

AMERICAN BAPTIST UNITED MISSION
“Pentecost and United Mission”

Rev. Dr. Ron Vallet, Ambassador for United Mission from ABC/NYS
June 2011

**When we are united in God’s mission,
our United Mission will grow.**

The long stretch in the liturgical year from Eastertide to Advent has two names: ordinary time and the season of Pentecost. I definitely prefer the latter name, although I agree with a thought expressed by Walter Brueggemann: “It strikes me that the juxtaposition of *Pentecost* and *ordinary* is a wondrous claim on the church. It is wondrous because of our shared assumption that it is ‘ordinary’ for the church to be powered by God’s Spirit. We assume it! The hovering empowering work of the Spirit is so recurrently trustworthy that there seems to be nothing ‘extraordinary’ about it. Except that it is!” (Pentecost 2011, *Journal for Preachers*).

The question is often asked, “Is the church changing?” I believe it is, with the leading of God’s Spirit. I believe that God is leading the church to “be church” and not merely a “social club.” In these difficult times, God continues to call the church to be more about doing God’s mission and less about survival for its own sake. Yes we need the church—**the church that remembers who it is and whose it is**. The church needs the comfort and the power that comes only from God’s spirit: Remember the account in Acts 2:1-4:

“When the day of Pentecost had come, they were all together in one place. And suddenly from heaven there came a sound like the rush of a violent wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting. Divided tongues, as of fire, appeared among them, and a tongue rested on each of them. All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other languages, as the Spirit gave them ability” (NRSV).

Let the church be the church. May God’s Spirit lead us to be full participants in God’s mission. As American Baptist Christians, I believe that our best participation in that work of mission is through American Baptist United Mission.

- Your church’s United Mission giving supports your local region, which makes it possible for the region to provide more effective support for your church and others. In fact, most of the income for each of our regions comes from **gifts to United Mission**. Our giving to UM pays the major parts of the salaries of our region’s staff who provide:
 - staff service for search committees;
 - assistance resolving church conflicts;
 - area

ministers to maintain contact with individual pastors and with associations and small groups of churches; • camping ministry; • resources to assist your church in growth and spiritual health; and • education and training of pastors, youth, and lay leaders in congregational empowerment.

• UM giving also supports: • The Office of the General Secretary • American Baptist Men • American Baptist Women's Ministries (through the Love Gift) • ABC Information Services • American Baptist Home Mission Societies • International Ministries • Colleges, Seminaries, Homes Hospitals, etc. • Career Centers • Mission Resource Development • American Baptist Historical Society • American Baptist Personnel Services • Orientation to ABC Life Reminder: If you need a remittance form with your church's name, address, and PIN number, please contact your regional office.

THANK YOU for your support of American Baptist United Mission!

Ron

P.S. I encourage you to share this letter electronically or in print with others in your church.