2014-1  Resolution Encouraging Discipleship in Turkey

The General Council of the Baptist World Alliance, meeting in Izmir, Turkey, July 9-11, 2014:

RECOGNIZES the courage and faithfulness of the disciples of Christ in the nation of Turkey;

ACKNOWLEDGES the government’s efforts toward mutual respect and tolerance among different religious groups, which help promote peace and harmony among all of its peoples;

REJOICES in the steps taken to increase religious freedom for people of all faiths, and positively anticipates these freedoms becoming more comprehensive, in accordance with Article 18 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and also Article 18 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights;

EXPRESSES prayerful support for disciples in The Alliance of Baptist Churches in Turkey and in every other Christian group in Turkey, historic or more recent;

REPENTS of any failure to serve, support and prayerfully encourage Turkish Christians in more relevant and meaningful ways;

ENCOURAGES all Baptists in Turkey as they embrace their role and purpose in the redemptive work of God, and continue to courageously follow Jesus and to share the message of the Gospel in culturally relevant ways;

ASKS Baptists around the world to pray faithfully for fellow disciples of Christ Jesus in Turkey and to practically support them, as the Lord leads, that they may be encouraged in continuing to live out their faith in a way that blesses their Lord and their nation; and

URGES all Baptists to engage more actively in the redemptive work of God and to be more intentional in discovering ways of following Jesus that are relevant to their local circumstances.
2014-2 Resolution on Christians at Risk of Persecution

The General Council of the Baptist World Alliance (BWA), meeting in Izmir, Turkey, July 9-11, 2014:

RECOGNIZES the very real dangers faced by many Christians in various parts of the world who experience intolerance and persecution from governments and authorities of different political, religious and ideological persuasions;

CONDEMNS the kidnapping of more than 200 young girls from the school of the Church of the Brethren in Chibok, Nigeria, by Boko Haram on April 14 of this year, which has been followed by further kidnappings and violence;

AFFIRMS its solidarity in sorrow and grief with fellow Christians in the Church of the Brethren, pledging its prayers for the safety and release of the kidnapped students;

COMMENDS to BWA member bodies the use of the prayer resources the Church of the Brethren in Nigeria developed in response to the tragedy, that our prayer in unity with them may give expression to our mutual love in Christ;

CALLS upon the governments and authorities in the region, including the African Union, to collaborate in the effort to secure the release the girls;

RESTATES its concern over targeted attacks and persecution against Christians as a minority community in North Africa and the Middle East as voiced in BWA Resolution 10 of 2013: “Crisis in the Middle East and North Africa.” Recent attacks include such as kidnappings, the recent death penalty imposed in the Sudan on Miriam Ibrahim for her Christian faith, and the plight of some two to three thousand Christians in Eritrea who are currently imprisoned for their faith;

REMEMBERS the example of Polycarp, bishop of Smyrna (Izmir) in the second century, who, in the face of persecution, regarded faithfulness to Christ as of more value than life itself;

PRAYS that the Holy Spirit may strengthen vulnerable Christians in faith and hope through the mercies and promises of Christ, the Lord of life eternal;

REAFFIRMS its abhorrence of violence in the name of religion and commends the efforts of all who work for peace between people of different faiths; and

PLEDGES its continued work for religious liberty for all persons regardless of nationality, religion, or status.
2014-3 Resolution on Myanmar, Violence and Religious Liberty

The General Council of the Baptist World Alliance, meeting in Izmir Turkey, July 9-11, 2014:

AFFIRMS the many significant steps taken by President Thein Sein's government in Myanmar in recent years to relax restrictions and permit a more open society. In particular we welcome the release of many political prisoners and the opening up of greater freedoms in civil society and the media;

EXPRESSES grave concern regarding the proposed Religious Conversion Law, published in state media, on May 27, 2014, that places severe restrictions upon the exercise of religious liberty. We note, with concern, the proposal to deny the right of an individual to choose a faith other than the faith of the community into which they were born. We also observe the intrusive role the law provides for government officials, including the right to apply fines or imprisonment in instances of religious conversion. The impact of these developments especially on minority religions in Myanmar, including the Christian community, will be devastating;

CALLS on President Thien Sien and his government to abandon the proposed law and to adhere to the principles of religious liberty spelled out in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights;

APPLAUDS the peace-building initiatives taken which have reduced decades of fighting and displacement of people from homes and villages across Myanmar;

LAMENTS the fact that, after three years, the military continues the conflict in the Kachin state, earlier addressed in BWA Resolution 11 of 2013: “Kachin Crisis;”

CONDEMNS the forceful displacement of the Kachin by the military for the economic exploitation of the natural resources of the Kachin state;

GRIEVES over the violence being suffered by Muslim communities across Myanmar, most acutely in Rakhine state, where the Rohingyas have lived for generations. Thousands of Muslims have been displaced, their homes and shops looted and burned. Hundreds have been killed; and

REAFFIRMS its commitment as Baptists to religious freedom for all; and calls for the elections scheduled for November 2015 to be free and fair.
2014-4  Resolution on Corruption

The General Council of the Baptist World Alliance, meeting in Izmir, Turkey, July 9-11, 2014:

ACKNOWLEDGES that every human being is created in the image of God and thereby has an intrinsic value to God and to the world (Genesis 1:26-27);

AFFIRMS that God calls all people to do justice, love kindness and walk humbly with God (Micah 6:8);

RECOGNIZES that Jesus commands us to love God and to love our neighbor as ourselves as a model of practicing justice in the world today (Mark 12:33);

ENDORES transparency and integrity in all aspects of public life as called for by the Exposed Campaign, a faith-based call to end corruption in government and business sectors; and

JOINS with brothers and sisters in various faith communities, including the World Council of Churches and the World Evangelical Alliance, in signing this public letter to the leaders of the G20 nations meeting in Brisbane, Australia in November 2014:

We, the leaders of faith based communities, issue this letter calling for integrity and transparency in public life.

We are part of the global EXPOSED campaign representing a billion people in 170 nations taking a stand against greed, secret deals and abuse of public influence, which happens everywhere and affects the poorest most. In 2010 developing countries lost around US$850 billion to illicit financial flows and tax evasion associated with trade mispricing costs developing countries $160bn a year. The lives of 230 little children could be saved every day if corruption issues were addressed and much needed funds were released for development.

As faith leaders, we repent of any practices that may have contributed to corruption, and mend our ways. And we call on G20 governments which have influence over nearly all multinationals operating around the globe, to promote greater transparency in their financial affairs.

[Previously], G20 finance leaders [had] the chance to address bribery and tax evasion in multinational companies and government officials. In November, government leaders could endorse those measures in an historic meeting in Australia. It is our prayer that as you fulfil the G20’s mandate, the policies that you formulate will restore fairness and prevent greed.

ENCOURAGES all Baptist churches, conventions and unions to practice justice, accountability and transparency in all our dealings;

URGES all Baptists to call attention to corruption that can, and does, expose people to unnecessary suffering; and

CALLS UPON Baptists around the world to take action to combat corruption at every level in keeping with the biblical command to do justice, love kindness and walk humbly with God.
Resolution on the Situation in Ukraine

The General Council of the Baptist World Alliance, meeting in Izmir, Turkey, July 9-11, 2014:

ACKNOWLEDGES, with deep sadness and great concern, the current political crisis in Ukraine that has resulted in armed conflict, loss of life, displacement of many people and severe tension between Russia and Ukraine;

NOTES with concern that, in Crimea and Eastern Ukraine generally, the situation has led to increased religious persecution, especially against evangelical Christians;

BELIEVES that our allegiance to Jesus Christ as Lord transcends all our national allegiances and aspirations, and that Christ, by his death on the Cross has "broken down the dividing walls of hostility” (Ephesians 2:14), now and for all time to come;

SUPPORTS all efforts by the international community toward freedom, justice and peace for the whole of Ukraine, and all initiatives toward the reconciliation of those who have been in conflict with each another;

ENCOURAGES the work of Ukrainian Baptists in reaching out in the love of Christ to those most affected by the conflict;

URGES the leaders and churches of the Baptist unions of Ukraine and Russia to overcome prejudice and misunderstanding in the situation, to seek to “speak the truth in love” (Ephesians 4:15) to each other, and to continue to work together in partnership toward a common vision of mission and the growth of the Kingdom of God in their region; and

PROMISES to continue to pray for peace and reconciliation among the people of Ukraine and their political leaders, and to support our brothers and sisters in Christ in Ukraine in the challenging days to come.

“Blessed are the peacemakers...” (Matthew 5:9).
2014-6 Resolution on the Humanitarian Crisis of the Mass Migration of Unaccompanied Minors in the Americas

The General Council of the Baptist World Alliance (BWA), meeting in Izmir, Turkey, July 9-11, 2014:

ACKNOWLEDGES the human tragedy of the recent flood of unaccompanied minors to the United States who risk their lives in search of safety, economic resources and justice;

VOICES ITS CONCERN for these unaccompanied minors who are victimized by separation from their families, economic exploitation, lack of medical care and education, discrimination, and who are sometimes subjected to a hostile host environment;

REAFFIRMS the BWA Resolution 16 of 2013 on Displaced Persons and its call to the governments of the countries involved to seek together a comprehensive approach to the underlying issues across the region that contribute to this social and human tragedy;

MAINTAINS that this is not primarily an issue of unprotected borders, but a humanitarian crisis affecting the countries of origin and all of the United States, especially the states of California, Arizona, New Mexico and Texas, as the principal receiving country;

CHALLENGES the churches in the region to practice hospitality and charity as they regard each minor as a neighbor and child of God;

ENDORSES the message of the Texas Baptist Christian Life Commission which reads in part:

Whereas, United States Customs and Border Protection agents have apprehended more than 46,000 unaccompanied minors since October 1, 2013 and estimates apprehensions this year may reach 90,000; and

Whereas, increasing numbers of minors are coming from the Central American nations of Honduras, Guatemala, and El Salvador, where poverty is widespread and violence is rising; and

Whereas, these children, once in the United States, require proper care and supervision; and

Whereas, the United States has an overburdened immigration court system and a confusing policy framework; and

Whereas, unaccompanied minors who come to the United States often end up staying for years before their cases are resolved; and

Whereas, some communities have expressed hostility toward these children; and

Whereas, these children are not at fault either for the circumstances in their home countries or for the confusion created by human smugglers and American policy;

Therefore be it resolved, the Texas Baptist Christian Life Commission encourages [Baptists] to remember the many biblical injunctions about caring for the “stranger” or immigrant, as reflected in the words of Jesus, “I was a stranger and you welcomed me;”
JOINS its voice with theirs to urge BWA member bodies and churches to:

1. Respond to the need for spiritual support and pastoral services for these children;
2. Create welcoming communities in the various places where these unaccompanied minors are being housed;
3. Communicate with their Latin American networks that the journey is dangerous and misinformation is being spread about the situation that awaits these minors in the United States; and
4. Promote seasons of prayer for the people of Central America, for the children who are traveling to the United States and for all those responding to this human tragedy.

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