



ABCUSA Leaders to Receive Honorary Doctorate Degrees

VALLEY FORGE, PA (ABNS 2/22/13)—The Board of General Ministries for American Baptist Churches USA (ABCUSA) is proud to announce the receipt of honorary doctorate degrees for ABCUSA President Ruth Clark from Bacone College, and for ABCUSA Vice President Don Ng, as well as Associate General Secretary for Mission Resource Development Leo S. Thorne, both from American Baptist Seminary of the West.

Clark will be presented with the Doctor of Humane Letters degree on Saturday, May 4, in Muskogee, Oklahoma. Ng and Thorne will each be awarded the Doctor of Divinity degree on Saturday, May 18, at the Burmese Baptist Mission Church of Oakland, California.

Roy Medley, general secretary for ABCUSA, said, “Each of these three honorees is well known for his/her devotion to Christ and the church – locally, denominationally and ecumenically. I have had the joy of serving with each of these multi-talented persons and have seen their many gifts at work for the Kingdom. Their recognition is well-earned.”

Of Ng and Thorne, Dr. Paul M. Martin, president of the American Baptist Seminary of the West, said, "These leaders exemplify the kind of ministry and ministers the American Baptist Seminary of the West was commissioned to prepare for ministry in 1871. We are honoring persons of distinction in Christian service to church, community and international work. We are proud of the Trustees' selection because it represents our seminary's long history and commitment to justice, ecumenism, international mission and diversity."

Ruth Clark is currently serving as president of ABCUSA. Nominated by the Central Region, she served two terms on the General Board (now the Board of General Ministries) including four years as part of its Executive Committee. Clark served as both vice president and president of American Baptist International Ministries, completing her term in 2011. Regionally, she chaired the Alaska Commission and the regional Mission and Stewardship Committee, served on the Board of Directors, and was part of both the Task Force on Restructure for the Region and the Bylaws Task Force. Clark is a graduate of William Jewell College (music education) and Central Baptist Theological Seminary, with a degree in religious education. She is a member of the Judson Baptist Church of Kansas City, Kansas.

Rev. Don Ng has served since 1998 as senior pastor of the historic First Chinese Baptist Church in San Francisco. The church serves both English-speaking and Cantonese-speaking people in Chinatown, as well as in the greater Bay Area. Ng is also currently serving as vice president of American Baptist Churches USA (ABCUSA) for a two-year term ending December 31, 2013, and has been nominated to serve as President for a term running from January 1, 2014-December 31, 2015. From 1978-1998, Ng was on the national staff of American Baptist Educational Ministries in Valley Forge, where he was director of Education for Discipleship and Youth Ministry. He is a graduate of Gordon College, Wenham, Massachusetts, in psychology and received his M.Div. from Andover Newton Theological School, Newton Centre, Massachusetts. His home church, First Baptist Church of Boston, is one of the oldest Baptist churches in the U.S., founded in 1665.

Rev. Dr. Leo S. Thorne, associate general secretary for ABCUSA, provides leadership for the department of Mission Resource Development within ABCUSA. He is chiefly responsible for communicating the vision and mission story of the denomination, developing stewardship resources for local congregations, and assisting the program boards and regions in raising mission support. A full schedule of speaking and preaching engagements enables Thorne to raise awareness of the opportunities that local American Baptist congregations have for mission. He has served as a pastor in culturally diverse settings for over 15 years in Trinidad, West Indies (his birthplace); Brooklyn, New York; Oakland, New Jersey; and Kansas City, Missouri. At the Baptist World Alliance, he serves on the Executive Committee of the Communications Committee and as a member of the Commission on Doctrine and Interchurch Cooperation. Thorne holds a doctorate in American Literature from Columbia Pacific University and two Masters degrees, including the Master of Divinity degree from Drew University.

American Baptist Churches is one of the most diverse Christian denominations today, with over 5,200 local congregations comprised of 1.3 million members, across the United States and Puerto Rico, all engaged in God's mission around the world.