

AMERICAN BAPTIST UNITED MISSION
“God’s Radical Justice” and United Mission

Rev. Dr. Ron Vallet, Ambassador for United Mission
September 2011

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

Last Sunday, August 28, 2011, it was my privilege to lead the worship service at the church where my wife and I are members as the congregation observed the 48th anniversary of Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King’s “I Have a Dream” speech. Eight of our young people and children helped us recapture the words and the meaning of that memorable day in Washington, D.C. Together the congregation recited the words of Dr. King’s conclusion:

And when this happens, when we allow freedom to ring, when we let it ring from every village and every hamlet, from every state and every city, we will be able to speed up that day when *all* of God's children, black men and white men, Jews and Gentiles, Protestants and Catholics, will be able to join hands and sing in the words of the old Negro spiritual: *Free at last! Free at last! Thank God Almighty, we are free at last!*

Less than five years later, at age 39, Dr. King went to Memphis, Tennessee, in support of striking garbage workers. On the evening of April 3, 1968, he concluded a speech with these words: “Like anybody, I would like to live a long life. Longevity has its place. But I'm not concerned about that now. *I just want to do God's will. And He's allowed me to go up to the mountain. And I've looked over. And I've seen the Promised Land. I may not get there with you. But I want you to know tonight, that we, as a people, will get to the Promised Land! And so I'm happy, tonight. I'm not worried about anything. I'm not fearing any man! Mine eyes have seen the glory of the coming of the Lord!*”

The next day, Dr. King was shot and killed.

In Jesus’ parable of the Laborers in the Vineyard, found in Matthew 20:1-16, it is clear that Jesus is calling us to a radical equality. We are called to a new alternative society—God’s new order that creates the possibility of something new. Even when things seem to be unfair, we can trust in the absolute fairness of God. God will do what is right. “I will pay you whatever is right,” the landowner said in the parable. God sees the whole story, in the light of eternity. This is God’s radical justice.

Our job as American Baptist Christians is to be faithful stewards of the gospel of Jesus Christ—proclaimers and enablers of God’s justice. One important way we do this is by giving generously to American Baptist United Mission on a regular basis.

In this season, many of our congregations are crafting budgets for the coming year. Be sure to include United Mission in your church’s budget.

- 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.