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April 22, 2011

Dear ABCGI Family,

Last year, 2010, ended uniquely for me as I spent the month of December on crutches after my November 22nd foot surgery. As I was wheeled into the annual Christmas Dinner a few weeks later, I told the group gathered about how God had been teaching me through the experience.

As helpless as I had felt, I had friends and family to care for me through the healing process. I needed to learn to accept help from others in order to accomplish simple tasks. Furthermore, what I discovered was that I need continue to ask for help all the time, because as I open myself to receive from others, I open myself to trust in and receive from God.

This is not a time for any of us to go it alone. This is not a time for any church to go it alone.

Our new vision statement for ABCGI reflects this very idea. After months of study and discernment by the Region Board, including a region-wide survey, we have adopted the following to guide us into the future...

Churches Helping Churches to be the Heart, Hands, and Feet of Christ

This easily happens when churches express hospitality for us all. We saw churches helping churches as Mt. Zion Baptist hosted by Installation Service last March, Mt. Pleasant set a high bar at the 2010 Annual Gathering, Emerson Avenue welcomed us for our Thanksgiving Worship, and Oasis of Hope held our Christmas dinner for Board, pastors, and retired pastors. A number of others hosted workshops and events throughout the year including Tuxedo Park, FBC Indianapolis, Southport, Covenant, Garfield Park and Lynhurst.

You will be hearing, and experiencing, more of churches helping churches in the coming year. If nothing else, we need the encouragement we can offer each other. It's one of the reasons I appreciate the way the Missional Church Learning Experience happens as teams from a variety of churches come together four times during the year for learning and sharing. As six churches completed the first round of MCLE this January, we were all moved by what God did in each congregation. And we have six more teams in MCLE during 2011, hosted at Garden Baptist!

When we share in mission together, we not only help each other but further God's kingdom. I hope you will take time to follow what's happening at the Edna Martin Christian Center this year (www.ednamartincc.org) as God is doing a new thing. In addition, our financial gifts to mission in 2010 were outstanding! I am deeply grateful for your church's sacrificial giving to United Mission, which exceeded our 2009 giving thanks to your generosity. (See the attached 2010-11 Resource Report for additional information.)

One of the ways we help each other is through support during pastoral transition. This year we said “goodbye” to a number of faithful pastors in our region. **Rev. Amy Bailey** left Franklin First Baptist at the end of August. Franklin was the first of our region churches to go through a new spiritual discernment retreat to help prepare them for their pastoral search. **Rev. Dr. Mark Hetrick** became the Interim Pastor in November.

Rev. Janet Hoover finished her ministry at Emerson Avenue Baptist Church. **Rev. Marie Wiese** became the Interim Pastor at Acton Baptist Church. **Rev. Dr. Doug Willey** completed his first year as Interim Pastor at Southport Baptist Church. Please be in prayer as we expect to welcome these churches’ new pastors in the coming year.

As we learn to navigate new cultural waters, I want to recommend one of my best reads of the past year to you. “UnChristian—What a New Generation Really Thinks about Christianity...and Why It Matters” is written by David Kinnaman of The Barna Group. His research is thought provoking and helpful in looking at how we share the Jesus we love.

Blessings,

Joan C. Friesen
Executive Minister

**Please note:* The Region Directory is normally published as a part of the Annual Report. While the Report is being published on-line, the Directory will be e-mailed to churches, pastors, board members, and retirees. If you would like an e-mail copy, or do not have computer access, please contact Sherri Stidd (office@abcgi.org or phone 317-484-9327) in our office and she will make sure you receive a copy.

2010 Region Survey Findings

As the Region Board processed the survey results at our January 2011, here's how we saw your responses. And thanks to those who participated!

Region Strengths

- There is a high level of collegiality
- Leaders show genuine concern for people's opinions
- There is a good level of hospitality and welcome for new people
- Involved lay leaders gain energy and spiritual renewal
- Lay leaders perceive the region is a help in adapting to societal change
- Communication is improving
- There is a positive spirit
- ABCGI is a solid resource during pastoral transition

Region Weaknesses

Primary Concerns

- Lack of a shared vision
- Need for congregational vitality

Secondary Concerns – still major

- Resolving problems through mutual effort
- Developing greater health in tolerating differing opinions and beliefs

Region Opportunities

- To work together as a group
- Involve more churches
- More interaction/fellowship among clergy and laity
- Do ministry together
- Discipleship among pastors and leaders
- Seminarian support
- Promote national leadership programs such as CECL
- Help churches restructure – one board
- Help with stewardship
- EMCC move
- Revitalize/improve neighborhoods
- Habitat for Humanity build

Observations (from board members)

- People in the pew have an overall more positive response than pastors
- There is disparity in perceptions between pastors and lay leaders
- There don't seem to be a lot of "mad" people
- Many are happy with things "as is"
- Many are satisfied with their current level of involvement and do not desire more control

Additional Observations (from Executive Minister)

- We are still healing from the issue divides of 5 years ago
- Pastors have higher expectations of the Region and Region leadership/staff
- Team learning approaches bring together churches, pastors and lay persons
- There seems to be a readiness to "do" together

2010 ABCGI Financial Report

Revenue	2009	2010
United Mission Giving from Churches <i>Thanks for your generosity!</i>	\$141,516.45	\$144,596.43
Region Offering <i>Over and above gifts from churches and individuals</i>	3,720.00	2,250.00
Annual Meeting	1,120.00	1,565.00
Program Fees	1,199.00	314.00
Honoraria & Miscellaneous Income	1.00	2343.00
Investment Income used for Operations <i>(see below)</i>	39,679.88	-0-
 <u>Total</u>	 <u>\$187,236.33</u>	 <u>\$151,068.43</u>

Expenses		
Salaries, Travel, Benefits	\$139,362.40	\$109,345.66
Executive Minister Search <i>2009 expenses not billed until 2010</i>	6,401.08	931.23
Programs, Ministries, Regional Gatherings	5,170.41	5,404.65
Professional Fees <i>Audit, Foundation Services, Insurance, Legal, Bank fees</i>	16,611.22	16,216.64
Office rent and expenses <i>Rent, equipment, phone, internet, website, copies, postage</i>	19,691.22	15,774.24
 <u>Total</u>	 <u>\$187,236.33</u>	 <u>\$147,672.42</u>

Budget Outcome

We exceeded our expenses by almost \$3,400.00. Praise God! Out of our 2010 surplus, the Region Board made a gift of \$3,000.00 to the Ministerial Excellence Fund for the Blessing Fund, helping to provide matching funds for grants to clergy in need.

America for Christ Offering	2009	2010
	\$7,881.60	\$5,721.76
Edna Martin Christian Center	\$5,085.98	4,467.31
American Baptist Camping	1,000.00	501.78
Lynhurst Baptist Church Community Center	500.00	250.89
Renaissance Center, Mt. Zion Baptist	500.00	250.89
Church Federation of Indianapolis	500.00	budgeted
American Baptist Youth of Indiana/GI		250.89
Carry over into 2010	295.62	-0-
 Total Investment Income	 2009	 2010
	\$61,058.74	\$62,937.65
Towards 2009 expenses	39,679.88	-0-
Reinvested	21,378.86	62,937.65

2011 ABCGI Ministry Resources

Revenue

United Mission Giving	\$140,000.00
<i>We count on tithes and gifts from member churches that support all of American Baptist life, ministry, and mission, while modeling proportional giving to their own church members</i>	
Region offering	5,000.00
Annual Meeting Income	2,000.00
Program fees	500.00
Honoraria & Miscellaneous income	1,100.00
Investment Fund allocation	7,498.00

<u>Anticipated Total</u>	<u>\$154,098.00</u>
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Expenses

Salaries and Benefits	\$104,345.00
<i>Executive Minister (full-time) and Office Administrator (part-time)</i>	
<i>Our Executive Minister concentrates in the following areas—1) Being a pastor to pastors and providing clergy support and training, 2) Working with region leadership to discern God’s vision and direction, 3) Creating a broader network among ABCGI churches while offering innovative opportunities for congregational vitality, 4) Resourcing mission and stewardship</i>	
<i>The Office Administrator handles communication, financial accounting, and day-to-day responsibilities of office management</i>	
Travel and Staff Professional Expense	9,650.00
<i>Includes Continuing Education, travel, professional memberships</i>	
Professional Expenses	15,100.00
<i>Audit, Foundation Services, Insurance, Legal, Bank fees</i>	
Office rent and expenses	19,353.00
<i>Rent, equipment, phone, internet, website, copies, postage</i>	
Programs, Ministries, Regional Gatherings	5,650.00
<i>Most if not all of our region activities are offered at low or no cost. Other educational events and worship gatherings are funded by your mission gifts or for a minimal fee. This resource allows us to be responsive to the needs of our churches as we seek to add innovative and relevant opportunities.</i>	

<u>Anticipated Total</u>	<u>\$154,098.00</u>
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The logo for the Ministerial Excellence Fund features the words "Ministerial Excellence Fund" in a blue, elegant cursive font. The word "Ministerial" is positioned above "Excellence Fund". A horizontal blue line is drawn beneath the word "Excellence". Below the line, the biblical reference "2 Corinthians 9:8" is written in a smaller, blue, cursive font.

*Ministerial
Excellence Fund*
2 Corinthians 9:8

MEF Update – January 2011

The Parable of the Sower, as recorded in Mark chapter four, reminds us that the seed of the Gospel, planted in good soil, brings a great harvest. The results of our Ministerial Excellence Fund (MEF) Ministry to date tell us that we are sowing the seeds of God's financial resources in good soil.

God's abundant provision through the Lilly Endowment proffered the following results in the fourth quarter of 2010...

Testimonies:

This quarter, we approved three of the six general grant applications received. The remaining three are still pending, as we seek additional information and input from financial advisors who are working with our applicants.

Our total general grant amount for the quarter currently stands at \$6,300. While this amount is relatively small compared to other quarters, the needs we have met have helped our professional church leaders (PCLs) greatly.

One grant, an extension of grant approved a year ago, will help eliminate the debt of one of our PCL's. To date, this pastor has been able to eliminate approximately half of his debt -- thanks to last year's grant. With help from generous matching fund donors, we hope to eliminate his debt entirely.

We continue to see congregations who stand behind their PCL's. We approved a grant where in the congregation will provide the entirety of matching funds required.

On October 14, the MEF Team approved a new initiative. Applications for Insurance Premium Increase Assistance Grants were received beginning in the fourth quarter of 2010. Eleven applications were received and approved. Total grant monies distributed to assist churches with insurance premium payments was \$15,185.56. (These figures are in addition to the general grants noted above.) The purpose of these grants is to help congregations pay for significant increases in health insurance premiums in 2011.

Here again, the local congregations of applicants matched the entire amount of grant moneys. We commend these congregations who are committed to maintaining this vital benefit to their Professional Church Leaders (PCLs).

Statistics:

To date, we have received 92 applications for assistance. These applicants have identified more than \$1.3 million in financial need. As has been the case throughout our ministry, the greatest needs continue to be student loan debt, medical bills and consumer debt.

While we have not been able to meet every need, we have approved 62 grants totaling just more than \$300,000. In addition, we have commitments of more than \$305,000 in matching funds to supplement grant monies. After the first two years of our MEF ministry, we have exceeded the \$600,000 level in providing financial relief to PCLs in need.

As in past quarters, the Ministers and Missionaries Benefit Board (MMBB), continues their generous support of our PCL's. Including all commitments to date, MMBB, through their Emergency Assistance Fund (EAF), has provided \$61,500 in matching funds.

Blessings Fund:

We continue to raise matching funds for grants where the need is beyond the reach of a congregation. In these first two years of the MEF, 14 individuals, two associations, one association chapter of the American Baptist Men, and nine churches have given a total of \$21,627.63 to the Blessings Fund.

We continue to use these reserve funds, however, and need to replenish them. We have committed \$12,800 from the fund to date, and we know the need will continue to grow.

Education:

A growing number of our PCLs are taking advantage of financial coaching provided by our network of professional counselors. This ministry is free to any PCL who desires to have their financial situation reviewed, seek assistance in household budgeting and debt reduction and/or create tax-advantageous estate plans.

Dave Ramsey's *Financial Peace University* (FPU) continues to be a popular and effective tool used by our congregations. We now have 31 churches who have, or are hosting FPU in their congregations. This represents 10 percent of our congregations who are now providing formal, biblical, financial education to people in their congregations and communities.

We will continue to provide the church kit and pay a facilitator's travel expenses as needed – at no cost to the congregation. We will also provide individual household member kits at a discounted price of \$60 each (regularly \$90-100).

We distributed our self-study training DVD to all PCLs at the end of October. Entitled *Personal Financial Planning for Professional Church Leaders Who Counsel Their Parishioners*, this study equips our PCL's to assist members of their congregations and community with a variety of economic issues. Materials, information and training address topics which include: household budgeting, unemployment, church finance, debt, savings and investing, clergy compensation, retirement and estate planning.

Every member of our ABC/IN-KY family can be involved in the MEF Ministry. You are invited to join us by:

- Encouraging applications from those whom you know need assistance
- Participating in financial education experiences in your congregation
- Committing financial resources to the MEF Ministry
- Praying for the MEF Team, applicants, donors and ministry.

If you have questions about the Ministerial Excellence Fund, please contact Marc Kirchoff, Minister of Grants and Fundraising:

812-235-9303 or marckirchoff@abc-indiana.org.

Please join us in sowing the seeds of God's abundant Providence in the good soil of our American Baptist family!