Resolutions Adopted by the BWA General Council
Santiago, Chile
July 6-7, 2012

2012-1 Appreciation for Gardner Calvin Taylor

WHEREAS, the General Council of the Baptist World Alliance®, met in Santiago, Chile, July 2-7, 2012, under the general theme "In Step with the Spirit – Proclamation;" and

WHEREAS, the Commission on Baptist Worship and Spirituality and the Commission on Doctrine and Christian Unity held a joint session dedicated to the living legacy of the Reverend Dr. Gardner Calvin Taylor; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Taylor has recently (June 18, 2012) celebrated his ninety-fourth birthday having served for many years as a faithful minister of Jesus Christ, including his forty-two year pastoral charge at Concord Baptist Church of Christ in Brooklyn, New York (1948-90); and

WHEREAS, Dr. Taylor has been long recognized by many observers as one of the most eloquent, passionate and effective preachers in the world, and has modeled a holistic ministry and courageous commitment to civil and human rights, religious liberty and social justice; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Taylor has demonstrated his faithful stewardship as a preacher of the gospel across many countries, cultures, and confessions, and has been an able apostle of Christian unity in all these contexts; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Taylor is held in special esteem among the people of God called Baptists, has served the cause of Christ and enriched the work of the Baptist World Alliance® for more than six decades including having spoken at four consecutive meetings;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Baptist World Alliance® express our love and appreciation to Dr. Gardner Calvin Taylor on the occasion of his ninety-fourth birthday, commending his steadfast service in proclaiming the whole counsel of God.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that we commit ourselves to pass on to the rising generation his gentle wisdom and his worthy example remembering that "God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind" (2 Tim. 1:7).

2012-2 Religious Liberty

The General Council of the Baptist World Alliance®, meeting in Santiago, Chile July 2-7, 2012:

ACKNOWLEDGING we as Baptists are now celebrating the historic occasion of the 400th anniversary of Thomas Helwys' 1612 publication of the Mystery of Iniquity, the first defense of Universal Religious Liberty for all persons to be published in the English language;

WHEREAS, "Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion"**;

WHEREAS, Religion can be deeply rooted in the identity of a person and one's relation to the transcendent world expressed in acts of worship and the sharing of one's faith;

WHEREAS, Religious Liberty for all persons has been a foundational Baptist principle for 400 years;

WHEREAS, Religious Liberty appears to be taken for granted even as religious minority groups in various parts of the world are suffering for lack of religious liberty protection;

WHEREAS, Religious Liberty cannot be taken for granted, but must be defended by every generation;

THEREFORE CALLS on Baptist church leaders around the world to renew urgently the teaching on Religious Liberty for all persons and to serve as advocates in their congregations and communities for the protection of all who wish to worship as their consciences dictate.

*Article 18, Universal Declaration of Human Rights
Global Baptist Mission

The General Council of the Baptist World Alliance®, meeting in Santiago, Chile July 2-7, 2012:

REMEMBERS the 1812 journey of Adoniram and Ann Hasseltine Judson and Luther Rice to Asia to serve as missionaries;

ACKNOWLEDGES the leadership of the Holy Spirit under whose guidance these three Christians to become adherents of the Baptist tradition; and

REJOICES that God inspired these three in the formation of the General Missionary Convention of the Baptist Denomination in the United States of America for Foreign Missions in 1814 that helped to transform Baptists in North America to a missionary people;

GIVES THANKS to God for the Judsons and their impact upon the world missionary movement;

GIVES THANKS to God for the churches in Myanmar that have flourished and persevered in bearing witness to Christ since the planting of the gospel in their midst by the Judsons;

CELEBRATES the participation of Baptists around the world in the joyful proclamation that "God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself" (2 Cor. 5:19, NRSV) and in the manifestation of the kingdom of God through the life, death and resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth;

CELEBRATES the many thousands of Baptist Christians who have responded to the call to mission following in the footsteps of early missionaries such as George Liele, William Carey, Johann Gerhard Oncken and the Judsons;

REJOICES in the millions of brothers and sisters around the world who have come to know Jesus as their savior through the work of missionaries and whose lives have been touched by ministry initiatives in education, health, and agricultural development; and

PLEDGES support through the giving of ourselves, our prayers and our gifts to the cause of Christian mission around the world.

"Christian Witness in a Multi-Religious World"

The General Council of the Baptist World Alliance®, meeting in Santiago, Chile, July 2-7, 2012:

DECLARES that sharing the Good News in both word and deed is an imperative for Christians commissioned by our Lord Jesus Christ (Matthew 28:19);

AFFIRMS that violence, bribes, threats or force are incompatible with Christian mission;

LAMENTS increasing interreligious, political, and economic tensions in the world that result in conflicts, bribes, threats, force, violence, war, and loss of life; and that Christians have been, and sometimes are, implicated in these conflicts;

REJOICES that the World Evangelical Alliance, the World Council of Churches, and the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue jointly endorsed recommendations for conduct for all Christians in Christian Witness in a Multi-Religious World. The text proposes ethical guidelines and practices in witnessing to faith in Christ;

URGES Baptists, all Christians, adherents of other faiths, and those of no faith tradition to live together peaceably and with mutual respect to foster reconciling relationships with others;

COMMENDS AND ENDORSES Christian Witness in a Multi-Religious World,* for study and encourages Baptist World Alliance® member conventions, unions, and associations to incorporate and contextualize these and similar ethical practices in relationships with other faith traditions and individuals.

The General Council of the Baptist World Alliance®, meeting in Santiago, Chile, July 2-7, 2012,

Renews resolutions of climate change made by the General Council in 2008 and 2009: and

CONTINUES TO BELIEVE AND AFFIRM:

- God as creator, sustainer and Lord of all, who delights in and is committed to God’s creation;
- The biblical teaching of respect for the earth and everything in it; and
- The moral imperative to love one’s neighbor including future generations by caring for God’s creation;

REPENTS that we have not always been faithful stewards of God’s creation owing to ignorance, neglect, arrogance and greed;

CONFESSES that we have not responded adequately to God’s indignation and sorrow for creation’s agony, but rather have often exploited, consumed and abused creation for selfish advantage;

LAMENTS that the world’s poor are most affected by climate change and are least able to adapt;

REGRETS the lack of progress toward a global consensus on the urgent need to reduce human contribution to climate change that is having dramatic impact on God’s creation. This lack of progress is motivated in part by national and corporate greed and individual preference for unsustainable lifestyles;

RECOGNIZES that an increased commitment is needed by the churches, conventions and unions of the Baptist World Alliance® and by Christians everywhere to act as agents of change and reconciliation with God’s creation;

REnews the CALL for multi-national corporations, national governments, the United Nations, and the agencies of these entities, to urgently promote climate change legislation and policies, which:

- Recognize common but differential responsibility of nations;
- Secure adequate public financing for poverty eradication, social equity and sustainable development;
- Establish participatory accountability mechanisms and independent monitoring of commitments to action that were made at the RIO+20 United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (June 20-22, 2012) and in previous meetings of the United Nations on Sustainable Development and Climate Change;
- Keep human rights considerations in the forefront of sustainable development;
- CALLS UPON Baptist individuals, churches, conventions and unions as a matter of urgency to:
  - Support the framework for action advocated by the June 2012 Rio conference and join other civil society actors in monitoring the implementation of key commitments made by conference stakeholders in Rio;
  - Teach and model creation care;
  - Identify simple and practical means for immediate personal and corporate ecologically-appropriate lifestyle changes as a matter of Christian discipleship and actively advocate that their national leaders do the same;
  - Pray fervently for a renewed commitment worldwide to care for God’s creation and for the coming of God’s Kingdom “on earth as it is in heaven”.

ENCOURAGES the Commission on Social and Environmental Justice and the Commission on Christian Ethics to work together to develop an equitable plan to offset the carbon footprint of the Annual Gathering and to recommend ways to reduce the carbon footprint of all Baptist World Alliance business meetings.
The General Council of the Baptist World Alliance®, meeting in Santiago, Chile July 2-7, 2012:

RECOGNIZES concern about the discriminatory bombing of places of worship and properties, slaughtering and killing of Nigerian people and the abuse of human rights in the name of religion;

OBSERVES that these horrendous acts of inhumanity in Nigeria have become a hindrance to the exercise of free worship and assembly;

REJECTS all forms of cruelty that cause sorrow, suffering, death, destruction and the abuse of all forms of human rights in Nigeria;

RE-AFFIRMS our commitment as Baptists to religious liberty for all;

CALLS for a peaceful ending of all violence and abuse of human rights in Nigeria, while encouraging our Baptist sisters and brothers to continue to seek ways to promote peace and respect for all persons in Nigeria;

APPEALS to the government of Nigeria at all levels to ensure safety and security for all people in the country;

URGES Baptists around the world to raise these concerns with their governments, religious leaders and persons of influence;

REQUESTS Baptist World Alliance® member bodies to commit to relentless prayer for peace where there is violence in Nigeria.