



“Emerge: Baptist Witness in the 21st Century” Announced for January 2014

VALLEY FORGE, PA (ABNS 5/29/13)—American Baptist seminarians and new-to-ABC ministers will meet for the Orientation to American Baptist Life conference in Orlando, Florida, January 6-9, 2014. For the third time, the orientation conference will be integrated with a Ministers Conference which is sponsored by ABCUSA. The 2014 event theme is “Emerge: Baptist Witness in the 21st Century” and is linked to Acts 1:8. In this 200th anniversary year of the historic Judson mission to Burma, conferees will explore emergent themes in Baptist theology of the Holy Spirit, postmodern witness and third millennium mission. The conference will be held at the SeaWorld Doubletree Resort in Orlando.

Bible study teachers, worship experiences, workshops and speakers will find their themes in Acts 1:8, focusing on the Holy Spirit, witness and mission. The Orientation track and Ministers Conference track will both have more flexibility in 2014 than in the past, with seminarians and new ministers able to elect to attend Ministers Conference workshops and ministers able to attend Orientation sessions. New to the event in 2014 is inclusion of Women in Ministry, led by Rev. Patricia Hernandez. Worship will be coordinated by Rev. John Polite, who will invite seminarians to plan and lead worship.

Major orientation sessions are planned by ABCUSA (General Ministries), American Baptist Home Mission Societies, International Ministries, Ministers and Missionaries Benefit Board, Regional Executive Ministers Council, and Associated Ministry Organizations. Dr. David Laubach, retiring associate executive director, ABHMS, is coordinator for the Orientation to American Baptist Life conference and Dr. Donald Ng, pastor of First Chinese Baptist Church in San Francisco and Vice President of ABCUSA, is coordinator for the Ministers Conference.

Planning committee members include:

- Karen Mason, director of Special Events, International Ministries;
- Rev. Melody Chartier, financial advisor and Certified Financial Planner, MMBB;
- Rev. Patricia Hernandez, national director of Women in Ministry and Transition Ministries, ABCUSA;
- Dr. George Hancock-Stefan, associate professor of Church History Palmer Theological Seminary
- Rev. Douglas Avilesbernal, pastor, Calvary Baptist Church of Norristown, PA;

- Dr. Steven Van Ostran, executive minister, ABC of the Rocky Mountains;
- Dr. Cassandra Williams, national coordinator for Discipleship Resource Development, ABHMS; and
- Annie Marcucci, director, Office of Travel and Conference Planning, ABCUSA.

Registration fees will be \$75 for seminarians, \$100 for new-to-ABC ministers, and \$150 for Ministers Conference attendees. Room rates at the Doubletree will be \$99 per night. Seminarians are encouraged to enroll in the American Baptist seminarians' database in order to receive communications about the Orientation conference. They can do so at http://abhms.org/education/seminarian_registration/register.cfm. Registration for the January event will be online in July.

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.