

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
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## ABC-MI Churches 2009 Mission Giving Reflects Challenging Economic Times

**East Lansing**—Once again American Baptists across Michigan sacrificially supported American Baptist missions through United Mission, Love Gift, five major offerings, institutional support and specific gifts. Please note the following totals:

	<u>2009</u>	<u>2008</u>	<u>Diff</u>
United Mission Basic/ Designated	\$269591	\$361792	(\$92201)
Love Gift	\$14004	\$15875	(\$1871)
America for Christ	\$52693	\$49867	\$2826
World Mission Offering	\$79671	\$93362	(\$13690)
Retired Min. & Miss. Off.	\$43191	\$51743	(\$8553)
One Great Hour of Sharing	\$38007	\$49006	(\$10999)
Region Offering	\$42165	\$43425	(\$1261)
Institutional Support	\$56045	\$66199	(\$10154)
Specifics	\$339652	\$348966	(\$9315)
Targeted Giving	\$21160	\$19915	\$1244
<b>Total ABMS</b>	<b>\$956178</b>	<b>\$1100151</b>	<b>(\$143973)</b>

There are several items of note regarding the American Baptist Mission Support of ABC-MI churches in 2009:

- Total ABMS giving for 2009 is down \$143,973 over total ABMS giving in 2008;
- In 2009 several of our traditionally strong mission giving congregations made significant cuts due to their own local church budget challenges. The top United Mission giving church in 2008 reduced their 2009 UM giving by \$40,335 due to economic challenges (For the mission giving report of the churches, go to [www.abc-mi.org](http://www.abc-mi.org) and click on “ABC-MI Missions” on the left-side navigation bar. Giving by month for 2009 is listed there);
- The decrease in United Mission affects the ABC-MI budget as the ABC-MI receives .65 cents of every United Mission dollar given by our churches. The remaining .35 cents of every United Mission dollar is divided among the national

program boards, Representative Process and the ABCUSA Office of the General Secretary. Giving to “Specifics” and the new “Region Offering” in recent years has helped to offset the Region United Mission losses to some degree, but not totally;

- The decrease in One Great Hour of Sharing gifts reflects the fact there was not a significant natural disaster in the US or world in 2009 therefore giving was limited, for the most part, to general giving to the One Great Hour of Sharing Offering. The Haiti Earthquake in early 2010 will result in significant gifts being received through One Great Hour of Sharing in 2010;
- 2009 marked the eleventh year in a row total ABMS giving declined. The 1999 total ABMS was \$1,796,642 compared to \$956,178 in 2009;
- ABC-MI churches have given generously to the Region Offering which was a new offering allowed by the revised ABCUSA Budget Covenant beginning in 2004 though we did not implement a formal Region Offering with materials and specific promotion month until 2008;
- “Specific” gifts to the ABC-MI and support of the “Region Offering” are critical to sustain the current ministry of the Region.

Regarding the 2009 ABC-MI budget, the actual revenue (unaudited) for 2009 was \$604,845 against a budget of \$716,044. The actual expenses (unaudited) were \$659,541 compared to budgeted expenses of \$718,990. In order to address the shortfall, the ABC-MI Executive Committee authorized a \$50,000 grant from the Michigan Baptist Convention reserve fund.

The ABC-MI budget does not include revenues/expenses of Camp Lael and Camp Lake Louise. Both camps have their own income/expense reports. The good news for 2009 is that both camps, based on unaudited reports, ended 2009 in the black (for more information on the camping ministry, see Camp Task Force February 8 news release). The 2009 audit of the Region and Camp financials will begin in April. When completed, the audit reports will be presented to the Administrative Ministries Team and Region Board.

Delegates to the 2009 ABC-MI Annual Meeting adopted a 2010 budget of \$670,494. This necessitated: (1) the reduction in support staff from four positions to

three; (2) professional and support staff salaries frozen at 2009 levels; (3) reduction in the number of hours for professional staff consulting.

Even with these reductions, based upon 2009 actual giving, Dr. Williams, ABC-MI Executive Minister acknowledges “there will be a gap between our mission of building healthy congregations and what we can afford to do.” He further states, “Yet, at a time when church budgets are stretched, when we all seek to respond to the overwhelming needs of Haiti, and when community needs across our state are so immediate, the ABC-MI mission of building up congregations and their leaders to transform the world is critically important. The ABC-MI continues to help congregations be prepared, ready, and able to face the myriad of challenges and create opportunities in their own missions. If anything, the ABC-MI must redouble our efforts to meet the needs of congregations and leaders which is why we are committed to moving forward with ReTool (a new initiative we are introducing this year) for congregational revitalization; maturing our Ministry Leadership Groups; and more.”

“On behalf of the ABC-MI Region Board, I express our sincere gratitude to our churches for their faithful and sacrificial support of American Baptist missions in challenging times. And, I ask each constituent congregation to help us address this financial gap between our mission of building up congregations/leaders and our fiscal responsibilities in 2010.”

Recognizing the financial challenge facing the ABC-MI in 2010, the First Baptist Church of Royal Oak Mission Fund has offered a \$15,000 challenge grant for the Region Offering. Every new church participating in the Region Offering in 2010 and churches that increase their giving to the 2010 Region Offering over their 2009 Region Offering giving, will be matched dollar for dollar up to \$15,000 by the First Baptist Church of Royal Oak Mission Fund. More about this opportunity will be included in the Region Offering promotional materials.