

Resolution on Current Manifestations of Religious Intolerance and Religiously-Motivated Violence

The Baptist World Alliance (BWA) General Council, meeting in Nassau, Bahamas, July 7-12, 2019:

EXPRESSES its deep concern over recent instances of religious intolerance and religiously-motivated violence around the world since its last meeting in 2018, including but not limited to: the attacks against synagogues in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, USA; and Poway, California, USA; attacks in Christchurch, New Zealand against two mosques; and the deaths and injuries to hundreds of Christians during a coordinated set of bombings throughout Sri Lanka on Easter morning;

ACKNOWLEDGES that these events remind us that various forms of religious intolerance, both from individuals and as a result of government action or inaction, continue to pose a significant threat to individuals and to societies across the globe;

DECRIES the well-documented rise of anti-Semitism around the world, for instance the marked increase in anti-Semitic crimes in western and central Europe; the increase in Islamophobia across the world, including violence against Rohingya Muslims in Myanmar; the crackdown on religious freedom in China that has led to the detention of more than a million Uighur Muslims and the persecution of Christians and churches in China; and the significant rise in global Christian persecution as evidenced by continued violence in Nigeria, Cameroon, and India, as well as the recently published report commissioned by the UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office, which found that approximately 245 million Christians suffer high levels of persecution or worse;

RECALLS that 2019 is the 85th anniversary of the historic resolution passed at the fifth Baptist World Congress in Berlin, Germany, in 1934, against the background of the rise of fascism, which opposed anti-Semitism and all other forms of religious and racial prejudice, stating in part that

This Congress deplores and condemns as a violation of the law of God the Heavenly Father, all racial animosity, and every form of oppression or unfair discrimination toward the Jews, toward coloured people, or toward subject races in any part of the world.

This Congress urges the promotion of Christian teaching concerning respect for human personality regardless of race or religion, and as the surest means of advancing the true brotherhood of all people, urges the active propagation of the Gospel of Christ throughout the world.

REAFFIRMS that, in the light of the vision of the early Baptist Thomas Helwys who, in 1612, made his famous plea for Jews, Christians, and Muslims to be allowed to worship in freedom and so live at peace together in the same geographical space, we stand in solidarity and sympathy with all people who suffer violence, injury, and harm, regardless of religion, race, gender,

culture, or ethnicity; in response to all of the tragedies cited above, we “mourn with those who mourn” (Romans 12:15);

ENCOURAGES all Baptists to demonstrate that by living in peace with everyone (Romans 12:18), we reaffirm that prejudice, hate, and violence cannot defeat respect, love, and faith; and

CALLS upon the BWA member bodies to offer the hand of sincere friendship to our neighbors of other faiths, as an expression of biblical teaching that all human beings are made in the image of God (Genesis 1:27), and as a prophetic response of God’s love against all manifestations of terrorism, violence, and religious intolerance (Romans 12:21).