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War and Peace – Adopted 1968

Abortion

Abortion – Adopted 1981*

Recognizing the critical nature and complexity of the issue of abortion, be it resolved that the Baptist General Conference opposes abortion on demand and encourages its members to influence public opinion in this regard and that our attitude toward those involved in abortion and abortion decisions, be able to speak the truth in love, seeking to bring to bear the forgiveness of God and healing through Christ's body, the church.

Abortion – Adopted 1971

Being very much aware of the current concern about the liberalization of existing laws related to abortion; and, recognizing the necessity of periodic reevaluation of laws which are so intimately related to human well-being; Be it resolved that: We exhort our people to be guided by these basic Christian principles as they relate themselves to the controversy and concern surrounding the abortion problem:

1. **The Stewardship of Life**
Human life is a gift from God and as such is a sacred trust. In those areas of human experience where life is so basically involved such as conception and abortion, we ought always to be governed by our awareness of the sacredness of life; and,
2. **Individual Responsibility**
We as Christians ought not to regard abortion as a means of evading individual responsibility; and,
3. **Christian Morality**
Since many abortions are sought as a result of an immoral sexual relationship, we must submit that the most effective solution to the abortion problem is the revival of the Christian concept of morality wherein the fruits of sexual relationships are accepted as a trust from God and not an inconvenience to be disposed of; and,
4. **The Christian community should respond in sympathetic understanding to the Individuals immediately involved, whatever action is taken in regard to abortion.**



Abstinence

True Love Waits – Adopted 1994*

Whereas many pressures are brought to bear on our young people to engage in sexual activity; and Whereas the pledge contained within the program “True Love Waits” embodies the concept of sexual abstinence until marriage;

Be it resolved, that the delegates in attendance at the 1994 annual meeting of the Baptist General Conference hereby encourage promotion of the concepts contained in the pledge of the “True Love Waits” program and the spiritual values which it and similar programs embody; and that we urge all of our churches and parents to seek this type of commitment from our young people as a positive reinforcement of the biblical principles and values to which we as the Baptist General Conference subscribe.

The following is the pledge from the “True Love Waits” program:

“Believing that true love waits, I make a commitment to God, myself, my family, those I date and my future children to be sexually pure until the day I enter a covenant marriage relationship.”)

Baptism and Membership

The Relationship Between Baptism and Membership – Adopted 1995

Report from the Task Force on Baptism/Membership

Rev. Vic Winqvist, chairman of the Task Force on Baptism/Membership reported that the Task Force was created in response to questions concerning the admission of two new churches into BGC affiliation which had earlier been received into district affiliation.

The board of overseers presented the following statement on the relationship between baptism and church membership, for delegate confirmation: "We, the board of overseers, reaffirm the biblical mandate of believer's baptism by immersion and that it be a prerequisite for church membership as stated in the BGC Constitution. We further recommend that if, in the process of reaching people from diverse backgrounds, a local church establishes different levels of association for the purpose of allowing people to identify with a BGC church while they consider church membership:

1. "The church should affirm in its Constitution, Articles of Incorporation, or Bylaws, the biblical practice of believers baptism by immersion."
2. "A term other than 'church member' be used to identify these people."
3. Spiritual leadership positions (such as pastor, elder, deacon, governing board), the privilege of voting on constitutional changes, and the calling of a pastor be constitutionally limited to those who are church members, and"
4. "All delegates to district and BGC meetings be church members."

Bethel University

Resolution in support of Bethel College and Seminary – Adopted 2000

From the Committed Pastors to the 2000 Annual Meeting (introduced by Ron Saar) Passed 423 "For" / 363 "Against" on 6/28/2000.

Be it resolved that the statement on the doctrine of God in the 1951 Affirmation of Faith is sufficiently stated; and, in regard to the subject of open theism, as delegates of the Baptist General Conference (who are also the delegates of Bethel College and Seminary) * we affirm the Position paper unanimously approved by the Board of Trustees of Bethel College and Seminary on June 24, 2000.

POSITION STATEMENT OF THE BETHEL BOARD OF TRUSTEES Whereas, as the Bethel Board of Trustees:

We affirm our bylaw-mandated responsibility..."for maintaining the integrity of both instruction and spiritual quality within the College and Seminary, such that traditional, biblical and historic baptistic principles and doctrine observed by the churches affiliated with Bethel Corporation are not compromised," and

We acknowledge the debate regarding Open Theism is of critical importance in seeking truth and unity within our Conference, and have given careful consideration to the concerns that have been raised; and

We affirm the unanimous vote of the Committee for Theological Clarification and Assessment occurring on May 13, 1998, that Dr. Boyd's views did not warrant his termination as a member of the Bethel College faculty and by inference that his views fall within the accepted bounds of the evangelical spectrum; and

Therefore, as the Bethel Board of Trustees:

We stress the importance of continuing the process of listening to the doctrinal convictions of the members of constituent churches of the BGC and encourage the pursuit of rigorous biblicentric scholarship in the Open Theism debate as well as other subsequent controversial issues that may arise.

We insist that any faculty member who may hold the Open View of God must in good faith refer to this view as marginal to the mainstream thought of the BGC whenever this view is presented in formal or informal teaching contexts.

Further, when we examine this view in the classrooms of our school, it must be done alongside presentation of the classical Calvinistic, Arminian, and other evangelical viewpoints, inviting fairness in teaching even if it requires guest presenters for credible representations of all views. We affirm the continued use, as the textbook, a volume that primarily represents the classical view.



Further, we reaffirm Dr. Greg Boyd as a valued colleague within the Bethel Christian liberal arts community who enthusiastically embraces the BGC Affirmation of Faith, serves as a pastor in good standing in a BGC church and reflects an uncompromising commitment to bibliocentric and christocentric theology.

We invite you, our partners in the Baptist General Conference, to join us in diligent and ongoing efforts to understand faithfully God's mystery as revealed in Scripture. All praise be to Him!

Adopted unanimously without abstention on June 24, 2000*

*Dr. Dwight Perry withdrew his affirmative vote on June 27, 2000.

Child Protection - Pornography

Protecting Children; Sexual Misconduct – Adopted 2002

We call on the churches of the Baptist General Conference to establish and implement policies to protect our children. We further call on our churches to exercise appropriate discipline over anyone in a ministerial position, including revocation of ministry credentials upon sufficient evidence of involvement or substantiation of allegations of sexual misconduct with a minor.

Pornography – Adopted 1987

Whereas the problem of pornography has continued to be a crisis in this nation as identified by the United States Attorney General's Commission on Pornography, and whereas many men, women and children have been victimized by pornography, therefore be it resolved that the delegates to the 1987 annual meeting of the Baptist General Conference hereby urge other members of the Baptist General Conference to inform themselves about the evils of pornography and to work toward instituting state and local laws which are enforceable and constitutional to remove hard core pornography from our land.

Pornography – Adopted 1986

Whereas the problem of pornography has continued to be a crisis in this nation as identified by the United States Attorney General's Commission,

And whereas many children and families have suffered from the consequences of pornography, And whereas the preponderance of media reviews of the Attorney General's Commission on Pornography have been critical, resulting in a curtailment of full implementation of the recommendations of the committee,

Therefore, be it resolved that the delegates of the 108th annual meeting of the Baptist General Conference direct the general secretary to send telegrams, on behalf of the Baptist General Conference, to the Attorney General of the United States and to the President of the United States urging them to quickly implement the recommendations of the Attorney General's Commission on Pornography and that the responsibility for implementation be kept at the Attorney General level to ensure their accomplishments.

Further be it resolved that the delegates of the annual meeting of the Baptist General Conference write, and encourage others to write, to the Attorney General of the United States and the President of the United States, urging them to quickly implement these recommendations and their implementation be retained with the Attorney General.



Creation

Creation Sunday – Adopted 1990

Whereas: The belief that God created the universe is often denied by those outside the Christian faith, and Whereas: The designation of a specific Sunday as Creation Sunday will give testimony of our faith in the reality of creation, and

Whereas: The Minnesota Baptist Conference has endorsed the second Sunday of February of each year as Creation Sunday,

Therefore be it resolved that: To emphasize that God did indeed create the universe and ourselves, the Baptist General Conference hereby designates the second Sunday of February of each year as Creation Sunday.

Be it further resolved: That each member and church is encouraged to celebrate Creation Sunday as they are led by God.

God as the creator – Adopted 1981

In light of the current discussion regarding creation and evolution, we reaffirm our confidence in the authority of the Word of God and in God as the Creator. Seconded and carried.

Doctrine – Baptist Distinctives

God's Foreknowledge – Adopted 2000

From the Edgren Fellowship to the 2000 Annual Meeting (introduced by Larry Adams) Passed by a large majority on 6/28/2000.

Whereas the Bible reveals and affirms that God knows all of the past, present and future exhaustively, and

Whereas both Presidents Ricker of the BGC and Brushaber of Bethel College and Seminary have made it clear that the BGC and Bethel are no "safe havens" for open theism and that no new professors espousing such a view would be hired, and

Whereas an increasing number of districts and churches have taken action to affirm God's exhaustive foreknowledge and rejection of open theism, and

Whereas Dr. Ricker and the entire BGC Executive Ministry Team (Jerry Sheveland, Ron Larson, Ray Swatkowski, Lou Petrie and Steve Schultz) have already unanimously stated that open theism is not consistent with the BGC's biblical or historical understanding of God's omniscience, and

Whereas the Bible teaches there can be no real unity apart from the unity of the truth of God's person.

I therefore move that the following resolution be adopted by the delegates of the BGC annual meeting:

Be it resolved that we, the delegates of the Baptist General Conference (who are also the delegates of Bethel College and Seminary)* affirm that God's knowledge of all past, present and future events is exhaustive; and, we also believe that the "openness" view of God's foreknowledge is contrary to our fellowship's historic understanding of God's omniscience.

A Reaffirmation of our Heritage – Adopted 1977

We thank God for the past 125 years of existence of the Baptist General Conference and for the committed and spiritually sensitive men and women who have helped shape the Conference over these years, remembering also our debt to the Reformation Anabaptist movement, and the encouragement and support of other Baptist groups on the American continent.

Because we recognize the richness of our heritage and its relevance for the present day, we seek to identify some of the distinctives that have contributed to our vitality in the past, and to reaffirm them as a continuing part of our life and ministry together.

1. The Centrality of the Word of God. Having their origins in the widespread revival movements of nineteenth century Europe in which the Bible had such a prominent role,

the early Swedish Baptist immigrants had a deep hunger to understand and obey the Word of God as their sole authority for faith and practice.

2. **The Necessity of Personal Conversion.** The immigrant church held as one of the most basic teachings of Scripture that all persons are sinners deeply in need of salvation that can be found only through confession of sin and trust in Jesus Christ as Savior.
3. **The Practice of Believer's Baptism.** For them the clear teaching of the Bible made believer's baptism by immersion both a natural response and a necessary witness to their conversion experience.
4. **A Commitment to Godly Living.** These believers were characterized by a strong desire that their lives reflect the person of Christ and the teachings of the Scriptures in their daily walk, both in personal conduct and in concern for others.
5. **A Witness to the World.** From the beginning, the Conference Baptists spontaneously shared their new faith in Christ. To a great extent, the early churches grew as a result of enthusiastic witnessing by the lay people. Their evangelistic concern carried them to the most difficult and remote places in this country and then overseas.
6. **An Active Concern for the Needy.** Many pioneer Conference Baptists, although generally extremely poor, made hospitality a way of life, sharing out of their poverty with anyone in need. As their numbers and resources grew, they began to establish institutions of mercy, including homes for the aged, children's homes and hospitals.
7. **A Growing Irenic Spirit.** This positive thrust of their faith led many of the early Conference leaders to combine strong doctrinal convictions with loving concern for persons of divergent views. This ability to speak the truth in love increasingly became a distinguishing mark of the Conference Baptist fellowship.
8. **The Importance of the Local Church and the Conference Fellowship.** Early Conference Baptists felt the necessity of gathering together in local church bodies for worship, mutual encouragement, fellowship and evangelism. At the same time, they regularly sought to meet with other Swedish Baptist churches for further fellowship, inspiration, teaching and missionary effort.

As we commit ourselves afresh to these Biblical principles, be it resolved that we seek to implement them for our time in the following ways:

1. That our churches emphasize the Bible as their central textbook and also seek to stimulate individual and family Bible study.
2. That our churches provide frequent opportunities for people to make decisions for salvation, recognizing the sinfulness of man and the richness of the new life offered in Christ's name.

3. That, through our Christian education programs, we teach that believer's baptism by immersion is a clear New Testament principle.
4. That both our churches corporately and our members individually, re-examine their positions on Christian lifestyle and personal holiness.
5. That our churches recognize and assist the witness of lay people as it expresses itself through their gifts, personalities and conversations, emphasizing that all members are called to be on mission for Christ.
6. That we seek to follow the example of Jesus in responding to people's needs as we meet them, both in an immediate personal sense and in organized social ministries at home and around the world.
7. That our churches encourage their members to hold their doctrinal convictions with confidence, while at the same time maintaining an attitude of love and concern for those of divergent views, both within and without the church.
8. That our churches underscore the importance of the local body of believers as God's unique instrument for ministry, realizing also the need and value of churches cooperating or fellowship and outreach.

The Christian and Freedom – Adopted 1976

Inasmuch as the political and social patterns of the world in which we live are undermining the worth of the individual, depriving him of his freedoms,

And, inasmuch as the institutional church of which we are a part often reflects the patterns of our society,

And, inasmuch as each person is of infinite worth, having been created in the image of God and is the object of Christ's redeeming love,

And, inasmuch as the people of God are to be the light of the world, and not a reflection of its patterns,

Therefore be it resolved:

That we encourage our churches to resist conformity to those patterns of the world which are detrimental or prohibitive to individual worth and freedom,

And be it further resolved that our churches be encouraged to recognize, cherish and demonstrate the biblical teaching of the worth of the individual by:

Reaffirming the biblical teaching of the priesthood of the believer, in which each individual has personal access to God and is privileged and responsible to share in the ministry of the church.

Providing opportunities whereby the God-given gifts of the individual can be discovered, developed and employed.

1. Recognizing the freedom of the individual to be led by the Holy Spirit in the making of decisions in areas wherein the Scriptures are either silent or not specific.
2. Informing our people that there are brethren in Christ who differ from us in their interpretation and application of some portions of the Word of God, and that we are responsible before God to live them too.

Inasmuch as we live in a society in which the uniqueness of the person and work of Jesus Christ is being compromised.

Therefore, be it resolved that our churches reaffirm that authentic freedom is realized only in submission to the lordship of Jesus Christ (John 8:36; Galatians 5:13; 1 Peter 2:16).

And be it further resolved that in the total life and ministry of our churches we will express our submission to the lordship of Jesus Christ through obedience to the Written Word of God.

Inasmuch as we also live in a society in which the exercise of individual freedom often interferes with the equal rights of other individuals.

Therefore, be it resolved that in Christian love we shall limit the exercise of our personal freedoms whenever it infringes upon the rights and well-being of others.

And be it further resolved that as concerned Christians we will also work through governmental structures to insure that individual freedoms are protected from those who demonstrate a disregard for the equal rights of others.

Religious Liberty – Adopted 1968

In accordance with Article X, “Religious Liberty,” in the Baptist General Conference Affirmation of Faith, the following amplification is made:

We believe that God created man in His own image and endowed him with the freedom to respond to His redemptive love; that man is responsible to God for his Christian convictions and practices; and that Christian commitment and participation must be voluntary to be real.

Therefore we maintain that it is a human right as well as a prerogative of Divine grace that man be free to worship God; that the state should guarantee the right of all citizens to believe, to worship, to teach, to evangelize, to change their religious affiliations, and to serve their God as their consciences dictate; that this is best effected when state and church are separate in program, administration and support.



Furthermore we believe that the Christian citizen has a responsibility to his government in defending and promoting human liberties and rights by opposing discriminatory practices based on religion, race, economic or social status; by resisting any forms of totalitarianism, such as communism or fascism, that deny these basic rights; and by positively fulfilling the goals of religious liberty by being obedient to the first and great commandment: To love the Lord our God with all our heart, our soul, our mind, and our neighbor as ourselves.

START. STRENGTHEN. SEND.

Gender

Beliefs about homosexual behavior and ministering to homosexual persons – Reaffirmed 2012

Delegates unanimously reaffirmed the preciously adopted statement (below).

Beliefs about homosexual behavior and ministering to homosexual persons – Adopted 1992

We the delegates to the 114th Annual Meeting of the Baptist General Conference gathering in Estes Park, Colo., June 22-28, endorse the following two-part resolution:

Part 1

Our affirmation that the Bible is the infallible Word of God with “supreme authority in all matters of faith and conduct,” and our affirmation that “a Christian should live for the glory of God,” include the following six beliefs about heterosexuality and homosexuality:

1. We believe that heterosexuality is God’s revealed will for humankind and that, since God is loving, a chaste and faithful expression of this orientation (whether in singleness or marriage) is the ideal to which God calls all people.
2. We believe that a homosexual orientation is a result of the fall of humanity into a sinful condition that pervades every person. Whatever biological or familial roots of homosexuality may be discovered, we do not believe that these would sanction or excuse homosexual behavior, though they would deepen our compassion and patience for those who are struggling to be free from sexual temptations.
3. We believe there is hope for the person with a homosexual orientation and that Jesus Christ offers a healing alternative in which the power of sin is broken and the person is freed to know and experience his or her true identity in Christ and in the fellowship of his Church.
4. We believe that this freedom is attained through a process which includes recognizing homosexual behavior as sin, renouncing the practice of homosexual behavior, rediscovering healthy, nonerotic friendships with people of the same sex, embracing a moral sexual lifestyle, and in the age to come, rising from the dead with a new body free from every sinful impulse. This process parallels the similar process of sanctification needed in dealing with heterosexual temptations as well. We believe that this freedom comes through faith in Jesus Christ by the power of his Spirit.
5. We believe that all persons have been created in the image of God and should be accorded human dignity. We believe therefore that hateful, fearful, unconcerned harassment of persons with a homosexual orientation should be repudiated. We believe that respect for persons with a homosexual orientation involves honest, reasoned, nonviolent sharing of facts concerning the immorality and liability of homosexual behavior. On the other hand, endorsing behavior which the Bible disapproves endangers persons and dishonors God.

6. We believe that Christian churches should reach out in love and truth to minister to people touched by homosexuality, and that those who contend Biblically against their own sexual temptation should be patiently assisted in their battle, not ostracized or disdained. However, the more prominent a leadership role or modeling role a person holds in a church or institution of the Conference, the higher will be the expectations for God's ideal of sexual obedience and wholeness. We affirm that both heterosexual and homosexual persons should find help in the church to engage in the Biblical battle against all improper sexual thoughts and behaviors.

Part 2

We further endorse the following affirmation as an implication of the previous six beliefs.

Since beliefs about the sinfulness of homosexual behavior, like beliefs about the sinfulness of lying, stealing, murder, greed, etc., are an essential part of our commitment to the supreme authority of the Bible in all matters of faith and conduct, and since a person who believes that lying, stealing, murder or greed are Biblically acceptable lifestyles would not and should not be deemed qualified to serve in the leadership of our Conference, or teach in its educational institutions, or serve as pastors of Baptist General Conference churches, or as teachers and principals of all church-sponsored schools, or as missionaries of the Baptist General Conference, therefore we affirm that, in the same way, those who believe that homosexual behavior is a Biblically acceptable lifestyle are not qualified to serve in the leadership of the Conference or to teach in its educational institutions or to serve as pastors of Baptist General Conference churches, or as teachers and principals of all church-sponsored schools, or as missionaries of the Baptist General Conference.

We further affirm that this affirmation is simply an effort to make explicit the implicit religious consensus of the Baptist General Conference concerning the meaning of Article One (The Word of God) and Article Eight (Christian Conduct) of our Affirmation of Faith adopted in 1951.

Operation Rescue – Adopted 1989

Whereas a heinous evil has taken place in the termination of millions of unborn babies in the United States in recent years, and Whereas fifteen years of political effort on the part of the pro-life movement has failed to halt abortion-on-demand.

Whereas the movement called “Operation Rescue” has arisen at this crucial period as a means for Christians to endeavor to peacefully prevent the destruction of unborn infants and to influence public opinion,

Whereas we are informed that excessive legal measures have been taken against some of the leaders of this movement, and

Whereas we are informed that the magnitude of the problem is reflected in the fact that there have now been approximately 30,000 arrests in the two years of Operation Rescue compared with approximately 9,000 arrests during 10 years of the Civil Rights movement, and

Whereas we are informed that vast sums of money are being raised to support the proabortion cause, and

Whereas there is imperative need for the evangelical community to make clear its determination to help end the abortion-on-demand horror of our generation, and

Whereas the Scriptures command God's people to exercise themselves on behalf of the poor, the needy, the disadvantaged, and the powerless, and

Whereas there is need for considerable sums of money for the legal defense of leaders of Operation Rescue,

Be it resolved that the Baptist General Conference send a clear signal of its sympathy for and support of those who are seeking by peaceful and non-violent means to save the lives of unborn babies and to save their mothers from exploitation and to honor the Lord who has sole rights over life and death, by implementation of the following positive action:

That individuals within the Baptist General Conference be encouraged to send contribution directly to a fund to aid in the defense of those undergoing litigation as a result of being involved in Operation Rescue; and that this fund be well-publicized to the Conference constituency.

Be it further resolved that this action be subject to review by Conference legal counsel to determine that the Conference tax exemption is not jeopardized, and that there is no violation of the standing of the Conference as a member of the Evangelical Council for Financial Accountability, and that the board of overseers be authorized to approve implementation of the motion upon favorable resolution of any legal issues.”

Homosexuality – Adopted 1987

Whereas the practice of homosexuality is soundly condemned as a sin in the Bible, and whereas homosexual behavior contributes to the spread of AIDS and other incurable diseases, therefore be it resolved that the delegates to the 1987 annual meeting of the Baptist General Conference hereby state our opposition to the practice and promotion of homosexual behavior, and to encourage the members of the Baptist General Conference to seek biblical means of ministering to the homosexual community.

Human Worth

A call to a biblical view of ministry – Adopted 1978

The Bible clearly challenges the church and individual Christians to minister to the whole spectrum of human needs. They are to follow the example of Jesus, who saw it as His goal not only to preach the gospel, but also to meet the needs of the poor, those in prison, the blind and oppressed (Luke 4:18). He encouraged His followers to feed the hungry, clothe the naked and visit the sick (Matt. 25:34-36). For them not to meet such needs was seen as hypocrisy (James 2:14-17).

However, during the last century of church history many evangelical Christians have turned away from ministering to the non-spiritual needs of human beings. The cause for this change has been the theological polarization of those who call themselves Christians into modernists and fundamentalists. The trustworthiness and authority of the Bible was questioned by an increasing number of theologians toward the end of the nineteenth century. The debate surrounding this issue culminated in the modernist/fundamentalist cleavage of the early twentieth century. The theological antagonism resulted in an increasing difference in the way Christian ministry was viewed. Modernists tended to see their ministry solely in terms of social action, ignoring the proclamation of the gospel. Unfortunately, many fundamentalists moved to the other pole, often emphasizing evangelism only and developing an increasing distrust of social ministry.

The Baptist General Conference has a strong heritage of commitment to the whole spectrum of ministries to human needs. However, it has been theologically close to the fundamentalist movement. As a result, its original breadth of ministry has become somewhat limited. Some members of Conference churches fear that involvement in any ministry other than direct evangelism amounts to an embracing of the “social gospel” of modernism. Because of this, some Conference churches have come to view this part of Christian ministry with suspicion and engage in it only tentatively and halfheartedly.

The challenges presented by American and Canadian society in 1978 make it imperative that the Conference take steps to broaden its concern for human needs. This is a time of social change, and the church ought to speak a prophetic word based on Scripture about the direction the changes should take. Attitudes about racial differences are being radically altered. The gulf between rich and poor is widening. The traditional family unit is encountering great stress. Single and divorced persons are in need of special consideration by the church. Life expectancy has increased, and ministry to older persons has consequently taken on a new urgency. The pressures of a fast-moving pattern of life threaten individuals and couples in their prime years. The increase of juvenile crime is just one more signal that it is time for evangelical churches to enter the arena of social concern with renewed vigor.

In its Double in a Decade thrust, the Baptist General Conference has designated “ministry” as the emphasis for 1978. In the light of this emphasis and in view of all the above factors, be it resolved:

1. That ministry be defined in the Conference in a way that expresses the whole spectrum of concerns for lost humanity that are found in Scripture: Ministry is the spiritual offering of all Christians lovingly expressed in actions-upward to God in a service of worship as a redeemed community; inward to the body in a service of sustaining and nurturing fellowship; outward to the community in a service of redemptive ministry (Romans 12:1-18; I John 3:11-18; Galatians 6:1-10).
2. That the Baptist General Conference commit itself as an association of churches to encourage the above view of ministry in every way possible. That the Conference office become a clearinghouse for the awareness of needs, using The Standard for interchange of ideas and mutual encouragement among churches in the development of broader and more effective kinds of ministry. That the Social Ministries Committee become a more active and integral part of the Board of Home Missions, having its own full time executive. That evangelism and social ministry be seen as accompanying aspects of every outreach effort of the Conference.
3. That each church in the Baptist General Conference be encouraged during this year of ministry to re-examine its way of applying the gospel to human lives. That each be encouraged to develop at least one particular corporate ministry that meets a genuine need in its community, as a symbol of its desire to bring the whole gospel to the whole person. That each church also emphasize the biblical gifts of ministry present in its membership, such as serving, financial aid, acts of mercy, helping, healing, organizing (Romans 12:6-8; 1 Corinthians 12:27-30).
4. That every individual member of a Conference church review his or her Christian service in the light of the example set by Jesus. That we seek to balance as He did the word of loving witness and the work of loving action, seeing them both as essential elements of biblical evangelism. That each person seek to discover his or her ministry gift and then to use that gift to meet the specific human needs of brothers and sisters in the church, of neighbors, of members of the broader community. That all such ministry be seen as an expression of the compassion of Jesus and of His desire to draw all men unto Himself (John 12:32).
5. Man is created in God’s image and is essentially a spiritual rather than a physical being. All ministry, then, ought to be spiritual in its source and in its final goal. The touch of love is to be given in the name and spirit of Christ. The believer who ministers should care beyond a person’s immediate need to his eternal need for redemption.
6. The motivation for Christian ministry comes, not from a sentimental response to the suffering of humanity, but from the fact that Jesus sends the believer to do His work in His place: “As the Father has sent me, So send I you” (John 20:21; 21:15ff.).

Human Relations – Adopted 1965

We believe that:

God created one human family and that all men everywhere, whatever their color, culture, class or caste, are inseparably related and bound together as members of that one human family.

All men are created in the image of God and are equally precious in His sight.

Jesus Christ, Himself the God-man, by His redemptive act lives now as the Savior and Lord of men everywhere, whatever their color, culture, class or caste.

All men are by nature selfish and in rebellion against God; and that only through God's reconciling grace can they be set free from the dominion of sin to live as one in Christ.

Through the Word, the Holy Spirit establishes the fellowship of believers to which men are called for corporate worship, compassionate concern and evangelistic outreach.

Since the Church is created by God, the decisive factor in controlling its mission is not based primarily upon the variable cultural patterns in the world but upon the revelatory principles of the Word of God.

Therefore, the mandate of Jesus Christ, to bring salvation to all men, makes it obligatory for the Church to communicate the Gospel to all men without discrimination or distinction.

Further, we maintain that to exclude from worship or membership in the local congregation any person on the basis of color, culture, class or caste is to sin against God and man.

Furthermore, Christians ought to exercise their God-given responsibility by acting to remove whatever injustices exist in the community and to insure for all persons, without discrimination, just and equal opportunities, especially in housing, employment, education and full rights of citizenship including equitable voting privileges.

Marriage and Family

Marriage and the family – Reaffirmed 2012

Delegates unanimously reaffirmed the preciously adopted statement (below).

Marriage and the family – Adopted 2004

We live in a time when society is calling into question the validity of marriage. We reaffirm our historical commitment to the Biblical institution of marriage and thereby the definition of a family. We therefore resolve the reaffirmation of the following resolutions adopted by the delegates of Baptist General Conference in annual sessions 1974, 1977 and 1992 regarding the Family Unit, Marriage and Beliefs About Homosexual Behavior and Ministering to Homosexual Persons. We call upon the pastors of the BGC to teach and members to champion the truths set forth in these resolutions.

The Family Unit – Adopted 1974

We acknowledge the importance and dignity of the family as a God-given institution created for His glory.

We believe the family is the foundation of society and that it is presently in serious danger due to sociological changes, false ideologies and non-Christian practices which are gaining wide acceptance.

We believe sufficient spiritual resources can be found in the Scriptures and in Jesus Christ to enable families to survive and function in our day in a manner that will fulfill God's purposes for the family.

We believe that God intended that members of the family live in harmonious relationship with Him and with each other.

We believe that responsibilities of family members and of the family unit itself are set forth in the Scriptures.

We believe the local church should be zealous and active in nurturing the family, instructing the family and ministering to the family according to the Scriptures and through the power of the Holy Spirit.

We resolve, therefore, that:

1. The churches be encouraged to instruct the family concerning the responsibilities of family members given by God in the Scriptures as follows:
 - a. Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord of the family and duly recognized as the source of the love upon which the family is built.
 - b. The father as spiritual leader, provider, giving of himself in love for his wife and children as Christ gave Himself for the church (Eph. 5:21; 6:4; Col. 3:19-21).

- c. The mother as partner, companion and helper to the father, submitting to the leadership of her husband, loving him and her children (Col. 3:18; Eph. 5:22; Prov. 31; Titus 2:4).
 - d. The children as obedient to the parents, respectful of their elders and attentive to the instructions of God and parents (Col. 3:21; Eph. 6:1-3; Luke 2:51-52; Lev. 19:32).
 - e. The family as submitting each to the other in obedience to God out of their love for Christ and for one another (Eph. 5:1,2,21; Phil. 2:3).
2. The churches be encouraged to instruct the family regarding holy and productive living that leads to freedom from sin and peace with man and God through consistent and creative public and family worship, frequent open communication, the mutual sharing of burdens and the recognition of Christ's lordship over the whole of life.
 3. The churches be encouraged to assist rather than compete with the unity of the family by developing the program of the church so that it enhances the family unit, assisting in the discernment and development of such areas as:
 - a. Our God-given individual talents, abilities and spiritual gifts.
 - b. Our function as witnesses to society through stable, happy and contributing family units.
 - c. Our relationships within the larger family of the local church.
 4. The churches be encouraged to assist the family both materially and spiritually in combating the many rising problems that threaten the family such as poverty, unemployment, alcoholism, divorce, chemical dependency, trial marriage, premarital and extramarital coitus, materialism, disease, covetousness and the host of other problems that exist as enemies of the family.
 5. The churches be encouraged to minister with compassion and mercy to those individuals who remain single and/or who are members of families broken by death, separation, divorce, desertion and conflicting religious beliefs so that those persons who fail to meet the scriptural ideal for the family might within the church find the love and acceptance which may be lacking in their home situation.

Statement on Marriage – Adopted 1977

Christian marriage is a sacred institution ordained of God for the happiness of mankind and the propagation of the race. It is a spiritual and physical union into which one man and one woman may enter for the glory of God and, according to the scriptural ideal, is to be broken only by death (Genesis 2:18, 24; Matthew 19:3-9; Romans 7:2).

The churches should exert a major effort to help their members uphold and preserve this ideal by providing preparatory classes for young people before marriage and special study classes for adult couples after marriage and by making available appropriate literature. Pastors should be encouraged to prepare themselves for extensive counseling with couples before uniting them in marriage and to include in their program of preaching sermons from God's Word about the responsibilities of Christian marriage and the home (Matthew 28:20; Ephesians 5:21-33).

Each local church, according to historic Baptist practices, interprets the Biblical principles and determines its own policies on these matters. The Church as a loving and healing community should nurture and teach individuals and families in the Biblical ideals of marriage and the Christian home. Churches should deal with people involved in divorce and remarriage with firmness, love forgiveness, patience and prayer (Galatians 5:1-2; II Timothy 2:24-26; Colossians 3:16) Social Action

Racial Reconciliation – Adopted 1996

Whereas faith in Jesus as our only Lord and Savior relates us to other believers as brothers and sisters through His reconciling death, and binds us together as different members of His Body in service to Him as our common Head and Leader; and Whereas as members of His Body joined together by His Spirit, when one hurts, we all share in the pain; and

Whereas a Promised Day is coming when believers of all tribes, races, nations, and cultures will worship Him together as our Eternal Father, loving Sacrifice, and Conqueror of all barriers; and

Whereas we desire to demonstrate to an unbelieving world that His love is indeed transformational across distinctives of race, nationality, culture, and ethnicity, and; Whereas there is a growing intensity of attacks on places set aside for sacred worship of Jesus by the traditionally marginalized and minority peoples in America, especially African American and multi-cultural congregations; and

Whereas our origins as an emerging denomination reflect common experiences of marginalization, violence, prejudice, rejection, intimidation, and assignment to minority status; Therefore, be it resolved that we recommit ourselves to the task of reconciliation through the atoning death of Jesus Christ as our common Lord and personal Savior; and

Be it resolved that we demonstrate our obedience to our Lord's Great Commandment and Great Commission by recommitting ourselves to participatory community reconciliation through action such as:

1. fraternal and adoptive relationships with sister Christian congregations of different ethnic, racial, or cultural demographics;
2. regularly scheduled pulpit and worship team exchanges with such congregations;
3. designated financial support for congregations whose facilities have been damaged by racial, ethnic, or religious violence or arson (e.g., to help rebuild facilities or pay insurance premiums); and
4. offering physical labor, materials, and skills to help such congregations rebuild their damaged facilities; and

Be it further resolved that we oppose with loving firmness and Christian vigor all expressions of racial, ethnic, cultural, and religious prejudice and ignorance at all personal and structural levels,

acknowledging the centrality of the gospel of Jesus as the supreme basis for true personal and community reconciliation.

Political Involvement – Adopted 1987

Whereas the moral decline of our country has resulted in part because its leaders have not heard a strong Christian voice, and whereas the American form of government is designed for the active participation of all of its citizens, and whereas the Bible does not prohibit Christians from involvement in political activities, but rather commands us to oppose injustice and oppression and to protect life and to stand for what is right and good, therefore we the delegates of the 1987 annual meeting of the Baptist General Conference encourage Christians everywhere, and especially other members of the Baptist General Conference, as they are led by God, to exercise their rights, duties, and privileges as citizens by:

1. praying for those in authority;
2. seeking God's will in His Word;
3. encouraging those in public office who stand for godly principles;
4. preparing to serve, as led by God, in roles of leadership in organizations, in political parties, or in public office;
5. writing letters to express our concerns to politicians, to advertisers, to school boards, to newspapers and other media;
6. voting in national and local elections.

A Call to righteous and responsible action – Adopted 1985

In 1965 and 1973 the Baptist General Conference adopted resolutions urging the members of the Conference, both as individuals and congregations, to take a stand against social evils such as the publication and sale of indecent literature. Now it is time for the Baptist General Conference, its various districts, churches and individual members to do more than adopt another resolution.

Righteous and responsible action is needed, because:

- Pastors, counselors, social agencies and law officials are increasingly seeing families broken and lives adversely affected, as well as persons of both sexes and of all ages victimized by pornography, obscenity and indecency.
- The illegal sex industry is now out of control in the United States, becoming an \$8- billion industry which invades every segment of society. It has already reached the American home. It is now downstairs, not just downtown.
- If this pornographic traffic is permitted to continue unabated, many fear the country will reach total decadence by the end of the century.
- Many of the life-styles and ideals which are modeled in the programs of the mass media work against society's traditional community values and are in direct contradiction to those life-style ideals which are modeled and proclaimed in the gospel of Jesus Christ and the commands of holy living as taught in the Scriptures.

- This situation exists in part because churches and Christians have often been silent, failing to rebuke people for their sins, and have faltered in prophetically proclaiming God's judgment upon the obscenity, pornography and indecency which saturate so much of the modern media.

Therefore, the delegates to the 1985 annual meeting request that the following action steps be taken:

1. The general secretary should write to the President of the United States commending him for his public statements in support of morality and traditional community values and informing him that it is the desire of the Baptist General Conference to have the laws related to obscenity such as the RICO (Racketeering Influenced and Corrupt Organizations) Statutes enforced by the U.S. attorney general, the U.S. attorneys, the U.S. Postal Service, the Commerce Department and Customs Department.
2. The board of educational ministries should provide a list of materials and resources to aid the churches of the Conference in developing an awareness of the depth of the problem and how they can combat the growth of obscenity, pornography and indecency.
3. The board of trustees should consider how the Baptist General Conference can work and relate to other denominations, organizations, and leaders who are taking responsible action against this problem.
4. The STANDARD should include appropriate articles and editorials which can raise the level of awareness of the people of the Conference to the depth of this problem and educate them to what can be done on every level. Articles reporting what is already being done should also be included as a way of encouraging every Conference Baptist and agency to remain faithful in its opposition to this evil.
5. Districts can encourage churches and individuals to act as faithful witnesses in their stand against this social evil.
6. The churches of the Conference can annually observe Pornography Awareness Week (October 27 - November 3 in 1985).
7. Every Conference Baptist can become aware of the depth of the problem and its insidious, addictive nature; take any possible action which will be effective in his or her area of influence and be faithful in prayer, asking the Lord to remove this evil from the country.

Suggested Action Steps for Districts

1. District newsletters can be used to raise the level of awareness of what churches and individuals are doing as a means of encouraging responsible action on the part of the churches and members of the districts.
2. Resources can be provided by district resource centers.
3. Youth, education and camp committees can include programs to educate young people about the seriousness of obscenity, pornography and indecency and what they can do to be faithful witnesses in opposing this evil.

4. Pastors can meet to pray and develop cooperative strategies for their churches to use on the district and area levels
5. District leadership can participate in state and regional organizations which are combating obscenity, pornography and indecency.
6. The strict enforcement of existing laws related to pornography, obscenity and indecency at the state and local level can be encouraged.

For Churches

1. Churches can minister to both those who have become victimizers and victims of violence, pornography and sexual abuse, affirming that the love of God and new life in Jesus Christ is available for everyone.
2. Pastors can raise the level of awareness of the depth of this problem by including sermons and lessons on it in their preaching and teaching plan each year.
3. Committees on community values can be formed in each church to provide leadership for the churches in combating obscenity, pornography and indecency on the local level.
4. Resources can be provided and made available for individual church members to use in a faithful witness against this evil.
5. Classes, seminars and workshops can be held for instruction in the depths of the problem and responsible ways to combat this problem.
6. Church libraries can acquire appropriate books to help educate and train church members.
7. Regular and consistent prayer on the part of every Conference Baptist can be encouraged.
8. Churches can consider supporting organizations both nationally and locally that are providing responsible leadership in combating the spread of this evil.
9. The young people of the churches can be instructed not only in the depth of the problem but also what they can do to be faithful and vigilant witnesses.

For Individuals

1. Individuals can develop an awareness of the insidious, addictive nature of obscenity, pornography and indecency and its implications in the lives of individuals, churches and the world.
2. Consistent prayer can be offered to the Lord asking him to remove this evil from the nation.
3. The strict enforcement of existing laws related to pornography, obscenity and indecency at the state and local level can be encouraged and requested by each individual.
4. An active, supportive role in one of the organizations working to combat this evil in responsible ways can be taken.

5. Individuals can refrain from using and supporting all motion pictures, books, magazines, television programs, newspapers, etc. which are offensive to their personal moral convictions.
6. Objectives can lovingly but yet firmly be expressed to those businesses which individuals personally feel contribute to the moral decay of people and families by their sale or sponsorship of pornographic material.
7. Individuals can refrain from patronizing companies that sponsor programs or advertise in media that are offensive to their personal moral convictions.

An affluent church in a hungry world – Adopted 1979

- I. WHEREAS, we are living in a world that is crying out in its need as evidenced by the facts:
 - A. One out of every seven people in the world is suffering from hunger and malnutrition, and
 - B. Approximately 14,000 people die daily from starvation and related diseases; and WHEREAS, such statistics are beyond our comprehension, they nevertheless show a great and pressing need of our world. Now, as at no other time in the history of mankind, we are painfully aware of the great need of a hungry world, and in an affluent and informed society, we can no longer ignore the need of the world. No longer can we remain silent or uninvolved citizens of a country that can produce more food than it needs, but will not in order to control our own economy and maintain an affluent lifestyle for her citizens. Hunger, retardation, famine and death are the grim realities of much of the underdeveloped nations of our world. Even within our own communities, hunger is a reality to many poor, elderly and unemployed.
- II. WHEREAS the Word of God is explicit in its instruction to Christians regarding their responsibility to the poor and hungry, as evidenced by:
 - A. The Old Testament Scriptures Deuteronomy 15:10 promises: "...the Lord will bless you in all your work and in all you undertake" when we care for the poor and do not begrudge the needy or harden our hearts and shut the hand against the poor.
 1. Proverbs 19:17 tells us: "He who is kind to the poor lends to the Lord, and He will repay him for his deeds."
 2. Ezekiel 16:49 tells us: "Behold this was the guilt of your sister Sodom; she and her daughters had pride, surfeit of food, and prosperous ease, but did not aid the poor and needy."
 3. Isaiah 58:10,11 promises rich blessings for those who care for the needy.
 - B. The New Testament Scriptures Mark 6:37 reminds us that our Savior not only fed the hungry but instructed His disciples to do so.

4. Galatians 2:10 shows it was the example of the early church to “remember the poor” and was the eager desire of the Apostle Paul.
5. Matthew 25:40 shows Jesus’ concern for the whole man, and that as we minister unto even the least of these His brethren, we have done it unto Him.
6. 1 John 3:17, 18 exhorts us to love not only in word and speech, but in deed and in truth. If we see our brother in need, and close our hearts against him, we cannot say that God’s love abides in us.

III. WHEREAS, the Baptist General Conference has been known down through its history as being concerned about the need of the whole man, as seen by our concern for children’s and retirement homes, military and institutional chaplaincies and medical work abroad, we must confess that we have not done as much as we could, nor as much as we should. For example, as Conference churches, benevolent giving has averaged approximately 3/4 of 1% of our giving, and that primarily for local needs. Conference giving to world relief, until this past year, has been on a downward trend, and has been primarily in response to world emergencies. For example:

1974-75	\$ 135,632
1975-76	\$ 117,950
1976-77	\$ 71,463
1977-78	\$ 86,690

IV. WHEREAS, we are “An Affluent Church in a Hungry World,” in obedience to God, we must respond to the cry of a hungry world, and seek to meet the need of the world around us and abroad. While there are no cheap, easy answers to solve a very complex social, economic, political and agricultural problem, we must do what we can, while we can, and where we can.

V. THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED:

- A. That as INDIVIDUALS, and members of the family of God, we, the members of the Baptist General Conference, will seek to develop a lifestyle that will enable us to give an increasing flow of resources to help the poor, suffering, and afflicted in all the world, including our own communities, by:
1. Becoming more informed on the need of the world through reading, listening, and discussing.
 2. Praying for the needs and situations of which we are made aware, and asking the Lord to burden our hearts with the need of afflicted people.

3. Giving careful study to the Word of God on portions that pertain to Christian lifestyle, and that these studies be made privately, in our family and church studies.
 4. Making sacrificial downward adjustments in our annual expenditures for vacations, food, clothing, entertainment and recreation, and in the quality of our housing and transportation.
- B. That as LOCAL CHURCHES, and members of the Body of Christ, we adopt a mission which includes in a biblically directed manner, the alleviation of the hunger needs of the world, by:
1. Encouraging our pastors to preach sermon series that deal with the subject of Christian lifestyle and caring for the poor.
 2. Encouraging the local churches to give a minimum of one percent of their total budget to world relief through the Baptist General Conference.
 3. Continuing to show concern for local needs through expanded giving and service to minister to the whole person in our communities.
- C. That the BAPTIST GENERAL CONFERENCE develop a method of operation which demonstrates to the world that we are concerned about the hunger and suffering of the world, by:
1. Endorsing through specific action, that Christian living calls for Christian caring, and that our dual citizenship obligates us to care for physical as well as spiritual deprivation, as stated in principle in 1978 Resolution. As a Conference we should seek to modify our concern and response from reacting to periodic disaster relief calls, and recognize hunger and starvation as a continuing world disaster.
 2. Directing the Board of Trustees to establish a line item in the UMC budget for World Relief in conjunction with local church giving to the Conference.
 3. The Board of Trustees shall direct the World Relief Committee to annually study the need of world relief and submit a proposed budget. The World Relief Committee shall also be directed to seek creative ways to promote a greater awareness of world relief needs throughout our constituency.
 - 4.

Christian Lifestyle – Adopted 1973

Be it resolved that we affirm that God's people are to behave as God's people and while a general description of Christian behavior has already been accepted by our Conference in Article 8 of our Affirmation of Faith, we further affirm that a Christian lifestyle is:

- A. Revealed and commanded in the Word of God.
- B. The natural outgrowth of an individual submitting to Christ as the Lord of his life.
- C. Made possible by the work of the Holy Spirit in our lives changing our nature, attitudes and sensitivities.

- D. Characterized by the following principles:
1. Timelessness. The teachings of the Scripture relating to Christian lifestyle are a concern for all ages and all cultures.
 2. Flexibility. Changing times and changing place new demands upon us, calling us to constant examination and application of biblical principles to Christian living.
 3. Sensitivity. Our concern is to live to the glory of God, not offending in our behavior by either unnecessary rigidity and censoriousness, nor by permissiveness and libertinism.
 4. Witness. We are the light of the world, and the example of our Christian lifestyle is a witness to our world of God's call to holy and righteous living.
 5. Responsibility. We acknowledge a stewardship before God for the lives we lead. Our standard for this stewardship is that all we do and say shall be done to the honor and glory of our Lord.

Therefore, be it also resolved that these principles of Christian lifestyle must be exercised in the world in the decade of the seventies in relation to the many critical issues that presently confront us. Thus we call on Conference Baptists to wrestle before God with Christian lifestyle as it relates to such issues as:

- A. Forgiveness and justice: amnesty.
- B. Providing for my family and the needs of the world: materialism.
- C. Social concern and individual responsibility: welfare.
- D. The right to live and the right to direct one's own life: abortion.
- E. Disapproval of society and color blindness to the Christian: interracial marriage.
- F. The will of the majority and the influence of Christian standards: legalized gambling.
- G. The nature of God's forgiveness and God's teaching on the permanence of marriage: divorce and remarriage.
- H. Freedom of expression in the media and concern about many adverse influences upon our lives and our world: television and media standards.

Obscenity – Adopted 1973

In the light of the recent United States Supreme Court decision on obscenity whereby states and local communities have been given greater authority to set their own standards on obscenity and mindful of the serious nature of this problem in the United States today, BE IT RESOLVED:

1. That we commend the United States Supreme Court for its decision reversing a trend of recent decisions on obscenity.
2. That we urge our Conference churches, pastors and members to contact local authorities, state officials and judicial authorities, making known our serious concern on this problem and requesting prompt action to control or eliminate this evil practice in our nation.

Social Ministries – Adopted 1966

We believe that:

God created both material and spiritual and that he has a concern for the whole man.

The Scriptures explicitly admonish us to a ministry of compassion; “But if anyone has this world’s goods and sees his brother in need, yet closes his heart against him, how does God’s love abide in him? Little children, let us not love in word or speech but in deed and truth.” (1 John 3:17, 18)

Consistent with the example of Christ, the Church fulfills its ministry when it expresses the redemptive love of God for man in his total life situation, both spiritual and social.

It is the Christian’s duty to visit orphans and widows and to feed the hungry, give the thirsty drink, welcome the stranger, clothe the naked and visit the sick and imprisoned. The Baptist General Conference and its members should support and perform services directed toward the well-being of their fellow men as a natural result of their faith in God and their Christian love for their fellow human beings.

Therefore, we urge our membership, both as individuals and congregations, to develop a critical awareness of social needs and to develop relevant programs to relieve stress, to improve the well-being of the community, and to work toward an environment favorable to the fullest development of individual human capacities.

Further, we believe that our Conference should seek ways to quicken the social consciousness of our people by:

1. educating our membership to the relationship between social responsibilities and the mandate of the Gospel:
2. expressing corporate opinions on social issues through stated resolutions and through the development of such programs that validate social concern:
3. promoting and sustaining social ministries commensurate with its resources and skills.

Social Evil – Adopted 1965

We are sadly conscious of the fact that we live in a day which may be characterized by the Scriptural statement, “as it was in the days of Noah.”

We view with great alarm the corrupting forces of evil so strongly entrenched in the life of our society. Of these evils we make particular note:

1. the ever increasing production and consumption of alcoholic beverages
2. the similar production and use of tobacco
3. the illegal traffic in and use of narcotics
4. the publication and sale of indecent literature
5. the offensive dramatization in movies and on television which exploits murder and sex

6. the increasing participation of our population in the nefarious forms of gambling and lottery.

We look upon these evils without compromise, as a serious danger to the physical health and well-being of participants, to the lives of others and of unborn generations. We therefore protest against these degrading practices and against those whom we hold responsible for this curse, those who so shamefully and without respect for decency and the common good of all society, and of our youth in particular, propagandize and exploit only for their own personal gain.

We therefore earnestly urge upon the members of our churches to take a definite stand against these evils; that members cooperate in such non-radical movements and organizations which have as their objective to combat and suppress these aforementioned evils and to enlighten the public of their dangers as a threat to the very life of our nation; that we deal with these problems, not by a negative approach alone, but by a positive educational program and by setting an example of godly living to counteract all these evils. "Whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things." Philippians 4:8

War and Peace

War and Peace – Adopted 1968

We are convinced that war destroys all Christian values, including the destruction of human lives, rights and properties; that the possibility of plunging the human race into an unimaginable holocaust of death and destruction through nuclear warfare is ever upon us; that we share in the weakness and sinfulness of the human race, that we express our Christian love toward all mankind, since we believe that God is love and that every person is precious in His sight; that ultimate peace comes only through the coming of the Prince of Peace; that any temporal hope for the solution of the problems of human society is through the Gospel of Jesus Christ which offers reconciliation and peace with God and our fellow men.

Therefore we recommend that the members of our Baptist General Conference churches

1. Confess their sins, asking God's forgiveness for all past failures that have contributed to misunderstanding and conflict.
2. Increase their support of world missions through which the Gospel of redemption and salvation is proclaimed to all nations.
3. Pray without ceasing for peace and good will throughout the world; for leaders and organizations which seek to bring about cooperative understanding and the alleviation of international discord, racial injustice and world hunger.
4. Support any practical program which attempts to reduce armaments thereby lessening the tensions that lead to war.

Recognize that we are a part of a world-wide fellowship of believers in Christ, that we have spiritual resources that transcend national boundaries and political differences and that link us to the power and Spirit of Almighty God and His Christ.

Resolution: Reaffirmation of our church planting vision

For 166 years, Converge has been planting churches. From our first church started in August of 1852 in Rock Island, Illinois, to our most recent plants on the coasts, in small towns, big cities and suburbs of this country and in nations around the world, we have always recognized the necessity of starting new congregations to reach people with the gospel of Jesus Christ.

We start new congregations for the glory of God, that he may be honored in every heart, household and homeland. Church planting is still the most effective strategy to reach people with the gospel of Jesus Christ.

We start new congregations because we desire to help fulfill the mission of God—every church to engage in the Great Commission by making disciples of all nations.

We start new congregations because we have personally experienced the power of God in our own lives, and we understand that this power is available to all who meet, know and follow Jesus.



We start new congregations because we desire to see the kingdom of God advance in every community, county and country and among every people group.

For these reasons and more, we reaffirm our commitment to focus on starting new congregations and strengthening existing congregations to start new congregations worldwide. Our prayer and desire is that every Converge church will play a part in intentionally starting new congregations that reach ethnically, racially and economically diverse communities locally, regionally and globally with the love of Jesus Christ.

We pray that our church leaders will sense a responsibility to their entire community, city or county. We pray that they would unapologetically and courageously call their congregants to lives of sacrifice, mission and generosity, create leadership development programs such as internships and residencies, and collaborate with other Converge churches to recruit, coach, train and resource church planters. We pray that our churches, in collaboration with national and district leaders, will adopt Each One Start One as a goal for this next season. We pray that every church would find a way to parent, partner or plant, and that, by God's grace, we as a movement of churches will experience the greatest number of new churches started from 2020 to 2025 in our rich history as a significant step in our vision to start 100 new congregations annually in the near future.

START. STRENGTHEN. SEND.