**ABHMS Launches Registration for National Gathering to Feature Theologian Brian D. McLaren**

**VALLEY FORGE, PA (ABNS 6/11/15)**—Registration for American Baptist Home Mission Societies’ national gathering, Space for Grace, Nov. 4-7, 2015, opens today. Visit <http://www.abhms.org/> and click on the Space for Grace graphic at the bottom of the page to register online. Paper registration forms will be available by mid-June.

The California gathering, to be held at the Hilton Los Angeles Airport hotel, seeks to restore human connections in a world divided by race, religion, culture and class by intentionally inviting diverse voices to explore differing perspectives about contemporary issues affecting congregations and communities across the United States today.

Theologian, author, speaker and activist Brian D. McLaren leads a roster of powerful, thought-provoking worship leaders and learning experience presenters that include the Rev. Ernest R. Flores, pastor, Second Baptist Church, Germantown, Pa.; the Rev. Marie Onwubuariri, executive minister, American Baptist Churches of Wisconsin; the Rev. Susan Sparks, pastor, Madison Avenue Baptist Church, New York City; and the Rev. Dr. Jacqueline A. Thompson, assistant pastor, Allen Temple Baptist Church, Oakland, Calif.

McLaren’s dozen-plus books include “A New Kind of Christianity: Ten Questions that Are Transforming the Faith,” “Naked Spirituality: A Life with God in 12 Simple Words” and “We Make the Road by Walking.” Profiled in Christian Century, Christianity Today and The Washington Post, McLaren has been named one of 25 influential Christian leaders in America by Time. He has been featured on CNN’s “Larry King Live” and ABC’s “Nightline” along with FOXNews, PBS and NPR. His blog can be found at <http://www.brianmclaren.net/>.

The Space for Grace gathering will feature morning worship followed by small group discussion and conversation café opportunities along with more than a dozen afternoon learning experience offerings, including: “Consensus Building in the Midst of Diversity and Divergence,” “Extending Grace to Others in Tension-filled Moments” and “Growing Downward in Grace: Social Justice in an Urban Church.”

“Spirit-filled hospitality”—designed to cultivate physical and interpersonal spaces where Scripture, insight and reflection can be processed and discussed—will infuse the event. Indoor and outdoor spaces will offer opportunities to learn about ministry partners, purchase Judson Press books and resources, take time to view photography and art exhibitions, and listen to poetry and live music.

The Space for Grace gathering will conclude with a banquet celebrating the 24-year ministry of Dr. Aidsand F. Wright-Riggins III, ABHMS retiring executive director.

For more information, visit <http://www.abhms.org/> and click the Space for Grace graphic, email space4grace@abhms.org or phone 800-222-3872, x2044.

*American Baptist Home Mission Societies—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 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.*