

**REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON RESOLUTIONS**  
**Southern Baptists of Texas Convention, 2017**

**Number one: On Prayer for Sutherland Springs**

WHEREAS, on November 5, 2017, a gunman attacked First Baptist Church of Sutherland Springs, Texas, killing 26 people and wounding 20 others; and

WHEREAS, First Baptist Church in Sutherland Springs is an affiliated church of the Southern Baptists of Texas Convention; and

WHEREAS, the families and community affected by this tragedy will continue to grieve as they attempt to recover; and

WHEREAS, Scripture promises that God is near to the brokenhearted and comforts those who are afflicted (Psalm 34:18; 2 Corinthians 1:3-7); now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, we, the messengers to the Southern Baptists of Texas Convention, meeting in Dallas, Texas, November 13-14, 2017, commit to pray for First Baptist Church of Sutherland Springs, the community of Sutherland Springs, and Pastor Frank Pomeroy and his wife Sherri; and be it further

RESOLVED, we commend the leadership of the Southern Baptists of Texas Convention, the North American Mission Board, and the Southern Baptist Convention for the ministry they have provided to the people of Sutherland Springs, including payment of funeral expenses; and be it finally

RESOLVED, we encourage Southern Baptists of Texas Convention churches to continue their support for the people of Sutherland Springs throughout the grieving process in the wake of this horrific tragedy.

**Number two: On Gender Identity**

WHEREAS, God has created and continues to create all human beings in His image and with equal intrinsic worth (Genesis 1:26); and

WHEREAS, God has designed two genders, male and female, as part of His original creation design and assigns one to each human He creates (Genesis 1:27); and

WHEREAS, God alone, as Creator, has the prerogative to assign gender; and

WHEREAS, individuals born with physical disorders of sex development are also created in the image of God with equal intrinsic worth, and are able to live abundant lives in joyful obedience to Christ; and

WHEREAS, no human act can alter gender, despite surgical or pharmaceutical efforts to change any person's physiological nature; and

WHEREAS, current culture contributes to confusion about gender identity; and

WHEREAS, current culture increasingly denies gender as biologically defined and given by God and instead embraces gender as culturally defined and perceived by an individual; and

WHEREAS, current culture further promotes the idea that speech or action that does not embrace a self-perceived gender identity is hateful and intolerant; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that we, the messengers to the Southern Baptists of Texas Convention, meeting in Dallas, Texas, November 13-14, 2017, affirm that gender is determined by God alone and is not influenced by man or open for selection or alteration; and be it further

RESOLVED, that we encourage government officials and policy makers to support public policies that recognize the unalterable God-given distinctions between male and female; and be it further

RESOLVED, that we affirm and support pastors as they proclaim the truth of God's Word, parents as they train their children in the Lord, and citizens as they live out their faith in the public sphere in relation to God-given gender identity; and be it finally

RESOLVED, that we commit to act in love and in God's grace toward all people, who bear the image of God, desiring that all would come to have a saving relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ, not withholding the truth, but conveying it in a gracious manner at every opportunity.

### **Number three: On Sexual Harassment**

WHEREAS, the Bible demands that we show proper respect to all persons, love the family of believers, fear God, and love one another (1 Peter 2:17; 1 John 4:7-8); and

WHEREAS, proper respect and love is not shown in sexual harassment; and

WHEREAS, accusations of sexual harassment are on the rise in the United States; and

WHEREAS, sexual harassment violates Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 which defines sexual harassment as "unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature when this conduct explicitly or implicitly affects an individual's employment, unreasonably interferes with an individual's work performance, or creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive work environment"; and

WHEREAS, the Bible condemns sexual harassment by prohibiting sexual immorality, every sort of impurity, obscenity, foolish talk, and coarse joking (Ephesians 5:3-5); and

WHEREAS, sexual harassment demeans, hurts, and antagonizes the victim wherever it may occur; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that we, the messengers to the Southern Baptists of Texas Convention, meeting in Dallas, Texas, November 13-14, 2017, declare that we should advocate for the proper respect of all people and denounce sexual harassment of any kind; and be it further

RESOLVED, we encourage churches to implement personnel policies that ensure appropriate awareness and education of sexual harassment; and be it further

RESOLVED, we encourage church leaders to continually monitor and take the necessary steps to ensure that any reported instances of sexual harassment are promptly investigated and addressed; and be it finally

RESOLVED, that we encourage all believers to treat every person with the compassion and respect merited by persons created in the image of God.

#### **Number four: On the Ministerial Housing Allowance**

WHEREAS, United States District Judge Barbara Crabb of the Western District of Wisconsin ruled on October 6, 2017, that the ministerial housing allowance exemption is unconstitutional; and

WHEREAS, since 1921 ministers have been eligible to receive a tax exemption for parsonages; and

WHEREAS, ordained ministers have enjoyed the benefits of a housing allowance exemption from federal income taxes since 1954; and

WHEREAS, Congress instituted the housing allowance exemption in recognition of the vital role that churches and ministers play in the life of their communities; and

WHEREAS, many Southern Baptist ministers across Texas utilize the housing allowance exemption to reduce their tax burden and enable them to continue in ministry; and

WHEREAS, ministers often use their homes for ministry purposes on behalf of the church and in service to the community; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that we, the messengers to the Southern Baptists of Texas Convention, meeting in Dallas, Texas, November 13-14, 2017, encourage our government officials to recognize the invaluable contributions of ministers and churches to their communities; and be it further

RESOLVED, we urge the Seventh U.S. Circuit of Appeals to overturn the lower court's ruling that the ministerial housing allowance exemption is unconstitutional; and be it further

RESOLVED, we encourage the Convention and churches to educate ministers regarding this valuable tax benefit; and be it finally

RESOLVED, we commit to set an example for how churches provide invaluable resources for our communities through volunteer service, disaster relief, benevolence, and spiritual well-being to demonstrate that the benefit received by ministers and churches through the housing allowance exemption is returned in abundance to the community.

#### **Number five: On Adoption Tax Credit Resolution**

WHEREAS, the gospel declares that sinners united to Jesus Christ are no longer spiritual orphans, but are now beloved children of God and joint heirs with Christ (John 14:18; Romans 8:12-25; Galatians 3:27-4:9; Ephesians 1:5); and

WHEREAS, the God we now know as our Father reveals himself as a “father of the fatherless” (Psalm 68:5) who grants mercy to orphans (Deuteronomy 10:18; Hosea 14:3); and

WHEREAS, Southern Baptists have advocated for the adoption of orphaned children as a reflection of their adoption in Christ and as a command given by God (James 1:27); and

WHEREAS, in order to protect vulnerable and orphaned children, government is able to create policies that assist and incentivize the adoption of orphaned children; and

WHEREAS, the Adoption Tax Credit provides economic assistance to families seeking to adopt orphaned children; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that we, the messengers to the Southern Baptists of Texas Convention, meeting in Dallas, Texas, November 13-14, 2017, call upon the federal government of the United States to retain the Adoption Tax Credit in federal law so that adoptive families have every means at their disposal to rescue orphaned children; and be it finally

RESOLVED, that we encourage Southern Baptist families to consider whether God is calling them to adopt, or to assist those adopting, in keeping with the culture of adoption we as Southern Baptists seek to foster in our churches.

#### **Number six: On the Centrality of Scripture**

WHEREAS, the Baptist Faith and Message asserts that “the Holy Bible was written by men divinely inspired and is God’s revelation of Himself to man. It is a perfect treasure of divine instruction. It has God for its author, salvation for its end, and truth, without any mixture of error, for its matter”; and

WHEREAS, the Bible affirms that being “born again is not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the Word of God” (1 Peter 1:23); and

WHEREAS, the Bible explains that spiritual growth comes by the Word of God and it is a lamp unto our feet and a light unto our path, and we are to be doers of the Word (Psalm 119:105; James 1:22; 1 Peter 1:2); and

WHEREAS, the Bible commands us to “preach the Word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine” (2 Timothy 4:2); and

WHEREAS, the Bible warns us that “the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; and they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables” (2 Timothy 4:3-4); and

WHEREAS, Scripture instructs us to disciple our children throughout each day by teaching them God’s Word, His mighty works, and His commands, imparting to them a biblical worldview (Deuteronomy 6:6-7; Psalm 78:4-7; Proverbs 22:6; Ephesians 6:4); now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that we, the messengers to the Southern Baptists of Texas Convention meeting in Dallas, Texas, November 13-14, 2017, encourage all our members, in view of the lostness of souls, the value of time, the love of God, and the mandate of our commission, to live, teach, and preach the Word of God, which is the only power of God unto salvation; and be it further

RESOLVED, that we urge our churches to encourage daily personal Bible study and memorization, family Bible studies, and regular Bible studies with their churches.

**Number seven: On Hurricane Harvey**

WHEREAS, Hurricane Harvey devastated 54 counties in Texas in the late summer of 2017 resulting in the loss of life and property; and

WHEREAS, many Texans experienced the destruction of their homes and businesses and continue to live in temporary quarters; and

WHEREAS, many churches experienced tremendous loss of property and scattering of their congregations; and

WHEREAS, Southern Baptist Disaster Relief was on the forefront of care for evacuees and restoration of homes and places of worship; and

WHEREAS, Southern Baptist Disaster Relief was among the first responders in the wake of the storms, providing food, water, supplies, and comfort to people in need; and

WHEREAS, Southern Baptists of Texas Convention Disaster Relief teams have worked more than 7,283 volunteer days and 72,830 volunteer hours; and

WHEREAS, Southern Baptist Disaster Relief volunteers have shared 2,187 gospel presentations with 417 reported professions of faith; and

WHEREAS, Southern Baptists of Texas Convention Disaster Relief teams have prepared and served 295,691 meals and helped to clean out 639 homes; and

WHEREAS, Southern Baptist volunteers continue to minister in those areas most affected by the storm; and

WHEREAS, the Southern Baptists of Texas Convention received donations for Hurricane Harvey relief from 47 states, Canada, and one military APO address through October; and

WHEREAS, 62 churches affected by Hurricane Harvey have been adopted by 116 sister churches through the Southern Baptists of Texas Convention Adopt-a-Church ministry; and

WHEREAS, this ministry to storm victims has demonstrated the love of God and was accomplished for His glory alone; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that we, the messengers to the Southern Baptists of Texas Convention annual meeting in Dallas, Texas, November 13-14, 2017, enthusiastically affirm the Southern Baptist Disaster Relief agencies and volunteers; and be it further

RESOLVED, that we express our gratitude to the thousands of volunteers who gave of themselves unselfishly to help people in their time of need; and be it further

RESOLVED, that we thank the many Southern Baptists of Texas Convention churches that opened their doors to receive evacuees and to minister to them both in word and deed; and be it further

RESOLVED, that we encourage churches to help with the ongoing rebuilding efforts in the region so that Jesus Christ may be glorified; and be it finally

RESOLVED, that we commit ourselves to pray diligently for our brothers and sisters and fellow Texans who seek to rebuild their lives and livelihoods in the midst of difficult circumstances.

**Number eight: On Appreciation for President Nathan Lino**

WHEREAS, Pastor Nathan Lino has served as president of the Southern Baptists of Texas Convention for the years 2016 and 2017; and

WHEREAS, President Lino has led our convention with grace, energy, creativity, and integrity, demonstrating a Christ-like spirit; and

WHEREAS, President Lino has a heart and vision for our nation and the world, supporting missions causes nationally and internationally through the Cooperative Program; and

WHEREAS, President Lino's leadership in evangelism, as well as through effective efforts to involve more young pastors in the leadership of the convention, has been a great benefit to the churches of our convention; and

WHEREAS, President Lino's term as president ends with the conclusion of our 2017 annual meeting; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that we, the messengers to the Southern Baptists of Texas Convention, meeting in Dallas, Texas, November 13-14, 2017, express our appreciation to Pastor Nathan Lino for his service and leadership as convention president and to Northeast Houston Baptist Church, Humble, Texas, for their generosity in sharing their pastor with our convention.

**Number nine: On Appreciation to Criswell College**

WHEREAS, the messengers to the 2017 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 Criswell College to host this convention; and

WHEREAS, we gratefully acknowledge the extraordinary commitment, extensive labor, and excellent leadership of the president, Dr. Barry Creamer, and his staff; and

WHEREAS, we gratefully acknowledge that 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, therefore be it

RESOLVED, that we, the messengers to the Southern Baptists of Texas Convention, meeting in Dallas, Texas, November 13-14, 2017, hereby express our profound gratitude to the Lord, and to all those He used to bring about a meeting characterized by evangelism, worship, and true Christian fellowship.