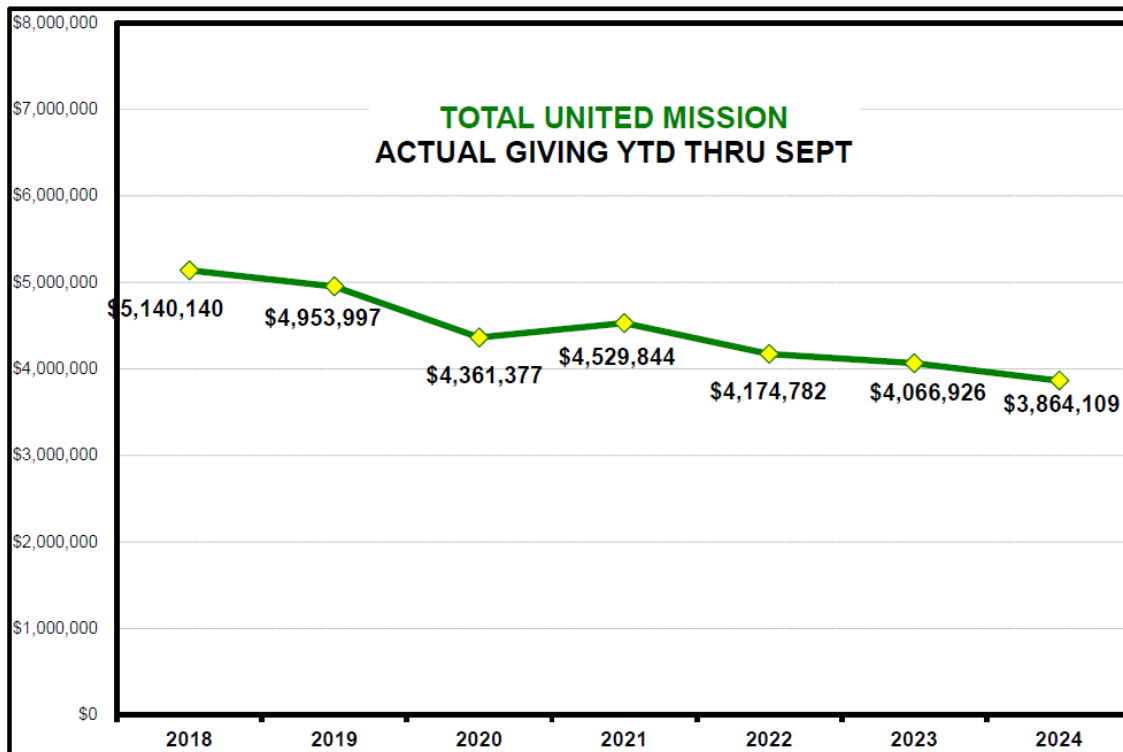


## Mission Resource Development (MRD) Report

By Wendy Clemmer, Director of Mission Resources Development  
July-October 2024



**Total United Missions** as of September 30, 2024, is \$3,864,109. This reflects a decrease of \$202,816 from the previous year, representing a decline of 4.99%.

To foster **stronger connections and keep donors engaged**, the General Secretary initiated new donor communication in consultation MRD. Some of the 2024 donor mailings included:

- **Spring Letter (May):** A heartfelt thank you letter with a seed-embedded heart-shaped paper, inviting donors to the Everyday ABC Conversation webinar series.
- **Summer Letter (June):** A thank you letter encouraging prayer for children's wellness and safety, with a link to more information about the Everyday ABC Conversation series on Harmony.
- **Fall Letter (September):** A letter inviting donors to the 2025 Biennial Mission Summit, including a sticker with the Biennial logo and a giving envelope.



- **End-of-Year Letter (November):** 2 letters, one for lapsed donors and a letter offering an update and year-end message.

These efforts are part of a broader strategy initiated by the general secretary to reconnect with lapsed donors and deepen relationships with both current and prospective supporters of ABCUSA's mission.

We are strengthening our communications and outreach:

- We now have a **social media presence!** We invite you to connect with us on platforms like Facebook and Instagram. Your engagement—liking our page and posts, and sharing our content—helps us reach a wider audience and spread our message further.
  - <https://www.facebook.com/AmericanBaptistChurchesUSA>
  - <https://www.instagram.com/americanbaptist/>
- We're increasing our **email communications** to keep you informed about upcoming events and provide reminders to register.
- We're sharing inspiring stories! Visit our social media sites to watch **videos** showcasing why American Baptists support ABCUSA and United Mission.
- We are also updating and redesigning our brochures to reflect our mission and engage others. You can download or request our brochures at <https://www.abc-usa.org/resources/resources-available-to-order/>.

The MRD and Women in Ministry collaborated on the **October Webinar Series**. MRD also supported the **Everyday ABC Conversations** focusing on Harmony. Our team has provided technology support and communications for both events. Join us for the next ABC Everyday Conversations:

- Thursday, December 5, 2024, with presenters Rev. Dr. Valerie Andrews and Rev. Dr. Jeremy Myers
- Thursday, March 20, 2025, with presenters Rev. Katherine Farley and Rev. Michelle Turek

Register now at [www.abc-usa.org/events](http://www.abc-usa.org/events).

We continue to plan the **Biennial Mission Summit**, July 3-6, 2025, in Omaha, Nebraska! The MRD team along with the Office of Travel and Conference Planning Team have been working diligently to get registration open by November 1, 2025! Registration is now open at [www.americanbaptists2025.com](http://www.americanbaptists2025.com). Some Biennial Mission Summit highlights include:

- This year's theme, "Come Seek Living Water," promises to empower attendees to engage deeply with their faith.
- The four distinguished keynote speakers are:
  - **Rev. Dr. Gina Jacobs-Strain**, general secretary of American Baptist Churches USA
  - **Rev. Dr. TaNikka Sheppard**, regional executive minister of the Cleveland Baptist Association and general secretary for the North American Baptist Fellowship



- **Rev. Dr. Greg Mamula**, executive minister and region missionary of American Baptist Churches of Nebraska
- **Rev. Dr. Zau Sam Lahtaw**, senior pastor of the First Kachin Baptist Church of America in Omaha, Nebraska
- a vibrant "family reunion," focusing on creating meaningful connections across the generations of attendees.
- engaging activities for all ages, including many activities for children, alongside workshops and discussions that inspire fellowship and spiritual growth
  - Our nursery area is specially set up for infants and toddlers up to age three, creating a fun and safe space where your little explorers can dive into a world of playful activities, laughter, and discovery.
  - Children 4-13 years old will have the opportunity to learn about God, sing together, make new friends, see the community aspect of the ABCUSA coming together, and serve others through missions.
  - A cohort-based learning community designed for middle and high school youth will emphasize learning Baptist distinctives, addressing critical faith and life topics, and building lasting relationships with fellow American Baptist youth. This will be achieved through intergenerational workshops, worship services, and shared meals.
- celebrate the July Fourth holiday with afternoon worship and a family picnic, before families enjoy the spectacular Omaha Fireworks display.

In consultation with Rev. Dr. Gina Jacobs Strain, General Secretary, we submitted seven nominations for American Baptists to serve on the Trustee Committee, Members Committee, and Commissions of the **Baptist World Alliance**.

We also supported the **United Nations Day of Action for Myanmar/Burma**, on Tuesday, October 30, 2024, organized by the Burma Advocacy Group. The event featured leading voices advocating for democracy and human rights in Myanmar, including special guest Tom Andrews, UN Special Rapporteur on the Situation of Human Rights in Myanmar, as well as key representatives and advocates from Myanmar's National Unity Government (NUG).

Bridget Lipin and Wendy Clemmer represented ABC's staff at the **World Relief Committee** meeting in October 2024. The Committee approved \$10,000 for the General Secretary's Pastoral Support Initiatives for fall 2024. Additionally, the Committee will vote in November for additional funds for 2025. American Baptist Churches requested a policy change to the World Relief Committee Manual, stipulating that all **One Great Hour of Sharing (OGHS) funds** be processed through American Baptist Churches, as OGHS is an ABCUSA fund. The current policy manual states:



## 11.0 FINANCIAL PROCEDURES

11.1 RECEIPT OF FUNDS. All undesignated One Great Hour of Sharing offerings should be sent through normal American Baptist Mission giving channels. Those funds are received by the Office of the General Secretary's Treasurer's Office and held in an account there. Exception: When there is a disaster of special concern to either IM or ABHMS, the relevant Board will be permitted to have funds designated for that specific disaster relief sent directly to them, as long as those funds are recorded as OGHS when received. When there is a disaster within a specific Region, the Region is permitted to receipt and retain funds designated for that specific disaster that come from churches/individuals within their Region. The funds must be recorded as OGSH when received.

The exception was established in 2013 to allow ABHMS and IM to process OGHS donations through their websites and by check for designated projects. ABHMS has been providing details on OGHS donors to American Baptist Churches as requested. However, International Ministries is unwilling to disclose all donor details, which is detrimental to ABCUSA. . The committee agreed that they could not vote on a policy change without knowing the legal ownership of the donor information.