

BARACK OBAMA

October 1, 2008

The Anointed Ex-Offenders Ministry
Appreciation Encouragement Luncheon

Dear Friends,

I want to thank you for the opportunity to welcome everyone to the Appreciation and Encouragement Luncheon for the Anointed Ex-Offenders Ministry. As you know, the reintegration of ex-offenders into society is a continuing challenge, and one we must work hard to address through new and innovative approaches. Faith-based approaches to reducing recidivism are an important part of the solution to this vexing problem.

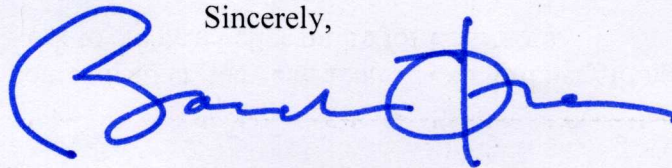
Too often in these cynical times we forget the abiding truth that we all have the power to create a better world, if only we do God's work here on earth. You have not only remembered that truth, but confirmed it anew.

Your work reveals a mission to instill people with dignity, personal empowerment, and hope. By organizing community outreach efforts including jail ministry programs, you recognize the power of helping others find salvation and hope through gospel.

When I was in my early twenties, I worked as a community organizer for a group of churches on the South Side of Chicago in areas that had been devastated by steel plant closings. At first, no one thought those neighborhoods had a chance. But we banded together, and we organized, and we taught people to stand up to their government when it wasn't standing up for them. In the shadows of those abandoned factories, I learned that when ordinary people come together, they can achieve extraordinary things. I'm glad you are doing similar work to create a better future for Baltimore.

I wish Anointed Ex-Offenders Ministry a successful and enjoyable luncheon today and great success in the future.

Sincerely,



Barack Obama



**OBAMA
BIDEN**

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