



## **ABHMS Announces Retirement of the Rev. Dr. David C. Laubach**

**VALLEY FORGE, PA (ABNS 6/3/13)**—Colleagues, friends, parishioners, and family members bid a fond farewell to the Rev. Dr. David C. Laubach recently, when American Baptist Home Mission Societies (ABHMS) announced his retirement at a building-wide celebration at the American Baptist Churches (USA) Mission Center, Valley Forge, Pa. The event featured recollections of Laubach’s 27 years of faithful service to ABHMS, most recently as associate executive director for Higher Education Ministries.

Laubach joined ABHMS in 1986 as director of evangelism conferences and Macedonia Ministries. As many as 100 Macedonia Ministries weekend events were held in a year as well as two extraordinary weekends in England and Alaska. Large national evangelism events included those in St. Louis in 1987—for which members of the St. Louis orchestra played as the Hallelujah Chorus was sung—and Washington, D.C., in 1992, for which Jeremiah Wright Jr. preached at the National Cathedral. Macedonia Ministries morphed into Lay Renewal Ministries, which included Ministry of the Laity in the Workplace. Under Laubach’s direction, teams for Macedonia Ministries and Workplace Ministries met annually and sponsored regular pre-biennial events. Interdenominational networks of leaders of similar national programs resulted in the international conference on reconciliation in Coventry, England. Large national evangelism conferences became an “Evangelism Meeting” at Green Lake that was held annually for 10 years.

Laubach became a manager in 1995 and, over the next 12 years, provided oversight for Haitian, Hispanic-Latino, Black Church, Asian, Indian and Alaskan ministries; evangelism; new church planting; transformation; missional church; discipleship; children and youth; lay renewal; American Baptist Men-USA; volunteerism; Rekindle; New Life Florida; chaplaincy; and family ministries. In addition, he convened the American Baptist Evangelism Team (ABET) and New Church Planting (NCP) Council. Under Laubach’s direction, the Church Planter Institute was birthed, meeting at Green Lake and adapting a model from the Union Baptist Association in Texas. NEW LIFE 2010 was born at a combined ABET/NCP gathering in Las Vegas in 1998. ABET became the National Evangelism Team, supporting the “Got Style?” personality-based evangelism program.

In 2007, Laubach became associate executive director of Strategic Missional Relationships, for which he nurtured relationships with new and traditional ABHMS partners, including the American Baptist Association of Seminary Administrators (ABASA), the American Baptist

Historical Society and Green Lake (Wis.) Conference Center. Since 2010, he has focused on Higher Education Ministries, for which he strengthened relationships and ministries with such key partners as the American Baptist Association of Colleges and Universities (ABACU).

Beginning with the Baptist World Alliance (BWA) meeting in Hong Kong in 1995, Laubach attended BWA general council and other meetings in Vancouver, Prince Edward Island, Hawaii, England, Berlin, Seoul, South Africa, Dresden, Prague, Amsterdam, Australia, Spain, Mexico and Cuba. A frequent presenter, he chaired the work group on church renewal for five years. He was part of the National Council of Churches of Christ USA work group for evangelism and served a term as chair. A highlight was lunch with former President Jimmy Carter at Emory University's Candler School of Theology, Atlanta. Having served on the board of the Green Lake Conference Center for several terms, he was elected board chair this year. In addition, he will serve as coordinator for the 2014 Orientation to American Baptist Life gathering.

“Dr. David Laubach has been trying to retire from American Baptist Home Mission Societies for several years, much to my dismay,” says ABHMS Executive Director Dr. Aidsand F. Wright-Riggins III. “The fact of the matter is: ABHMS and I value Dr. Laubach’s ministry so much that we hoped we could keep him from moving toward the next stage of his ministry journey. I confess that we have been selfish. Not only has he been the consummate professional, David has simply been one wonderful human being. If ABHMS was a professional sports team, I’d say that David Laubach has been a stellar franchise player for us—an MVP well on his way to the ‘Missional Hall of Fame.’ Yes, David’s retirement is hard for me and for our mission organization. But I am thankful to have had the privilege of serving with him for a score of years. I say to him: ‘Well done, David. Well done.’”

Laubach has been to every continent and all 50 states. He has preached and taught in every ABCUSA region and attended 13 biennials, beginning with Pittsburgh in 1987, where he was commissioned as an American Baptist home missionary. He has visited every church and institution in Alaska and all of the Indian churches in Montana, Nevada, Arizona, Oklahoma and Massachusetts. He has been to nine ABACU colleges and nine ABASA seminaries. He has visited the Pentagon, Air Force bases in Alaska and Army bases in Korea. With Wright-Riggins, Laubach attended the Washington, D.C., dinner at which the Rev. Billy Graham received the Congressional Medal of Honor.

Church history, Laubach’s avocation, became a larger part of his commitment to ABHMS in recent years. Beginning with a photo gallery of ABHMS leaders and the related “To Think that it Happened on Mulberry Street” booklet in 2007, the celebration at Mariners Temple in 2010 and the publication of “American Baptist Home Mission ROOTS: 1824-2010,” Laubach’s history-related work continues with recent presentations to the ABHMS board of directors in Atlanta and service on the board of directors of the American Baptist Historical Society. His last research project for ABHMS involves socially responsible investing.

Ordained in 1972, Laubach pastored for 15 years before joining ABHMS. He was pastor of Aldenville (Pa.) and Clinton Center Baptist churches; Mount Pleasant Baptist Church, Ambler, Pa.; and Cohansey Baptist Church, Bridgeton, N.J.

Laubach earned a D.Min. at Northern Baptist Theological Seminary, Lombard, Ill. He received a Th.M. at Princeton (N.J.) Theological Seminary and an M.Div. at Eastern Baptist Theological Seminary, now known as Palmer Theological Seminary, Wynnewood, Pa. Continuing education included certification in the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator and Emotional Competence Inventory. Two “sabbaticals” involved work on a Ph.D. at Temple University, Philadelphia, and research for a Northern Baptist Theological Seminary D.Min. at the University of Oxford, United Kingdom. He wrote “12 Steps to Congregational Transformation: A Practical Guide for Leaders” in 2005. He also was an adjunct professor of Evangelism and Church Renewal at Eastern Baptist Theological Seminary.

He is married to Candace Laubach and has two adult children, Johanna and Timothy, and four grandchildren. He is a member and moderator of Aldenville Baptist Church.

*ABHMS—the domestic mission arm of American Baptist Churches USA—ministers as the caring heart and serving hands of Jesus Christ across the United States and Puerto Rico through a multitude of initiatives that focus on discipleship, community and justice.*

*American Baptist Churches USA 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.*