been an attempt to provide connection, support, training and inspiration to pastors. Having Miroslav Volf address the pastoral issue of forgiveness and Shane Claybourne talk about a different way of being church were efforts to touch our pastors where our congregations live.
- 8) Last summer, OGS went as an experiment to Rocky Mountains region to do workshops that drew on the specific strengths and talents of each of us as OGS members: Hamblin on local church finances; Thorne on stewardship practices; Woods on congregational life; Eapen on personnel issues, and myself on missional church. We plan to offer this in more regions.
- 9) I have sought to be present at the annual meeting of American Baptist Women's Ministries.
- 10) Even Head of Communion matters such as the Burmese Refugee response and the Baptist-Muslim dialogue have involved me deeply with ABC congregations and pastoral leaders. Just this week, as we had a visit from a delegation from the NCCC, I spoke of my concern that the NCCC has not focused on the cultural transition the church is experiencing and how it needs to help us address the life of the congregation and the task of making devoted disciples of Jesus.
- 11) In the pieces I write, I have tried to touch on various matters of importance to our church life – most recently I wrote one on community – as a way of doing theological reflection in a way that I hope is helpful and stimulating.
- 12) I supported with funding and encouraged the work of the VanBrakles of Michigan and Ryan Bailey of Indiana in developing a network of young adult pastors in the denomination, having a dinner for them in Pasadena, and seeking to support these emerging voices by giving them platform time at biennials.
- 11) Since January 1, my calendar has included the following:
  - Together in the Lord ministers conference/Seminarians Orientation
  - Pastors prayer summit in Evergreen Association
  - Pastors cluster meetings in Oregon
  - Pastors Colloquium
  - Women in Ministry consultation
  - African-American Leadership Colloquium (had to cancel out due to jury duty that was extended due to snow storm)
  - Inviting and meeting with ABC seminarians in conjunction with Christian Churches Together
  - Puerto Rico pastors meeting and Annual Session
  - Had four pastors attend General Board Executive Committee to share the stories of their ministries
  - Met with Chin pastoral leader
  - Women's Colloquium
  - Layman's gathering in Boston
  - Preaching/events with 11 congregations

This is not atypical of my regular calendar.

If these strategies and contacts are not effective or sufficient, you will be a great help to me in offering your ideas and suggestions. I really do care about congregational health and the churches' connection to us.

And if I may gently push back, I would note that in many of your regions I have not in recent years been invited in for events with your pastors and churches. I have been invited by individual congregations within your region whose invitations I have accepted, but the invitations to larger groups from you have not been present. You are the key to opening those doors, and I will gladly make it a priority to be with you.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours in Christ,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "A. Roy Medley".

A. Roy Medley  
General Secretary