

## **2016 Resolutions Committee Report Southern Baptists of Texas Convention**

### **Resolution One: On Racial Reconciliation**

WHEREAS, Scripture teaches that God has created all people in His image (Genesis 1:27) and has made from one man all peoples to live on the earth (Acts 17:26); and

WHEREAS, our salvation is based on faith in Christ alone and not in our ethnicity (Galatians 3:27–28); and

WHEREAS, Christ has commissioned His followers to make disciples from every nation and has entrusted to us a ministry of reconciliation for all people (Matthew 28:19, 2 Corinthians 5:11-21); and

WHEREAS, racism is a sin because it disregards the image of God in all people and denies the truth of the gospel that believers are all one in Christ Jesus; and

WHEREAS, we continue to commit the sin of racism and suffer from its consequences in our nation; and

WHEREAS, we lack racial diversity in our churches; now, be it therefore

RESOLVED, we, the messengers to the Southern Baptists of Texas Convention, meeting in Austin, Texas, November 14-15, 2016, rededicate ourselves to the responsibility and privilege of loving and discipling people of all races and ethnicities in our communities; and be it further

RESOLVED, we urge churches to demonstrate their heart for racial reconciliation by seeking to increase racial and ethnic diversity in church staff roles, leadership positions, and church membership; and be it further

RESOLVED, we urge Texas Southern Baptist entities and Convention committees to make leadership appointments that reflect the racial and ethnic diversity of the body of Christ and of the Southern Baptists of Texas Convention; and be it further

RESOLVED, we encourage our churches to participate in the “Look Like Heaven” emphasis which promotes racial unity and cross-cultural relationships among SBTC churches; and be it further

RESOLVED, we continually prioritize and monitor our progress in adequately representing the increasing racial and ethnic diversity of our communities in our local congregations and our entities; and be it finally

RESOLVED, we call on Texas Southern Baptists to be faithful ambassadors of reconciliation in their personal relationships and local communities as they demonstrate the power of the gospel to reconcile all persons in Christ.

## **Resolution Two: On Prayer for Government Leaders and Civil Discourse**

WHEREAS, the previous election cycle was especially acrimonious; and

WHEREAS, the president-elect will be sworn in on January 20, 2017, thereby continuing the process of peaceful transition of leadership; and

WHEREAS, the Bible teaches God created human beings in His own image and as such they should not suffer denigration, especially from Christians (Genesis 1:27); and

WHEREAS, trusted Christian leaders hold disparate, entrenched, political opinions whereby they voice their support or disapproval of candidates; and

WHEREAS, Scripture unequivocally instructs Christians to submit to the governing authorities as established by God (Romans 13:1-2, 6-7, Titus 3:1-2, 1 Peter 2:13-14,17); and

WHEREAS, supporting our president and other government leaders does not include supporting policy positions or decisions contrary to Scripture; and

WHEREAS, Christians' speech should be seasoned as with salt, gracious, and give evidence of submission to the gospel (Ephesians 4:29, Colossians 4:5-6, James 3:3-12, 1 Peter 2:12); be it therefore

RESOLVED, that we, the messengers to the Southern Baptists of Texas Convention, meeting in Austin, Texas, November 14-15, 2016, affirm our responsibility as Christians to prayerfully submit to, obey, and honor all elected and appointed officials; and be it further

RESOLVED, we encourage Southern Baptists to remember our unity is not bound to a political system; rather we are united in our faith in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, and be it finally

RESOLVED, we dedicate ourselves to the responsibility and privilege of being gracious toward those in public office, Christian leaders, and our neighbors regarding the governing authorities of our country, and for this commitment of grace to be evident in our attitudes, speech, and actions, all for the glory of God and the advancement of the gospel.

## **Resolution Three: On Religious Liberty**

WHEREAS, Southern Baptists, believe that the Bible is the inspired and inerrant Word of God and the supreme standard by which all human conduct, creeds, and religious opinions should be tried (2 Timothy 3:16-17); and

WHEREAS, we affirm the exclusive claims of Jesus Christ as God and the only Savior and the necessity of personal faith in Him, truths which are at the very heart of the Christian faith (John 14:6); and

WHEREAS, genuine faith, by definition, cannot be coerced or legislated (James 2:18); and

WHEREAS, the gospel of Jesus Christ prescribes boundaries and definitions for what is best for the common good of mankind and the flourishing of humanity in the world (Luke 9:23-26); and

WHEREAS, authentic Christianity produces a culture that is often at odds with the culture at large, our disagreement being neither harmful nor hateful (Romans 12:2, I John 2:15-16); and

WHEREAS, Christians have been subject to intense criticism and punitive social reaction for our beliefs - actions which engender or encourage religious persecution and interfere with the free exercise of religion (Mark 13:9); and

WHEREAS, Christians are increasingly portrayed as intolerant and even dangerous to society because of our commitment to Christ as the only way of salvation (Matthew 10:16-20); and

WHEREAS, religious liberty is a basic human right discerned from scripture and affirmed by the founders of our nation (Matthew 13:24-30, Acts 18:12-17); and

WHEREAS, many are unaware of the long history of Baptists as determined advocates of freedom, especially genuine religious liberty; and

WHEREAS, there is a growing tendency to label the preaching of the Christian gospel, and the thinking of the Christian mind a "hate crime" (Matthew 10:22); now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the messengers to the Southern Baptists of Texas Convention, meeting in Austin, Texas, November 14-15, 2016, declare that Baptists have been and continue to be ardent advocates of religious liberty for all; and be it further

RESOLVED, that we call on all governments professing to desire the best for their citizens to embrace religious liberty as a basic and essential human right; and be it further

RESOLVED, that holding religious beliefs and exercising one's religion, are rights that supersede popular culture's perception of right and wrong; and be it further

RESOLVED, that we remind international governments that religious liberty is not merely the right to remain in the religion of one's birth, but includes the right of anyone to change his religious loyalties without fear of persecution, fully holding to one's deeply held religious beliefs; and be it finally

RESOLVED, that we call on the government of the United States of America to continue vigorous support of the First Amendment to the United States Constitution at home, and also to protect this basic and essential liberty of the citizens of mankind by openly advocating this freedom for all and by considering candidates for appointed positions in government on the basis of their willingness to protect their citizens against any and every form of religious discrimination and persecution.

#### **Resolution Four: On Supporting and Advocating for Orphan Care in the Church**

WHEREAS, there are an estimated 153 million orphans around the world and there are over 400,000 children in foster care throughout the United States; and

WHEREAS, there are over 650,000 children that spend time in foster care in the United States, and these children spend approximately two years in the foster system; and

WHEREAS, there are over 30,000 children in foster care in Texas, and there are an additional 30,000 confirmed victims of child abuse and neglect in Texas; and

WHEREAS, the neglect and abuse of children have reached alarming levels in our nation, thus requiring the urgent response of God's people; and

WHEREAS, the Bible tells us that God is our Creator, he knows us and attributes value to all human life, born and preborn (Psalm 139:13-16, Jeremiah 1:5); and

WHEREAS, God hears the cries of the fatherless and listens to their pleas, and He grants mercy to the orphans; and is the "Father of the fatherless and protector of widows" (Exodus 22:22-23, Deuteronomy 10:18, Psalm 68:5, Hosea 14:3); and

WHEREAS, all of God's people are called to seek the good of vulnerable children in our society (Psalm 72:12-14, Isaiah 1:17, Matthew 18:4-5, Matthew 25:40, Mark 12:31, Luke 18:15-17, James 1:27); and

WHEREAS, through salvation, we become the adopted and beloved children of God and fellow heirs with Christ (Galatians 4:4-7, Ephesians 1:3-6, Romans 8:14-23); and

WHEREAS, the church is in a unique position to minister to families at risk of breaking apart before the children are removed; and

WHEREAS, the church is in a unique position to meet the needs of vulnerable children should they be removed from their homes; and

WHEREAS, not all Christians are called to adoption or foster care, but the Scriptures are clear that all Christians are called to orphan care; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that we, the messengers to the Southern Baptists of Texas Convention, meeting in Austin, Texas, November 14-15, 2016, hereby express our commitment to intentional orphan care and family support both domestically and internationally; and be it further

RESOLVED, that we encourage churches to seek ways to support families who are pursuing the call to foster care and adoption, such as financial help, respite care, and practical ministries; and be it further

RESOLVED, that we ask all families to intentionally pray and seek the Lord's guidance as to what "orphan care" means for their families; and be it further

RESOLVED, that we commit to engaging community partners in order to identify needs that the church can help to meet relating to orphan care; and be it further

RESOLVED, that we are committed to praying for wisdom and discernment, and to encourage the judges, lawyers, case workers, supervisors, therapists, and other professionals who work directly with orphans and families in crisis; and be it further

RESOLVED, that we commend churches, ministries and agencies such as our own Texas Baptist Home for Children that are facilitating orphan care through foster care, adoption, family education, and financial assistance; and be it further

RESOLVED, that we encourage churches, pastors, other church leaders, missionaries, and missionary boards to educate themselves on the general and specific needs relating to orphan care; and be it further

RESOLVED that we encourage our pastors and church leaders to preach and teach on God's concern for orphans, and to present their congregations with specific options to impact orphan care; and be it finally

RESOLVED, that we pray for a spirit of clarity and discernment as we seek to share the gospel through our actions and words.

### **Resolution Five: On Meeting the Needs of Those in Our Communities with Disabilities**

WHEREAS, every human being, without regard to physical, intellectual, or developmental ability, is the special creation of God, deserving protection and support from conception to natural death (Genesis 1:26-27, Psalm 139:13-16); and,

WHEREAS, God commands that we serve the lame, poor, crippled, blind, and sick as an act of service to Christ Himself without expectation of repayment (Isaiah 58:7, Matthew 25: 31-46, Luke 14: 1-24, Acts 20:35, James 2:14-17); and,

WHEREAS, Christians, when we advocate for good deeds and do what is right in the view of worldly authorities, bear witness to the goodness of God through the political system and silence those who ignorantly slander His church (1 Peter 2:15); and,

WHEREAS, the State of Texas reports that a significant number of Texans have a disability requiring assistance on a spectrum ranging from minimal accommodation to lifelong care not typically covered by long-term care insurance; and,

WHEREAS, disabilities require lifelong understanding, compassion, and assistance; and,

WHEREAS, any action that offers hope to individuals with disabilities and to their families that they will not face these challenges utterly alone is an action that serves well the pro-life cause in our country; and,

WHEREAS, families seeking publicly funded care for disability services may sit on long waiting lists; and,

WHEREAS, over time, caregivers may have a lessened ability to provide complete care to include the spiritual, emotional, physical, and financial needs of caring for a loved one with a disability; and,

WHEREAS, some families find it difficult to participate in the life of their local churches, due to the challenges of caring for a disabled loved one; and

WHEREAS, the individuals with disabilities also benefit greatly from receiving the love and spiritual care of Christ's followers; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that we, the messengers to the Southern Baptists of Texas Convention, meeting in Austin, Texas, November 14-15, 2016, call Texas Southern Baptists to evaluate the ministries of our churches with regard to responding appropriately to the widespread and serious needs of people with disabilities and their caregivers; and be it further

RESOLVED, that we call our churches to love and minister to this population by developing methods and resources to, disciple, fellowship with, and assist them; and, be it further

RESOLVED, that we will pray for those who have a disability and for those who provide their care; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, that we support legislation that will protect the sanctity of life from conception to natural death and adequately care for the basic needs of disabled individuals, who are a valued part of God's creation.

#### **Resolution Six: On Prayer and Evangelism Emphasis**

WHEREAS, we, as followers of Jesus Christ, have been given a mission and commandment to make disciples of all nations (Matthew 28:19); and

WHEREAS, we are no longer of this world, but sent by Christ into this world with all of His authority (Matthew 28:18, John 17:15-18); and

WHEREAS, churches find themselves entangled with the cares of this world and living in a culture that denies the authority of God or even His very existence and that continues to demonstrate brokenness from God's design and will (2 Corinthians 4:4, Ephesians 2:2); and

WHEREAS modern culture continues to reinforce the emphasis on "self" as the answer to life's problems and challenges and as the source of hope and dreams; and

WHEREAS, churches are called to have a distinctive and clear witness in our culture (Matthew 5:13-16); and

WHEREAS, God has promised to draw near to those who draw near to Him with broken and contrite hearts, (Psalm 51:17, Isaiah 51:17, 66:2, James 4:8); and

WHEREAS, God has promised to hear, forgive, and heal when His people humble themselves, pray, seek His face, and turn from their wicked ways (2 Chronicles 7:14); and

WHEREAS, the patience of the Lord is salvation, and our obedience to share the gospel is in fact God making His appeal to the lost (2 Corinthians 5:20, 2 Peter 3:15); now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the messengers to the Southern Baptists of Texas Convention meeting in Austin, Texas November 14-15, 2016, call upon all Texas Southern Baptist churches and Christ followers to humble themselves before God, seek the Lord, turn from sin, and acknowledge our dependence on Him; and be it further

RESOLVED, that we renew our love, appreciation, and understanding of the gospel and our call to make disciples of every nation; and be it further

RESOLVED, that we exhort all Texas Southern Baptist churches to make a visible, concentrated effort to raise the awareness of evangelism and equip their members to effectively share the full gospel; and be it finally

RESOLVED, that we urge all followers of Christ to live “on mission” wherever God has placed us.

### **Resolution Seven: On Appreciation to Great Hills Baptist Church**

WHEREAS, the messengers to the 2016 meeting of the Southern Baptists of Texas Convention have enjoyed a time of worship, encouragement and fellowship; and

WHEREAS, we acknowledge God’s providence for all of these blessings; and

WHEREAS, we acknowledge the kind hospitality and generosity of the staff and leadership of Great Hills Baptist Church to host this convention; and

WHEREAS, we gratefully acknowledge the extraordinary commitment, extensive labor and excellent leadership of the pastor, Danny Forshee and his staff; and

WHEREAS, we gratefully acknowledge that other area churches have also extended hospitality and provided volunteer assistance; and

WHEREAS, we also acknowledge the Lord’s work in enabling all our officers, various committees, convention speakers, musicians, convention staff, volunteers and messengers to conduct the affairs of this convention with dignity and a Christ-like spirit; now, be it therefore

RESOLVED, that we, the messengers to the Southern Baptists of Texas Convention, meeting in Austin, Texas, November 14-15, 2016, hereby express our profound gratitude to the Lord and to all those He used to bring about a meeting characterized by evangelism, worship, and encouragement.