

## **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,