

Resolutions Adopted by the BWA General Council

Ocho Rios, Jamaica

July 1-6, 2013

Resolution # 1 Nelson Mandela

The General Council of the Baptist World Alliance, meeting in Ocho Rios, Jamaica, July 1-6, 2013:

RECEIVES with concern the news that one of the world's great statesmen has fallen ill and has been placed on life-support;

ACKNOWLEDGES that President Nelson Mandela is an extraordinary leader through whom God enabled a peaceful transition in a country divided by "race" and ethnicity and heading toward civil war;

NOTES that, together with Archbishop Desmond Tutu and others, he led a truth and reconciliation process, based on values consistent with the Gospel that set an example for other leaders;

OFFERS prayers for peace and healing for President Mandela, his family, and the people of South Africa; and

Inspired by Mandela's belief in human rights and justice for all, CALLS on Baptists to follow Mandela's example of courage, grace, truth and reconciliation in our dealings with others.

Resolution # 2 Gratitude for Life and Ministry of George Liele

The General Council of the Baptist World Alliance, meeting in Ocho Rios, Jamaica, July 1-6, 2013:

RECOGNIZES George Liele as the first ordained black Baptist minister in America and a pioneer leader of Black churches in the United States of America;

ACKNOWLEDGES George Liele, founder of the First African Baptist Church in America and leader of churches in South Carolina and Georgia, who contributed to the development of church leaders including David George, Jessie Peters and Andrew Bryan in USA, and others in Africa, the Caribbean and Great Britain;

NOTES that George Liele evacuated with the British after the American Revolutionary War and, while many remained enslaved, he chose to migrate to Jamaica with his wife Hannah and their four children and ministered there for over forty years; and

LAUDS George Liele as the first Baptist missionary, ten years before William Carey sailed for India and thirty-three years before Adoniram Judson sailed for Myanmar;

RECALLS that George Liele planted the first Baptist church in Jamaica, with membership drawn from both enslaved and free persons who had not been exposed to an ordained Black minister of the Gospel;

COMMENDS George Liele who, along with fellow American missionary, Moses Baker, whom he baptized, maintained correspondence with Dr. John Rippon and other Baptists and, together with other Ethiopian Baptists, including Parson Kellick, Thomas Swigle, George Gibb, George Vineyard, Miss Cooper and George Lewis, worked for the flourishing of the cause of Christ among the Jamaican people; and

OFFERS thanks and praise to God for the life and ministry of George Liele and places on record its gratitude to God for the remarkable life and legacy of this pioneer of Baptist mission.

Resolution # 3 Dr. Duke K. McCall in Memoriam

The General Council of the Baptist World Alliance, meeting in Ocho Rios, Jamaica, July 1-6, 2013:

NOTES that Dr. Duke McCall served and supported the BWA, participating actively from the time he was 16 years old by attending the 1931 Baptist Youth World Conference in Prague, Czechoslovakia;

RECALLS that Dr. McCall was elected to the BWA Executive Committee in 1947 and served faithfully in many other roles, such as: member of the General Council, member of the Commission on Freedom, Justice and Peace, co-chair of the Commission on Baptist Doctrine, and participated in committees charged with nominating BWA commission members and reviewing the BWA constitution;

REJOICES that Dr. McCall, who was elected at the 15th Baptist World Congress in Los Angeles, served as BWA president from 1980-1985 and was a primary contributor to significant achievements during his presidency.

These include:

- The formation of and inclusion of regional bodies within the global organization;
- The introduction of travel scholarships to facilitate attendance and participation in BWA meetings by Baptist leaders from around the world;
- The convening of the first Baptist International Conference on Theological Education held in 1982;
- The acquisition in 1985 of property to serve as BWA's international offices in McLean;

REMEMBERS Dr. McCall as a statesman among Baptists in the USA, contributing in creative ways to the advance of denominational institutions;

APPLAUDS the decisive role Dr. McCall played in theological education:

- Emphasizing the place of disciplined scholarship in the life of the church and the denomination;
- Integrating black students into the seminary during the civil rights movement in the USA and in violation of Kentucky state law;
- Asking local churches to certify seminary students;
- Merging the seminary and the Carver Women's Missionary Union School of Missions, and by initiating studies in social work;
- Allowing women to study in the School of Theology,
- Making significant innovations to the curriculum of theological education,
- Launching the Boyce Bible College, to provide theological education for laity
- Educating a generation of Christian ministers, encouraging them to dedicate themselves to teaching the Word of God, living out the full meaning of the Christian faith in service to humanity, and in sharing the gospel with the world;

GIVES THANKS for the life and ministry of Dr. McCall which has enriched Baptists around the world and urges Baptists to celebrate the legacy of Dr. McCall as an instructive model for denominational service and leadership.

Resolution # 4 Appreciation for J. Deotis Roberts

The General Council of the Baptist World Alliance, meeting in Ocho Rios, Jamaica, July 1-6, 2013:

NOTES that Dr. J. Deotis Roberts, Jr. will celebrate his 86th birthday in 2013, having been born to J. D. and Edith Roberts in Spindale, North Carolina, United States of America (USA), in 1917;

ACKNOWLEDGES Dr. Roberts' outstanding work as one of the most prominent theologians in the world, author of more than fourteen books and more than one hundred scholarly articles, and one of the founders of the Black Theology Movement;

RECOGNIZES Dr. Roberts unwavering dedication and commitment as an educator, having taught at colleges, seminaries and universities across the USA and internationally, including the Howard Divinity School, Yale University, Duke University, and Eastern (now Palmer) Theological Seminary, committing much of his life to training leaders for the church and academy;

RECALLS Dr. Roberts' former presidency of the American Theological Association and of the Interdenominational Theological Center in Atlanta, Georgia, in the USA;

NOTES that Dr. Roberts took an interdisciplinary approach to his work, insisting that the gospel of Christ speaks to all of humanity, and that Black theology harmonizes with Christian theology, as he developed a constructive role for black theology, emphasizing that "Christ the liberator is likewise Christ the Redeemer";

CELEBRATES Dr. Roberts' commitment to reconciliation and dialogue during his distinguished career as theologian, peacemaker, and activist,

APPLAUDS Dr. Roberts as founder and president of the J. Deotis Roberts Research Library and Institute and of the Foundation for Religious and Educational Exchange, Inc.; and

REAFFIRMS Dr. Roberts call for Christians everywhere to live as "agents of reconciliation" overcoming estrangement, mending fences and breaking down walls of separation between human beings.

Resolution # 5 Liberation Legacy of Sam Sharpe

The General Council of the Baptist World Alliance, meeting in Ocho Rios, Jamaica, July 1-6, 2013:

HONORS the occasion of the 181st anniversary of the execution of Jamaican national hero and liberator Sam Sharpe on May 23, 2013;

CELEBRATES the life of this Baptist deacon and preacher, an enslaved person and leader of the so-called *Baptis' War* in Jamaica, 1831-1832, who contributed significantly to the emancipation of Caribbean people from chattel slavery and ultimately to the abolition of slavery across the British Empire;

EXPRESSES solidarity with persons living under oppressive regimes across our world today;

ACKNOWLEDGES the actions of Baptists in our own generation who champion freedom from oppression;

RE-AFFIRMS our historic Baptist commitment to freedom and justice for all, as exemplified by the sacrificial life and ministry of Sam Sharpe;

URGES governments and international authorities to respect the right of all human beings to be free from oppression;

ASSURES those who are suffering continuing vigilance and prayerful support of the global Baptist family; and

CALLS UPON Baptist churches to join the struggle for liberation and social inclusion for all, and to take concrete action against injustice wherever it is found.

Resolution # 6 Proclamation of the Gospel

The General Council of the Baptist World Alliance meeting in Ocho Rios, Jamaica, July 1-6, 2013:

RECOGNIZES the church's role in the mission of God, who intends the restoration of all things in Christ Jesus;

ACKNOWLEDGES the church's vocation to bear witness to the Gospel in word and deed;

ENCOURAGES all Baptist conventions, unions, churches and individuals to recognize their high calling as participants in God's mission and to renew their passion for the fulfillment of the mandate of the church to share the good news to all people; and

CALLS UPON all Baptists to ensure that, as they embrace a holistic approach to mission, their proclamation is relevant to the realities of the local context and culture.

Resolution # 7 End to United States of America (USA) Embargo on Cuba

The General Council of the Baptist World Alliance meeting in Ocho Rios, Jamaica, July 1-6, 2013:

ACKNOWLEDGES that more than two decades have passed since the end of the Cold War, and that most negative manifestations of that struggle have been ameliorated, except for the continuing USA embargo against Cuba begun in 1960;

AFFIRMS that the embargo does not serve the interests of the USA, Cuba or the international family of nations, much less so the interests of the Body of Christ in general, and the Baptist family, in particular; and

RECALLS the resolution it adopted at its meetings in Montego Bay, Jamaica, in 1992 and in Havana, Cuba, in 2000, calling upon governments "to remove economic sanctions relating to food and medicines" and "to reconsider the appropriateness of the use of economic sanctions in the effort to encourage changes in political situations;"

NOTES that several Baptist bodies in the USA, including two USA conventions affiliated with the BWA – the American Baptist Churches USA and the Progressive National Baptist Convention – have been on record for more than two decades in opposition to the embargo; and

RECOGNIZES that annually, over the past 21 years, the United Nations General Assembly has voted – nearly unanimously – for an end to the embargo;

RECALLS the widely held belief that the lifting of the embargo will improve living conditions for Cubans and provide greater opportunities for commerce, education, and travel;

INVITES the member organizations of the Baptist World Alliance to stand in solidarity with Cuban Baptists who have been negatively impacted by this embargo;

COMMENDS the progress in the relationship between the USA and Cuba and urges the US government to lift all remaining restrictions on travel to Cuba by US citizens and end the embargo against Cuba and re-establish formal diplomatic relations with the Cuban government; and

CALLS UPON the governments of USA and Cuba to set in place a process for negotiating legitimate bilateral grievances.

Resolution # 8 Haiti

The General Council of the Baptist World Alliance meeting in Ocho Rios, Jamaica, July 1-6, 2013:

ACKNOWLEDGES that the Republic of Haiti was the first, and for a long time, the only state in the world to recognize equality of rights for all human beings regardless of gender, economic condition or any other consideration;

LAMENTS that the country was weakened by the trade embargo imposed by major world powers and by France's demand of an indemnity of 150,000,000 gold francs in exchange for recognition of Haitian independence;

REGRETS that the people of Haiti have suffered much since their declaration of independence and their simultaneous abolition of slavery within their land;

NOTES that frequent natural disasters have adversely affected the nation's welfare and, since the earthquake of January 12, 2010, world attention has been drawn to the plight of the Haitian people, many of whom are unemployed and suffering and their land and environment are degraded by decades of over-exploitation.

GIVES THANKS FOR the support given by the international community and the Christian World Communions in response to the earthquake;

JOINS the Caribbean Baptist Fellowship in encouraging members of churches of the Caribbean Diaspora, especially those of Haitian origin, to lobby their governments in order to alleviate the stress stringent regulations, such as visa restrictions, place on the Haitian people; and

CALLS UPON Baptists to maintain advocacy for the alleviation of the suffering of the Haitian people.

Resolution # 9 Caribbean Court of Justice

The General Council of the Baptist World Alliance meeting in Ocho Rios, Jamaica, July 1-6, 2013:

NOTES that English-speaking Caribbean nations have expressed a desire to eliminate the legal practice of making appeals from Caribbean courts to the Privy

Council of the United Kingdom, based on concerns for political identity, self-determination and national sovereignty;

ACKNOWLEDGES that the principle of a Caribbean Court of Justice (CCJ) to serve as the Caribbean final appellate jurisdiction was established in 1947 and that appeal to British courts limits accessibility to justice, owing to visa requirements and significant costs associated with travel and acquiring legal counsel in the United Kingdom;

OBSERVES that, after much deliberation among member states of the Caribbean Community and Common Market (CARICOM), the Caribbean Court of Justice was established in 2005 to provide for the Caribbean Community an accessible, fair, efficient and impartial court system on a jurisprudence reflective of the history, values and traditions of member states while maintaining an independent institution worthy of the trust and confidence of the people and of emulation by the courts of the region;

UNDERSTANDS that the CCJ is vested with an original jurisdiction in respect of the interpretation and application of the Treaty establishing the Caribbean Community, as well as an appellate jurisdiction and , at this time, only Barbados, Guyana and Belize use the CCJ as the highest criminal court of appeal;

STANDS ALONGSIDE the Caribbean Baptist Fellowship in its support for the CCJ as the final appellate jurisdiction among member states of CARICOM.

Resolution # 10 Crisis in the Middle East and North Africa

The General Council of the Baptist World Alliance meeting in Ocho Rios, Jamaica, July 1-6, 2013:

ACKNOWLEDGES that impact of the "Arab Spring" in the Middle East and North Africa has led to an increase in the persecution of minorities, including Christians;

NOTES that radical police and military actions have gone unpunished by governments of several Middle Eastern Countries;

LAMENTS that Christians have been targeted and persecuted in contexts where they have been perceived to be loyal to specific regimes in several countries;

REGRETS that attacks by Islamic extremists have victimized men, women and children in more than one location;

RECOGNIZES that Lebanon and other countries in the region are having an influx of refugees from Iraq and Syria;

RECOMMENDS Christian ministry to all refugees and pledges to pray for Lebanese Baptists and other Christians in the region who are ministering to refugees in the name of Jesus Christ;

URGES governments of the Middle East to engage religious minority groups located within their borders in the process of pursuing measures to protect them against actions that target Christians and other minorities;

ENCOURAGES Baptists to pray for the safety and well being of our brothers and sisters in the faith;

URGES the United Nations and national governments to work cooperatively to assist those countries in the protection of all the rights of all their citizens;

CALLS UPON governments to refrain from sending or selling armaments to the forces in conflict in Syria and instead support the efforts of those who are working toward a negotiated peace and provide essential humanitarian resources to assist refugees in this situation of conflict; and

COMMENDS and supports the efforts of moderate religious people everywhere who advocate for the just treatment of all citizens throughout the Middle East and North Africa.

Resolution # 11 Kachin Crisis

The General Council of the Baptist World Alliance meeting in Ocho Rios, Jamaica, July 1-6, 2013:

LAMENTS the atrocities occurring in Rakhine, Chin, Karen and Kachin states in Myanmar;

RECALLS that Baptist missionaries, Adoniram and Ann Judson, arrived on the shores of Myanmar in 1813 and Eugenio Kincaid, the Judsons' missionary colleague, first addressed the Kachins in 1837;

AFFIRMS Jesus' teaching that his followers should do to others what we would have them do to us "for this sums up the Law and Prophets" (Matthew 7:12) and the scriptural injunction to love our neighbors as ourselves (See, for example, Galatians 5:14);

NOTES that the Kachin Baptist Convention, founded in 1910, represents the majority of Kachin people living in Myanmar and around the world and is a member of the Myanmar Baptist Convention and the Baptist World Alliance, sharing the Christian commitment to peace and justice;

REGRETS that, in June 2011, a seventeen-year cease-fire between the Myanmar army and the Kachin Independence Army broke down and, although the president of Myanmar ordered the military on December 10, 2011, to stop their offensive, the war in the Kachin State has escalated;

LAMENTS that large numbers of innocent civilians have been killed and many women have been raped as part of a strategy of violence. More than 200 Kachin Baptist villages have been lost and at least sixty six places of worship have been

destroyed. The war has forced more than 100,000 civilians to flee their homes and live in camps as Internally Displaced Peoples (IDPs);

SUPPORTS the following public statement issued by the Kachin Baptist Convention on January 30, 2013, calling on all parties involved:

- "To immediately cease military operations at this time when the Myanmar president's Roadmap to Peace is being implemented, as it is creating mistrust and affecting national unity for the brothers and sisters of all ethnic groups of Myanmar."
- "To permit fast and effective access to humanitarian assistance by the removal of barriers to the UN agencies and international human rights organizations from reaching areas in need to ensure physical and emotional security of innocent civilians."
- "To cease all harassment, arbitrary arrest and unlawful detention of civilians under the guise of security and other reason, cease military attacks upon civilians and those in the IDP camps, the burning of houses and villages, and sexual violence against female civilians, and to respect human rights laws."
- "We do not believe that the use of force to attain peace can achieve sustainable peace. We urge an immediate political dialogue through the setting up of clear policies and procedures in order to secure a truly genuine and just peace;"

CALLS UPON Baptists worldwide:

- to stand with our Kachin Christian brothers and sisters in Myanmar and around the world to find solutions to this conflict and to all situations of ethnic cleansing through the power of prayer and nonviolent peacemaking; and
- to support actions of the United Nations and other nongovernmental organizations to promote relief work, establish justice, and return peace to this land.

Resolution # 12 Current Crisis on the Korean Peninsula

The General Council of the Baptist World Alliance meeting in Ocho Rios, Jamaica, July 1-6, 2013:

NOTES, with concern, the nuclear test carried out by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK), the escalation of rhetoric involving the DPRK, Republic of Korea and the USA of America, and the fear that this can lead to armed conflict in the region;

AFFIRMS steps taken by the governments to return to peaceful means of negotiation and the de-escalation of hostilities;

ENCOURAGES efforts by the churches and NGO's to promote mutual understanding, reconciliation and peaceful reunification, as we pray for wisdom

and strength for our Christian sisters and brothers in Korea so they may continue their role as peacemakers, following the footsteps of our Lord Jesus Christ;

URGES the government of the USA to continue its diplomatic initiatives to return the governments of the Republic of South Korea and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to the table to pursue peace talks, to listen to the voices of the Korean people, and to address their needs and issues; and

CALLS UPON the members of the Baptist World Alliance and Christians around the world to follow the teaching of Jesus to uphold and support all peaceful efforts to end the crisis on the Korean Peninsula, including prayers for the governments and peoples of the peninsula and surrounding countries.

Resolution # 13 Gender Equality and Gender-Based Violence

The General Council of the Baptist World Alliance meeting in Ocho Rios, Jamaica, July 1-6, 2013:

BELIEVES that everyone is created in the image of God and so possesses inalienable dignity and value, and that Jesus Christ, who died on the Cross for both women and men, commands us to love one another, as he has loved us (John 13:43);

CONTINUES to affirm with the United Nations the importance of gender equality and women's empowerment. Unless women are able to maximize the opportunities available, build their capabilities and achieve their full potential, the participation of more than half the population is limited and societies suffer;

RESOLVES to:

- pursue initiatives leading to the achievement of gender equality in societies worldwide;
- contribute to the empowerment of women and the protection of their human rights in all spheres of human endeavor;
- advocate that gender-based violence is a major hindrance to women's empowerment and gender equality;
- canvass that gender-based violence, in all its forms, is predominantly violence against women and represents an abuse of power used to establish male dominance and female submission and so perpetuate gender inequality;
- reject all acts of gender-based violence as being contrary to the laws of God and Christian doctrine;
- support legislation, policies, and action designed to eliminate gender-based violence, and take the lead role wherever this is appropriate;
- encourage churches, governments and NGOs to challenge attitudes and behaviors that devalue people through violence and exploitation, and
- urges churches, governments and NGOs to provide resources:
 - to support the survivors of gender-based violence in sensitive and effective ways; and
 - to promote interventions to change behavior among perpetrators of gender-based violence.

Resolution # 14 Child Sexual Abuse in the Church

The General Council of the Baptist World Alliance meeting in Ocho Rios, Jamaica, July 1-6, 2013:

AFFIRMS the intrinsic and inestimable value of children and young people as gifts from God and as the promise of future generations;

ACKNOWLEDGES the vital importance of children for the health and viability of families, communities and national life;

RECOGNIZES the responsibility given to parents and guardians to provide for the nurture and care of children, and the roles and responsibilities played by others;

GIVES THANKS FOR the biblical teaching on the nurture and care of children, the spiritual and social development of children through the ministry of the local church, and the contributions that children make to the life and mission of the church;

EXPRESSES PROFOUND SORROW at the ways in which children have been betrayed, harmed and sexually or otherwise abused, both historically and in the present day, through acts of omission and commission;

AFFIRMS that no child or young person should ever be abused, betrayed or harmed in any way while in the care of a church or church agency;

REPENTS of any failure by Baptists anywhere to implement consistently effective policies and processes to protect children from abuse, to protect and care for those who have been abused and to remain silent on any of these issues in the past;

COMMENDS urgent action to implement measures to protect children from abuse, support their physical and emotional welfare, and respond to allegations of abuse, including the following:

- Administrative processes to ensure the suitability of persons working with children in the context of Baptist churches (such as official checks against registers of criminal convictions, and proper disciplinary procedures in organizations where there has been substantiated abuse of children or where an organization has disciplined or ceased the employment of a person on the grounds of alleged or proven child abuse);
- Administrative processes to address situations where a child discloses child abuse or where statements are made indicating that a child has been abused;
- Restorative justice processes to address historic allegations or disclosures of child abuse;
- Disciplinary processes to determine whether a person is fit to remain in employment, either paid or voluntary, in a situation where the complainant has not contacted police, the police have not pressed charges,

the police do not consider there is enough evidence, or the prosecuting authority has dropped the case.

URGES all Baptist churches, conventions and unions to take seriously every case of alleged child sexual abuse and to ensure that proper rules and processes are in place to protect children from harm and to promptly respond to allegations.

Resolution# 15 Human Rights Based on the Work of Anabaptist Richard Overton

The General Council of the Baptist World Alliance meeting in Ocho Rios, Jamaica, July 1-6, 2013, in honor of the Human Rights Advocacy award winner for 2013, Glen Stassen:

RECALLS the contributions of English Anabaptist Richard Overton who encouraged Christians to discover human rights by recognizing the rule of God as revealed in Jesus;

NOTES that Richard Overton wrote the first comprehensive doctrine of human rights in world history circa 1647 with emphasis on:

- Religious and civil liberty for all, including the rights of freedom from coercion in religion, from governmental establishment of religion and from taxation for religion; freedom of the press; the right not to be arbitrarily arrested nor forced to incriminate oneself, the right to a speedy trial; and the right of prisoners not to be tortured, starved or extorted
- The right to life and economic rights, including free education for everyone; housing and health care for poor orphans, the widowed, the aged and the handicapped; and the right to trade internationally without restrictions and monopolies;
- The right to dignity in community, including the right of everyone to associate together in a church of their choice and in voting for a government that is responsive to the people and the common good.

REMEMBERS that Overton argued for religious liberty for Catholics, Protestants, Jews and Muslims;

CALLS UPON BAPTISTS to address cases of injustice, including greed that deprives the poor, exclusion that disempowers the people, and violence that kills the prophets.

Resolution # 16 Resolution on Displaced Persons

The General Council of the Baptist World Alliance meeting in Ocho Rios, Jamaica, July 1-6, 2013:

REMEMBERS that the Bible honors displaced persons, including the people of Israel who lived as exiles for forty years before entering Canaan (Exodus 13ff.),

and who later experienced displacement, loss and trauma when exiled to Assyria and Babylon (e.g. 2 Kings 24:10-16), and the Lord Jesus Christ who, with his family, experienced life as a displaced person (Matthew 2:13-23);

RECALLS that Scripture collectively describes the church of Jesus Christ as "foreigners and exiles" (1 Peter 2:11), and that the early leaders of the church were oppressed, attacked, imprisoned and deported for their faith and because of the threat they were perceived to pose to the centers of religious and political power;

AFFIRMS that the Bible teaches followers of Jesus to welcome the stranger among them and to respond with love and justice to the plight of displaced persons, including those who are temporarily displaced, internally displaced, or forced out of their homeland into exile (Micah 6:8; Matthew 22:34-40; 25:35, 40; Romans 12:13; Hebrews 13:1-3);

ENCOURAGES Baptists to uphold the human rights of all people at all times, including the rights of displaced persons, asylum seekers and refugees;

CALLS UPON governments to uphold universal human rights and develop just and compassionate policies with provisions for:

- access to the protections afforded to displaced persons in international law including non-discrimination with respect to religious and ethnic identity;
- access to adequate psychological, social, and medical care;
- ensuring that displaced persons whose claim for refugee status has been denied are treated fairly while awaiting repatriation;

URGES governments to use peaceful means to address human rights violations in countries of origin and to pursue policies to strengthen regional cooperation and expand protection of displaced persons;

ENCOURAGES political leaders to demonstrate ethical and non-partisan leadership in policy debates on immigration and the global movement of displaced persons; and

ENCOURAGES Baptists to act as advocates for displaced persons and to develop plans to respond with compassion and hospitality to the needs of displaced persons.