

**American Baptist Churches USA
Board of General Ministries**

**REPORT OF
MISSION RESOURCE
DEVELOPMENT**



***Rev. Leo S. Thorne, Ph.D.
Associate General Secretary
Mission Resource Development
June 2012***

**American Baptist Churches USA
Board of General Ministries
Report of Mission Resource Development**



INTRODUCTION:

The Office of Mission Resource Development (MRD) is positioned in the Office of the General Secretary and serves in the following areas: United Mission, Communications, Stewardship, Development and Mission Summit/Biennial Program Coordination.

MRD STAFF AND PRIMARY MINISTRY AREAS:

United Mission and Stewardship

Leo S. Thorne, Administrator
Soozi Whitten Ford, Stewardship Facilitator
Lorie Smith, Executive Assistant
Bridget Holmstrom, Web Manager/Communication Specialist
Joyce Lake, Administrative Assistant
Beth Fogg, Assistant to Associate General Secretary

Communication and Technology

Leo S. Thorne, Administrator
Bridget Holmstrom, Web Manager/Communication Specialist
Joyce Lake, Administrative Assistant
Beth Fogg, Assistant to Associate General Secretary

Mission Summit/Biennial

Leo S. Thorne, Mission Summit/Biennial Program Coordinator
Brad Berglund, Mission Summit/Biennial Manager and Consultant
Lorie Smith, Executive Assistant
Beth Fogg, Assistant to Associate General Secretary

Development

Leo S. Thorne, Associate General Secretary and Development Officer
Lorie Smith, Executive Assistant
Beth Fogg, Assistant to Associate General Secretary

REFLECTIONS ON UNITED MISSION (UM) GIVING/ACTIVITIES IN 2011

- 2,103 congregations have given to UM every year for 10 years; an additional 211 churches have given every year for 5 years. This indicates that just under half of our churches are regular supporters of United Mission. Even in these difficult economic times, 1,089 of our

churches gave more to UM in 2011 than they gave in 2010. This represents about a fifth of our churches. An additional 226 congregations were new or recaptured givers to United Mission in 2011;

- Approximately 47% of our churches do not give to UM, which continues to trend downward, from \$12.3 million in 2009 to \$10.1 million (projection) in 2012;
- In the spring, we recognized 2011 gifts to United Mission by:
 - * mailing certificates to the top 50 churches to UM;
 - * mailing certificates to the top 5 churches with greatest percentage increase;
 - * mailing certificates to the top 5 per capita churches in each of our ethnic categories;
 - * mailing letters of thanks to churches that increased their giving to UM over 2010 gifts (1,087 churches);
 - * mailing letters of thanks to churches that were new givers or recaptured givers to UM (226 churches);
- One of the strategic goals of MRD's staff is to increase church participation in UM.

SOME MRD ACTIVITIES:

- ***United Mission (UM)***—MRD staff continues to be very aggressive in its work with United Mission in this challenging economic environment. UM promotion is our top priority. MRD staff attend regional meetings; identify top-giving and new congregations for special recognition (certificates/letters); produce resources and make them available on the ABCUSA website and through Judson Press; encourage UM giving and education by video production; visit select congregations; and the like. We remain hopeful that our churches will soon come through this sustained period of economic hardship.
- ***Mission Summit/Biennial***—MRD continues to coordinate all aspects of the Mission Summit/Biennial. The various planning groups have already begun meeting, and the goal is to make this ABC gathering one of the most significant ever in ABC life. The plan is to meet in Overland Park, Kansas, for the next two Mission Summits/Biennials, in 2013 (June 21-23) and 2015 (June 26-28). The 2013 Mission Summit/Biennial will seek to give significant attention to our Baptist sisters and brothers from Burma in the total experience. Rev. Reg Mills is chair of the Mission Summit/Biennial Planning Team. Rev. Brad Berglund is Mission Summit/Biennial Manager and Consultant.
- ***Communications***—The ministry of Communications continues to be an important aspect of MRD's work. We are in the process of redesigning the ABCUSA website. The website will have a new look and feel and will be more user-friendly. We continue to maintain Facebook, YouTube, LinkedIn and Twitter accounts as a way of keeping different, especially younger age groups interested in ABC's ministries through these social media communication tools. We are also working to strengthen our use of technology with Skype, GoToMeeting, and so on, as a way to cut meeting costs, and at the same time build strong relationships with ABC regions and congregations, among other things. We have responded to the requests from region executives to have the regions more visible on the ABCUSA website. As such, we have added a "Spotlight on the Region" page. The quarterly publication, *ABCUSA Connections*, continues to meet a real need for keeping the ABC family

informed about significant aspects of ABC life. The publication is available in hard copy, on request, is emailed to a list of interested individuals, and is downloadable from the ABCUSA website. MRD maintains professional membership and affiliations with various communication groups like the National Council of Churches' Communication Council, Baptists for Ethics (EthicsDaily.com), Odyssey Network and the Communication division of the Baptist World Alliance. We also keep active contact with the wider religious news services, and we maintain regular meetings with our own ABC Communication Council. We also share with American Baptist Home Mission Societies an important contract with Meltwater News service that identifies all published stories, articles, and media mention of ABCUSA.

- **MRD's Deployed Staff**—Deployed staff is a significant aspect of MRD's work.
 - * Rev. Sooji Whitten Ford will continue as MRD's deployed Stewardship Facilitator. Sooji embraces this ministry with a passion and will combine it with her new role as Executive Minister of Indiana/Kentucky. The region board believes this situation benefits everyone.
 - * Sooji will continue representing ABCUSA on the Advisory Council of the Ecumenical Stewardship Center (ESC) and is a member of the planning team for the ESC's 2012 annual stewardship conference.
 - * MRD has purchased the license for Mark Vincent's and Barbara Fullerton's new book, *Speaking About Money (Revised)*. We will customize sections of this book for our purposes and distribute to our churches as a guide and study aid for biblical stewardship. This should be accomplished by the second half of this year. This important book essentially discusses, with research support, ways that churches can talk (and behave) about money.
 - * Sooji will work with MRD to continue promoting ESC's *Giving* magazine, which generally contains multiple resources for annual campaigns in stewardship for the local church. This magazine continues to be useful for many of our congregations.
 - * As part of her work with ABCUSA, Sooji will continue to lead seminars and workshops on stewardship upon request. She has two scheduled so far for this year: (1) American Baptist Women's Ministries annual conference in July in Nashville. She will join Linda Cassel (American Baptist Foundation in leading a 4-day seminar on women and money issues. (2) She will conduct a workshop on stewardship education as part of the Central Region's annual gathering in October.
 - * Sooji will continue to produce the monthly e-newsletter titled *Genero\$ity* available on the ABCUSA website, and we are working to strengthen the quarterly stewardship bulletin insert titled "Footprints of Generosity."
 - * MRD values the good work of Rev. Ford as Stewardship Facilitator and invites more of our regions to avail themselves of her ministry.
 - * Héctor González continues to represent ABCUSA as our Volunteer Coordinator for Hispanic Ministries.
- **Development**—This ministry continues to be a growing area as we engage in and help coordinate the fundraising activities for the denomination's *Transformed by the Spirit* (TbyS) initiative. MRD's Development Advisory Team, a denomination-wide group of diverse persons committed to assisting ABCUSA develop its donor and fundraising capabilities, provides good leadership and support to TbyS. MRD is also engaged in a process of coordinating the transition from eTapestry to a much more flexible system of donor management being created by our own computer center.

OTHER MINISTRY AREAS

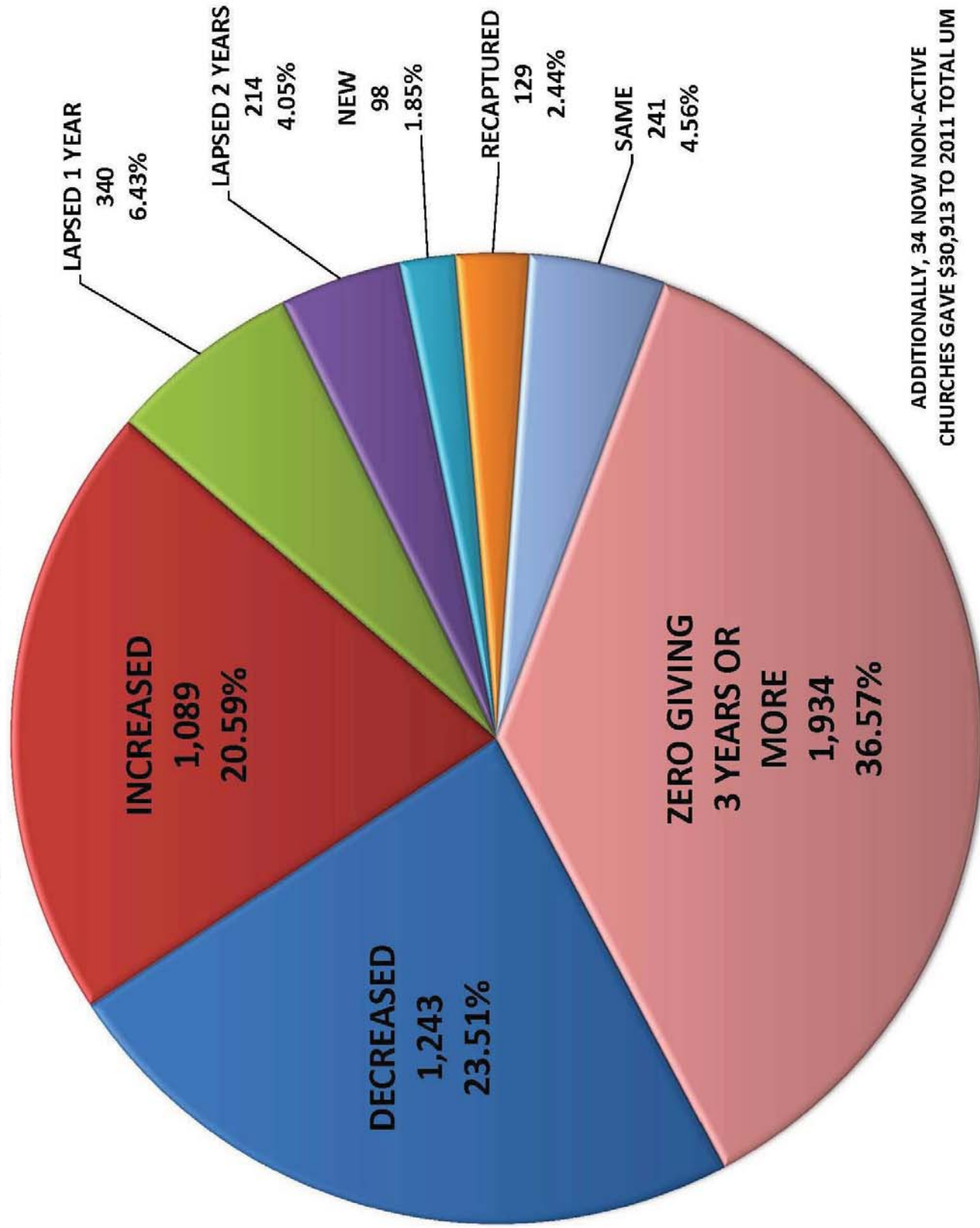
- Hosting an annual Reception for ABC persons at the Hampton University Ministers' Conference. The focus this year, Wednesday, June 6, highlighted specific ministries of American Baptist Home Mission Societies serving the global church. Attendance is generally 50-80 persons.
- Hosting a meeting of the State Department's Sub-Group on Religious Freedom, Stability & Democracy. The Sub-Group is part of the Secretary of State's Strategic Dialogue with Civil Society. This meeting of the group is part of a process through which religious leaders and communities can have ongoing input regarding the formation and implementation of U.S. foreign policy. The meeting was held at the ABC Mission Center in Valley Forge, PA, on Tuesday, April 17, 2012.
- Representing ABCUSA on various national/international boards and associations, including the American Baptist Assembly, the Baptist World Alliance, the American Baptist Foundation, and Baptists Today.
- Developing new strategies to promote the newly adopted identity theme, American Baptists serving as the hands and feet of Christ. We have recently created a new United Mission/Identity Theme poster for that purpose.

American Baptist Churches Information Systems

**Actual ABMS Giving Compared to Average Income with Estimated Income
for the Period YTD thru April 2012**

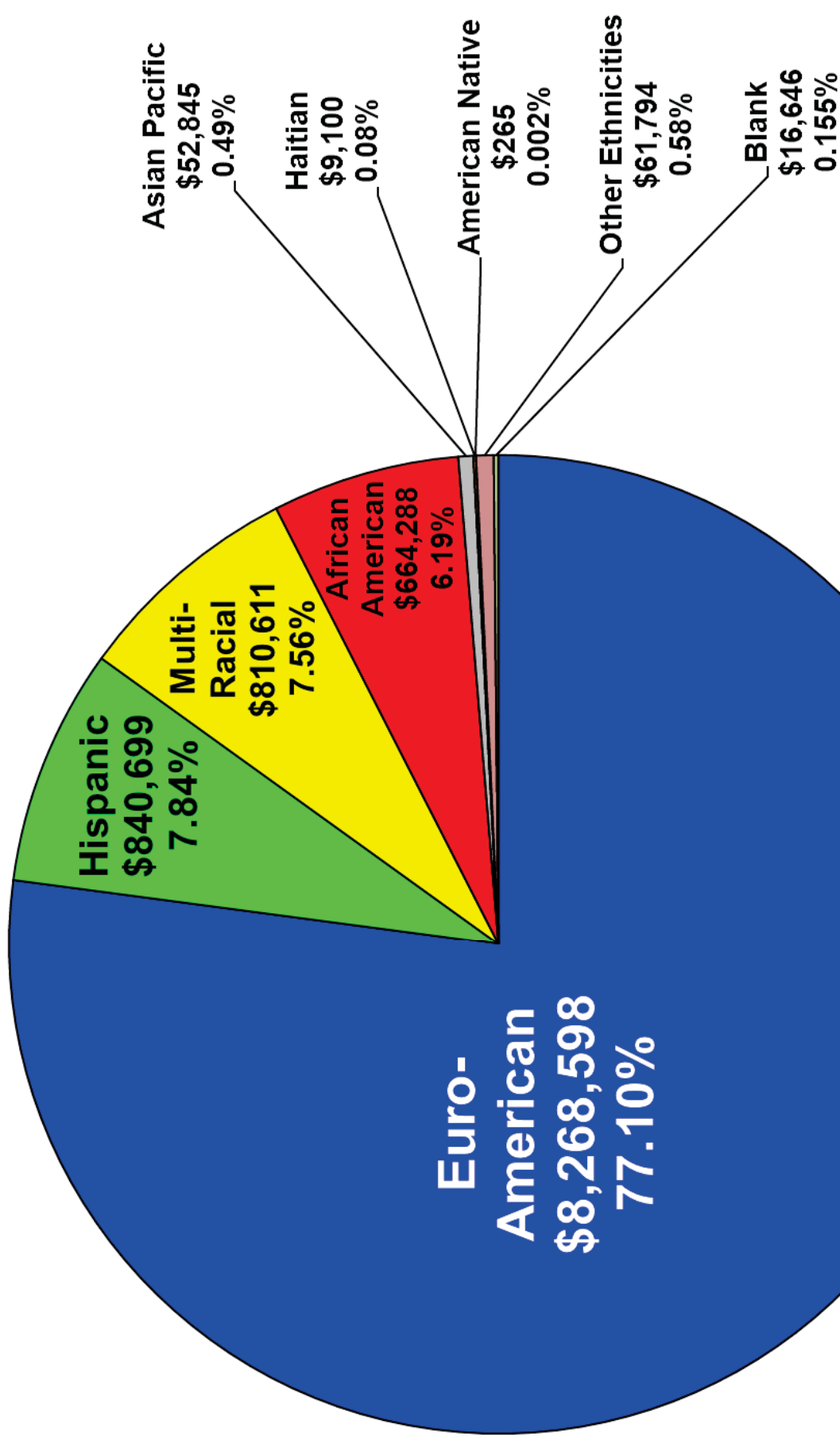
ABMS CATEGORY	2012 Estimated Income	3-Year Average Income thru April	YTD GIVING THRU APRIL 2012	YTD GIVING THRU APRIL 2011	YTD GIVING \$ Difference	YTD GIVING % Difference	YTD Giving vs. Average Income \$ Difference	YTD Giving vs. Average Income % Difference
UM Basics	\$9,340,000	\$3,255,831	\$2,864,576	\$3,065,822	(\$201,246)	(6.56%)	(\$391,255)	(12.02%)
Love Gift	\$543,000	\$180,912	\$175,405	\$180,519	(\$5,114)	(2.83%)	(\$5,506)	(3.04%)
UM Designations	\$282,000	\$117,525	\$98,965	\$108,018	(\$9,053)	(8.38%)	(\$18,560)	(15.79%)
TOTAL UM	\$10,165,000	\$3,554,267	\$3,138,946	\$3,354,359	(\$215,413)	(6.42%)	(\$415,321)	(11.69%)
A.F.C.	\$1,250,000	\$950,470	\$849,004	\$907,847	(\$58,843)	(6.48%)	(\$101,466)	(10.68%)
W.M.O.	\$2,760,002	\$668,250	\$692,546	\$659,675	\$32,871	4.98%	\$24,296	3.64%
Region Offering	\$2,170,001	\$389,545	\$553,298	\$446,677	\$106,621	23.87%	\$163,753	42.04%
I.S.P.	\$1,350,002	\$458,474	\$412,144	\$431,935	(\$19,791)	(4.58%)	(\$46,331)	(10.11%)
Specifics	\$5,770,000	\$2,182,711	\$2,337,056	\$1,909,124	\$427,932	22.42%	\$154,345	7.07%
Targeted Giving	\$3,509,999	\$870,441	\$1,184,835	\$1,076,618	\$108,217	10.05%	\$314,394	36.12%
SUBTOTAL ABMS	\$26,975,004	\$9,074,158	\$9,167,829	\$8,786,234	\$381,594	4.34%	\$93,671	1.03%
O.G.H.S.	\$2,109,999	\$1,120,212	\$218,719	\$403,961	(\$185,243)	(45.86%)	(\$901,494)	(80.48%)
R.M.M.O.	\$1,239,998	\$450,098	\$457,670	\$424,862	\$32,807	7.72%	\$7,572	1.68%
TOTAL ABMS	\$30,325,001	\$10,644,469	\$9,844,217	\$9,615,058	\$229,159	2.38%	(\$800,252)	(7.52%)

2011 TOTAL UNITED MISSION GIVING DYNAMICS FROM 5,288 CURRENTLY ACTIVE CHURCHES

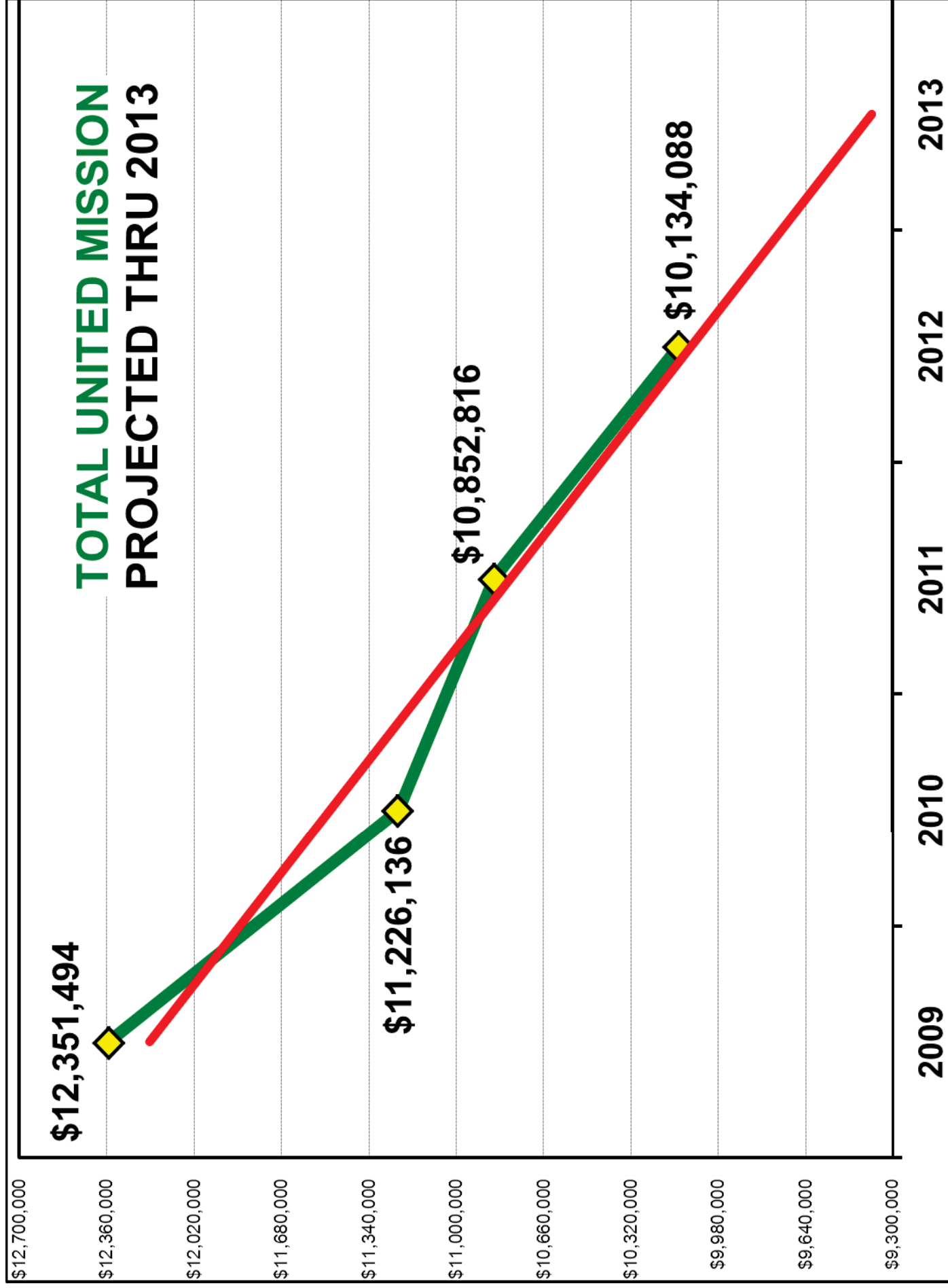


AMERICAN BAPTIST CHURCHES USA

2011 UNITED MISSION GIVING BY ETHNICITY



TOTAL UNITED MISSION (FROM 2,830 CHURCHES) = \$10,724,846



*For we do not preach ourselves, but Jesus Christ as Lord, and ourselves as your servants for Jesus' sake.
(2 Corinthians 4:5)*