

**AMERICAN BAPTIST UNITED MISSION**  
“God Bends the Universe Toward Justice” and United Mission

**Rev. Dr. Ron Vallet, Ambassador for United Mission**  
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**When we are united in God’s mission,  
our United Mission will grow.**

During the time of legalized slavery and during the period of reconstruction, many escaped slaves and other African Americans after the emancipation of the slaves, listened to the words of the Spiritual. They followed the drinking gourd to the northern Promised Land,” that is, they looked in the sky for the Big Dipper that points to the North Star. But they found that the land in the North was not the Promised Land. They still found themselves counted as chattel.

Last month, on January 15, the birthday of Martin Luther King, Jr., I had the opportunity to speak with joy to one of our congregations about Dr. King as a fellow American Baptist. Sometimes we forget his connection with us as an American Baptist pastor and a member of our Ministers and Missionaries Benefit Board. We rightly remember and celebrate his leadership in the Civil Rights Movement of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. I regard his “I Have a Dream Speech” as one of the greatest speeches given anywhere in the last century. But the struggle for human rights has not ended.

Ending legalized slavery, taking Jim Crow laws off the books, and the assassination of Martin Luther King, Jr. did not end practices of racial discrimination in the United States. But there is hope. Our hope is through God’s love shown in Jesus. In the words of Dr. King:

When our days become dreary with low-hovering clouds of despair, and when our nights become darker than a thousand midnights, let us remember that there is a creative force in this universe working to pull down the gigantic mountains of evil, a power that is able to make a way out of no way and transform dark yesterdays into bright tomorrows. Let us realize the arc of the moral universe is long, but it bends toward justice.

Micah, one of the ancient Hebrew prophets, expressed God’s priorities in these words: “He has told you, O mortal, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you, but to do justice, and to practice steadfast love, and to walk humbly with your God?” (Micah 6:8)

One of the great things about being an American Baptist is that we can and do provide needed financial support to all dimensions of our ministries together in our

country and around the globe we call Earth through United Mission. Take a look at the list of ministries.

- Your church's United Mission giving supports your local region, which makes it possible for the region to provide more effective support for your church and others. In fact, most of the income for each of our regions comes from **gifts to United Mission**. Our giving to UM pays the major parts of the salaries of our region's staff who provide: • staff service for search committees; • assistance resolving church conflicts; • area ministers to maintain contact with individual pastors and with associations and small groups of churches; • camping ministry; • resources to assist your church in growth and spiritual health; and • education and training of pastors, youth, and lay leaders in congregational empowerment.
- UM giving also supports: • The Office of the General Secretary • American Baptist Men • American Baptist Women's Ministries (through the Love Gift) • ABC Information Services • American Baptist Home Mission Societies • International Ministries • Colleges, Seminaries, Homes Hospitals, etc. • Career Centers • Mission Resource Development • American Baptist Historical Society • American Baptist Personnel Services • Orientation to ABC Life  
Reminder: If you need a remittance form with your church's name, address, and PIN number, please contact your regional office.

*Please note that among the ministries of the American Baptist Home Mission Societies are Justice Ministries. These include Children in Poverty, Disabilities Ministries, Immigration and Refugee Services, Office of Governmental Relations, Prisoner Re-entry and Aftercare Ministry, and Socially Responsible Investing*

**THANK YOU for your support of American Baptist United Mission!**

*Ron*

P.S. I encourage you to share this letter electronically or in print with others in your church.