



A Love Gift 'Resurrected'

While recently going through some old mementoes, Genevieve E. Peterson of Delaware, Ohio, was surprised to come across a small box marked "Love Gift." In the box were coins totaling \$9.21. The coins had been collected by her mother, Beatrice Amanda MacNeill, before her death at age 88 in December 1990 after a slow decline in health and strength.

The "Love Gift" initiative of American Baptist Churches USA (ABCUSA) was organized by American Baptist women in 1931 during the Great Depression. Women banded together to start "Love Gift" so that the denomination could continue its crucial ministries during the economic crisis. The initial fundraising goal was \$150,000. More than \$56 million has been donated since!

Love Gift money continues to be raised today in churches by donors who provide "extra" funds in support of the full range of American Baptist mission: American Baptist Regions, American Baptist Women's Ministries (ABWM), the Office of the General Secretary, American Baptist Home Mission Societies (ABHMS), International Ministries, and every mission endeavor strengthened by United Mission, the basic funding source for American Baptist mission. Love Gift funding helps create programs for children in poverty, provides elder care, makes available life-skills training to assist people in becoming self-sufficient, supports disaster relief, volunteer mission teams, refugee resettlement, chaplaincies, retirement communities and long-term care and children's homes.

Peterson forwarded her mother's collection to ABCUSA along with a note. "My mother was Beatrice Amanda MacNeill, wife of Vernon Harcourt MacNeill who was an American Baptist minister in Illinois for many years," Peterson wrote. "After his death she was visited yearly by a representative of the Retired Ministers



and Missionaries Benefit Board, and she was supported by Dad's retirement benefits. She appreciated each of these ways in which she was a part of a wider American Baptist church family."

"To the end she remained committed to her responsibilities, and so I know she would be happy for me to send this offering I have (just now) discovered directly to you even though years have passed since she collected these coins," Genevieve Peterson wrote. "It seems more in her tradition to send them in the box in which they were saved rather than to transmit the amount via a check or computer. On the other hand, she would be surprised at the speed and ease of modern technology and supportive of those who use it!"

"Thank you for continuing the emphasis on world issues and how we can impact them with the Love Gift offering." ■

You can give to Love Gift any time through your church by simply marking your offering for "ABWM Love Gift." Your church treasurer will record your gift with the church's report of mission support. You can also give to Love Gift online at www.abc-usa.org, giving credit to your church for your gift. (Click on Give Online.) Use Love Gift boxes at home or at work to prompt spontaneous gifts in thanks for God's blessings in your life. When you give to Love Gift, you are also supporting ABWM, which receives United Mission funding in an amount equal to 15 percent of Love Gift.

Love Gift brochures and coin boxes are available in quantity through the American Baptist Women's Ministries store online at www.abwministries.org or by a calling Judson Press at

1-800-4-JUDSON