

***Christmas Blessings***  
***Dr. Michael A. Williams***  
***American Baptist Churches of Michigan***

*And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, full of grace and truth...*

*John 1:14 (RSV)*

During my college years I served as part-time youth pastor. The church building and property were lovingly cared for by “Von,” a kind man who experienced some mental and emotional challenges but was rarely without insight. I shall never forget the night of the annual business meeting, when, in the course of discussion around a matter I cannot even recall today, things became heated. Suddenly, Von dropped to his knees praying aloud, “*Oh dear God, comes here quick, comes through the fields* (the most direct way), *and please don’t send your Son, this ain’t no place for kids!*” His sincere, outspoken plea caught the congregation by surprise and brought much needed levity, if not insight to the situation allowing the issue to be resolved in a more civil manner.

In these challenging, if not difficult days, we as individuals and congregations find ourselves asking the age-old questions: Where is God in this? Why is this happening to me/us? Please come quick and intervene!

In Isaiah 64:1 the prophet Isaiah utters his version of Von’s prayer, “*O that thou wouldst rend the heavens and come down...*” written during the time of exile when the people of God lost their homes and were forced into exile in Babylon. Each Advent we are reminded of their plight through the words of the hymn, “*O come, O come, Emmanuel, and ransom captive Israel.*”

Throughout history as people have struggled at a host of levels, the desperate prayer is to understand God’s role in it all—where is God in all of the chaos? The people of God comprising the congregations of the American Baptist Churches of Michigan (ABC-MI) are privileged to respond to this most basic human question—where is God? Through spoken word, music, art, drama, letters and more we affirm this very good news “*the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, full of grace and truth...*”

The ABC-MI is committed to assisting congregations in this effort, as we come alongside them to ensure they are at the healthiest place to continue responding to the cries and questions of hurting humanity. We understand healthy congregations are missional congregations reaching into their communities with words of hope and good deeds. For many individuals and churches, this Christmas season is indeed filled with fear and uncertainty. Yet, in the midst of such fear and uncertainty, we are being given unprecedented opportunities to affirm this very good news: “*the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, full of grace and truth...*”

On behalf of our Region Board and staff, I want to thank you for your support of the ABC-MI ministry through your regular and consistent giving of mission dollars to make this ministry possible. Your church’s gifts to United Mission and specific gifts to the ABC-MI help us reach our challenging 2009 budget goal of \$633,013. To date, we are facing a potential shortfall for 2009 of \$40,000. So your gifts at year’s end are critical if we are to avoid additional staffing cuts. The 2010 budget, approved by delegates to the Annual Meeting is \$596,300, which has forced us to eliminate one support staff position already. Further cuts may take place in 2010 if we do not reach our budget goals.

For your convenience, the remittance form used by church treasurers to forward mission gifts for distribution through the American Baptist Mission Support process, follows this letter. Please note, if you or your church gives to United Mission Basics, sixty-five cents of every dollar given through United Mission Basics supports the work of the ABC-MI and thirty-five cents is forwarded to our national office in Valley Forge to support the Office of the General Secretary, Board of International Ministries, and Board of National Ministries. If you or your church gives to “Specifics” for the ABC-MI or to the “Region Offering,” 100% of the gift comes to the Region. I encourage you and your church to give as you feel led of God. However you choose to give, we deeply appreciate your support of our common mission.

May you have a blessed Christmas!

*Michael A. Williams*  
Michael A. Williams  
Executive Minister

**Please remember your Mission gifts must be received in the ABC-MI office no later than January 11, 2010 in order to be given credit for 2009. Thank you!**

## UNITED STEWARDSHIP PLAN

ABMS CATEGORY	ABMS CATEGORY CODE	CATEGORY DEFINITION
United Mission Basics	UMB	<p>a. Giving through the avenue of United Mission shall remain the priority as other new sources of funding are explored.</p> <p>b. Upon implementation of the Common Budget Covenant, any Region may begin retaining a maximum of 65% of Net United Mission. Any Region choosing to receive less than the maximum of 65% at the outset may increase up to 2% per year provided that the respective Region Board report its intent to the Office of the General Secretary nine months ahead of a new fiscal year.</p>
ABWM Love Gift	LG	Love Gift shall continue to be promoted by American Baptist Women's Ministries and shall be included in United Mission. An equivalent of 15% of Love Gift will be allocated for the operation of American Baptist Women's Ministries.
United Mission Designations	UMD	Collecting Agents may receive designated gifts throughout the year. Monies received will be forwarded through regular distribution channels to the appropriate agency as directed by the gift and will become budget relieving for the recipient.
America for Christ Offering	AFC	<p>a. The promotional window for this offering shall be during the months of February - March.</p> <p>b. Collecting Agents may receive contributions to this offering throughout the year.</p> <p>c. Promotional costs for the America for Christ Offering shall not exceed 8% of the gross receipts from the offering.</p> <p>d. After promotional costs have been deducted, monies received from the offering shall be distributed equally among the respective Region, National Ministries, and Educational Ministries.</p>
World Mission Offering	WMO	<p>a. The promotional window for this offering shall be during the months of September - October.</p> <p>b. Collecting Agents may receive contributions to this offering throughout the year.</p> <p>c. After promotional costs not to exceed 8% have been deducted, monies received from this offering shall be used at the discretion of the Board of International Ministries. Promotional costs will be paid by the Board of International Ministries.</p> <p>d. Directed Giving is permissible throughout the year and will be credited toward the intended cause as directed by the gift.</p>
Retired Ministers & Missionaries Offering	RMO	<p>a. The promotional window for this offering shall be during the months of November - December.</p> <p>b. Collecting Agents may receive contributions to this offering throughout the year.</p> <p>c. The offering is used by MMBB to provide assistance for retired ministers and missionaries. Promotional costs, not to exceed 8%, will be paid by MMBB.</p>
One Great Hour of Sharing	OGH	<p>a. The promotional window for this offering shall be during the months of May - June. In the case of national or international disasters relief information may be communicated to the churches and individuals outside the window.</p> <p>b. Collecting Agents may receive contributions to this offering throughout the year.</p> <p>c. After promotional costs, not to exceed 8%, have been deducted, monies received from this offering shall be distributed by the World Relief Committee.</p> <p>d. Directed Giving is permissible throughout the year and will be credited toward the intended cause as directed by the gift.</p>
Region Offering	RO	<p>a. Regions choosing to receive a Region offering shall promote this offering during any two-month window that does not conflict with the promotional periods for AFC and WMO.</p> <p>b. Collecting Agents may receive contributions to this offering throughout the year.</p> <p>c. Monies received from this offering shall be used at the discretion of the respective Region. Promotional costs will be paid by the respective Region at a rate not to exceed 8% of the offering. The promotional cost limit becomes effective after the establishment of the offering (a period not to exceed five years).</p> <p>d. Directed Giving is permissible throughout the year and will be credited toward the intended cause as directed by the gift.</p>
Institutional Support	ISP	Institutions that are part of ISP may raise funds from all ABC churches. Special campaigns should be negotiated with individual partners to the Common Budget Covenant.
Specifics	SPC	Collecting Agents may receive specific gifts throughout the year. Monies received will be forwarded to the appropriate agency as directed by the gift.
Targeted Giving	TG	Appeals for targeted gifts may be made throughout the year. All appeals, however, shall indicate that such gifts are intended to be over and above United Mission and the Annual Offerings. Additionally, to ensure that the appeals do not interfere with the needs and interests of local congregations within a particular Region and to maximize region support, Regions are to be notified as to the purpose of all targeted giving strategies at least one month ahead of the appeal. For appeals to individuals, regions will be notified in advance of the appeal. Promotional timelines may need to be negotiated between Regions and the Program Boards in the event of potential conflicts.
Campaigns for ABC Work	CGN	Special campaigns are those that do not contribute to the annual operating revenue for the organization, but are integral to the long-term financial health of Regions, related National Boards, and the Office of the General Secretary. Increasingly, traditional capital funds campaigns, limited to a specific period of time that seldom exceeds 3-5 years in which the full pledge amount is realized, are supplemented with deferred giving campaigns. This style is known as an integrated campaign.
Miscellaneous Objectives	MO	This category provides a channel for sending gifts to American Baptist missionaries for their personal use, as well as to the American Bible Society. Other non-ABC-related gifts should be sent directly to the organization. Gifts in this category are treated as "pass-through" gifts and are not tax deductible.



# Monthly Remittance of Mission Support

Report for Month of \_\_\_\_\_ Year \_\_\_\_\_

Church Name/Donor: \_\_\_\_\_

Association/Area: \_\_\_\_\_ PIN: \_\_\_\_\_

Credit Receiver (Name): \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

E-Mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Region: **American Baptist Churches of Michigan**

To use window envelope mailing address must be below line or fold must be where marked below. Send Receipt To:

## Applies to Churches/Organizations only

Treasurer: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

E-Mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Treasurer Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

### Mail Remittance Report and Check Payable to:

American Baptist Churches of Michigan

4578 South Hagadorn Road

East Lansing, MI 48823-5396

Phone: 800.632.2953

FAX: 517.332.3186

Region E-Mail : [dhart@abc-mi.org](mailto:dhart@abc-mi.org)

Office Use Only

Date Received \_\_\_\_\_

Receipt Number \_\_\_\_\_

Check # \_\_\_\_\_ Staff \_\_\_\_\_

### UNITED MISSION

UNITED MISSION BASICS ..... CODE UMB \_\_\_\_\_

UNITED MISSION AB WOMEN'S MINISTRIES LOVE GIFT ..... LG \_\_\_\_\_

UNITED MISSION DESIGNATIONS (AS LISTED BELOW) LOCAL CODE

\_\_\_\_\_ \$ \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ \$ \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ \$ \_\_\_\_\_

TOTAL DESIGNATIONS (Use additional forms if space is not available.) ..... UMD \_\_\_\_\_

**TOTAL UNITED MISSION GIVING** ..... \$ \_\_\_\_\_

AMERICA FOR CHRIST OFFERING ..... AFC \_\_\_\_\_

WORLD MISSION OFFERING ..... (REGULAR WMO GIVING) \$ \_\_\_\_\_

WMO DIRECTED GIVING (AS LISTED BELOW)

\_\_\_\_\_ \$ \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ \$ \_\_\_\_\_

TOTAL WMO DIRECTED GIVING (Use additional forms if space is not available.) ..... \$ \_\_\_\_\_

TOTAL WORLD MISSION OFFERING ..... WMO \_\_\_\_\_

RETIRED MINISTERS AND MISSIONARIES OFFERING ..... RMO \_\_\_\_\_

ONE GREAT HOUR OF SHARING OFFERING ..... (REGULAR OGHS GIVING) \$ \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ \$ \_\_\_\_\_

TOTAL ONE GREAT HOUR OF SHARING (Use additional forms if space is not available.) ..... OGH \_\_\_\_\_

**ABC-MI Region Offering, sowing seeds of ministry** ..... RO \_\_\_\_\_

### INSTITUTIONAL SUPPORT (AS LISTED BELOW)

NORTHERN BAPTIST THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY ..... \$ \_\_\_\_\_

JUDSON UNIVERSITY ..... \$ \_\_\_\_\_

AMERICAN BAPTIST ASSEMBLY (GREEN LAKE) ..... \$ \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ \$ \_\_\_\_\_

TOTAL INSTITUTIONAL SUPPORT (Use additional forms if space is not available.) ..... ISP \_\_\_\_\_

### SPECIFICS (AS LISTED BELOW)

AMERICAN BAPTIST CHURCHES OF MICHIGAN (BUDGETED) ..... \$ \_\_\_\_\_

MINISTRY LEADERSHIP GROUPS ..... \$ \_\_\_\_\_

CAMP LAEL ..... \$ \_\_\_\_\_

LAKE LOUISE BAPTIST CAMP ..... \$ \_\_\_\_\_

FRIENDSHIP HOUSE MINISTRIES ..... \$ \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ \$ \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ \$ \_\_\_\_\_

TOTAL SPECIFICS (Use additional forms if space is not available.) ..... SPC \_\_\_\_\_

### TARGETED GIVING

\_\_\_\_\_ \$ \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ \$ \_\_\_\_\_

TOTAL TARGETED GIVING ..... TG \_\_\_\_\_

**TOTAL AMERICAN BAPTIST MISSION SUPPORT** ..... \$ \_\_\_\_\_

ABC CAMPAIGNS ..... CGN \_\_\_\_\_

MISCELLANEOUS OBJECTIVES

\_\_\_\_\_ \$ \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ \$ \_\_\_\_\_

TOTAL MISCELLANEOUS OBJECTIVES ..... MO \_\_\_\_\_

Although every effort is made to comply with donor wishes, tax deductible contributions are received with the understanding that ABC USA and ABC-MI have complete discretion and control over the use of all donated funds.

**REMITTANCE TOTAL** Verify Check Amount \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Monthly reports will be mailed to confirm posting. Retain a copy of this from as submitted for your records. Please report any errors or changes by calling 800-632-2953 immediately.

Fold mark

Annual Offerings

American Baptist Mission Support