

Mid-Winter Board Report – Rev. Charles E. Mock, Executive Secretary

Home Mission Board of the National Baptist Convention USA, Inc. - January 19, 2011

The energy is building as Indianapolis works hard to warmly welcome our National Baptist Convention USA, Inc. on June 20-24th of this year. This work began long before 2011 and we plan to be ready when it happens. The hosting committee meets weekly at the church of the Moderator of the Convention related district called Union District, Friendship Missionary Baptist Church. At the upcoming Board meeting, including the Home Mission Board, the Pastoral leaders of all the working committees and task forces will be distributed. Our Union District Leader, the Rev. Dr. Ronald Covington, has agreed to make an appearance at our Home Mission Board meeting as well.

The Indianapolis hosting committee has agreed to support the Home Mission Board's first active hand on mission involvement in Indianapolis on June 20th before the Congress gets well underway. The Home Mission Board, others from our Convention family will join neighborhood residents in the historic African-American neighborhood of Martindale Brightwood, the Union District representatives and churches from the wider church family represented in The Church Federation of Greater Indianapolis in a clean up and mobilization day in preparation for a Habitat for Humanity Centennial Village Build. The kickoff for this neighborhood transformation will begin in June of 2011 with a Neighborhood Cleanup Day. The day will begin early on the morning of June 20th with a breakfast followed by identification of clean up tools and work assignments, and a press conference that will include a prayer service dedicating the efforts of all those involved. A lunch will be served as well as dinner at the close of the work day.

For nearly 100 years, The Church Federation of Greater Indianapolis has been uniting and strengthening congregations to make an impact locally and to further God's Kingdom. Vice Chair of Home Mission, Dr. Angelique Walker-Smith, serves as the Executive Director. The members of CFGI have decided to partner with Habitat for Humanity of Greater Indianapolis to celebrate its 100 year milestone on June 7th in 2012. 2011 is the preparatory year leading up to this critical moment with the churches. The goal for the Centennial Village is to transform a street in the historic Martindale Brightwood neighborhood by building 10 homes, side by side, as well as a unity park and playground. Martindale-Brightwood is a neighborhood situated on the near northeast side of Indianapolis bounded by 30th Street, Massachusetts Avenue, 21st Street, Sherman Drive, and the Norfolk Southern Railroad tracks. This area encompasses two previously independent settlements. Brightwood, the eastern section of the neighborhood, was first platted in 1872 and amended in 1874. Railroad workers on the "Bee Line" were the first to settle the Brightwood suburb which soon became the railroad center of Indianapolis. The town of Brightwood was incorporated in 1876 and remained autonomous until 1897 when it was annexed by Indianapolis. The Martindale area was settled in 1874, also by railroad workers who found employment in machine shops and manufacturing. Industrial growth in Martindale was supported by the nearby railroad lines and the area quickly became a working class suburb. By 1960,

African Americans accounted for approximately half of Brightwood's population of 5,700. This amount would increase to over ninety percent of the population which had declined to 4,700 by 1990. Through this same period Martindale remained an African American center of small working class homes intermixed with industry. Although Martindale-Brightwood is known for the significant number of African-American churches and various African American enterprise, by 1967, there was the declaration that Martindale had been declared a poverty target area, the Martindale Area Citizens Service (MACS) organized to provide aid against the poverty, deteriorating houses, health problems, crime, and unemployment which threatened the neighborhood. Martindale-Brightwood continues to be a neighborhood in transition. New housing developments have begun in recent years and community groups continue to work for an end to the other problems which have plagued their neighborhood. Yet much remains to be done to improve the neighborhood condition and to rebuild a community which has witnessed so much change in the past forty-years. The neighborhood will have to look for some of these answers in its past which offers a picture of people, organizations, churches, schools, and businesses working together to promote the well being of their neighborhood.

In order to accomplish the goal of building the ten homes, we are asking the churches of greater Indianapolis to help us raise the support, witnessing to the dream of church unity. Each of the 10 homes will represent a decade from The Church Federation's past and the role that it played in our community:

- 1st decade – The Church in the City
- 2nd decade – Division to Diversity
- 3rd decade – Strengthening Families
- 4th decade – War & Work
- 5th decade – Evangelism: Telling the Story
- 6th decade – Growing Up & Out
- 7th decade – Expanding Christian Unity
- 8th decade – Seeking Common Unity
- 9th decade – Shalom
- 10th decade – Hope in the New Millennium

In order to make this project possible, 1 million dollars will need to be raised. Because we will have to prepare the infrastructure on the street, this equates to \$100,000 for each home. Every dollar committed will be matched by the Nina Mason Pulliam Charitable Trust up to \$85,000. This is a large project, and it will take everyone in the faith-based community and broader community to "put their best foot forward." Therefore the Greater Indianapolis community, and especially the Martindale-Brightwood community where the home will be built, thanks the Union District and the Home Mission Board for partnering with them to provide a re-vitalized neighborhood.