

AMERICAN BAPTIST FOREIGN MISSION SOCIETY

(AKA American Baptist International Ministries)

RESOLUTION ON RACIAL JUSTICE

NOVEMBER 17, 2020

We, the American Baptist Foreign Mission Society, also known as International Ministries (IM), believe the Spirit of God is moving us to recognize the existence of institutional and systemic racism, to denounce it as a moral evil, and to confess its negative impact on God's creation. We must take seriously the biblical mandate of those who follow Jesus Christ to act, live, speak, and work towards practices that respect and include people among “the great multitude from every nation, tribe, people, and language” (Revelation 7:9).¹

We affirm the inherent and universal right to dignity, equality, and worth of every person created in the image of God (Genesis 1 and 2) without distinction of any kind (Galatians 3:28). The Spirit of God calls us – a people of God with new life in Jesus Christ (2 Corinthians 5:17) – to “no longer be conformed to this world but to be transformed by the renewing of our minds, so that we may discern the will of God – what is good and acceptable and perfect” (Romans 12:2). As Christ's church in the world, we call upon all Christians in the unity of the Holy Spirit to rededicate themselves to be a holy people where all earthly distinctions lose their relevance in the light of the cross of Christ in service to God's global mission.

We celebrate the American Baptist Churches USA (ABCUSA) historical and our on-going ministries of evangelism, prophetic voice, community action, and work for social justice; while also confessing there is more work we must do to live up to Christ's command to "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength" and to "love your neighbor as yourself" (Deuteronomy 6:4-5; Leviticus 19:18; Mark 12:30-31).

We recognize our unique moment in history. We are witnesses of the global outcry against racially motivated murder and other violence against People of Color in the United States. This abuse of power at the hands of authorities and private citizens is an example of callous disregard for the lives of marginalized people throughout the world. We believe the Lord is calling us to tangible, redemptive actions that demonstrate our recommitment to advocate for and embody God's mercy, love, and justice in the world. We invite our friends, churches, supporters, staff, stakeholders, and partners in the United States and worldwide to join us in the work of equality, freedom, justice, and civil rights.

Seeking the mind of Christ and following the movement of the Holy Spirit, the love of God compels us to affirm and live out the following resolutions and to encourage our churches and other supporters to do the same. THEREFORE, we resolve to:

- Pray for God's empowerment and guidance to identify, oppose, and dismantle “the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms” (Ephesians 6:12).
- Affirm that Black lives matter.
- Denounce racism, prejudice, and degradation in all societies.

¹ See the American Baptist Policy Statement on Racial Justice 7032:3/89

- “Act justly, love mercy, and walk humbly with our God” (Micah 6:8) so all persons of faith can participate freely and fully in the life and mission of Christ in the world.
- Advocate for and accurately represent People of Color and marginalized ethnic groups.
- Educate ourselves, our children, and future generations in the histories of people of different racial, ethnic, and cultural groups.
- Endeavor to persevere on the long road of self-examination, repentance, and racial reconciliation.
- Engage in collaborative conversations and meaningful dialogues with local, national, and global partners, and directly engage racially marginalized communities to discover tangible ways to live together in harmony, unity, and peace.
- Lament and “mourn with those who mourn” (Romans 12:15) the loss of loved ones killed by acts of violence.
- Learn and retell stories from our history and the wider church's life that celebrate and honor the ministry of People of Color.
- Pledge to utilize culturally respectful practices and explore ways to economically support and participate in racial justice.
- Prophetically preach and practice the values and vision of God's kingdom on earth which Christ came to proclaim (Matthew 4:17).
- Speak “the truth in love” so “we will grow to become in every respect the mature body of him who is the head, that is, Christ” (Ephesians 4:15).
- Train our leaders, members, constituents, partners, and donors to recognize racism and implicit bias, to implement best practices that emphasize racial equality, respect, and human flourishing.
- Love God and love our neighbors as ourselves without distinction.

We, the American Baptist Foreign Mission Society, also known as International Ministries (IM), will make it our policy and practice to declare that God's love expressed in Christ's sacrifice includes all people. We will seek to move as the body of Christ toward that high promise of enacting and embodying the life and love of Jesus Christ, our Lord, to the glory of God. Amen

Adopted by the Board of the American Baptist International Ministries on November 17, 2020