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Equal Before God: A Letter Against Racial Prejudice



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Dear IM Family,

Greetings in the Name of our risen Lord, Jesus.

We have all read and seen the news of the President's alleged remarks on January 11, 2018 during a bipartisan meeting on immigration. It has been reported that he made vulgar, racist statements about Haitians, Africans and Salvadorans. It has also been reported that he has since denied those statements. Only God knows the truth.

This national conversation and the one amongst our valued colleagues and international partners has prompted me to offer a restatement of our commitment to the belief that racial

and ethnic prejudice is wholly contrary to Jesus' teaching because it disparages people created in God's image and damages human community. American Baptist International Ministries...

1. reaffirms the dignity and worth of all persons, reaffirms the American Baptist stand against manifestations of prejudice,
2. calls upon its family of ministers, missionaries and leaders at all levels of office to reject partiality and to respect all persons and
3. encourages followers of Jesus and people of good will to work together across barriers that divide and oppress to bring blessing to all the people of the earth.

Biblical-Theological Rationale

All people share a common origin, are created in God's image and bear God's likeness. (Genesis 1:27, Acts 17:26) Jesus taught that the commandment to love God with all one's heart, soul, mind and strength and the commandment to love your neighbor as yourself are alike. (Mark 12:28-31) Jesus said that treating others as we wish to be treated is a summation of all the law and the prophets. (Matthew 7:12)

The Holy Spirit led Jesus' followers to understand that God shows no partiality among people of diverse races, ethnicities and cultures. (Acts 10:34-35)

Mission Context

American Baptists are the most ethnically diverse denomination in the United States. We affirm this diversity as a gift given by God to bless and equip us to be agents of God's blessing to all the families of the earth. (Genesis 12:1-3)

Our ministries and our mission both within the United States and throughout the world are founded and enabled by relationships of mutual trust and respect. When any part of the human family is belittled and demeaned by prejudicial statements and actions, we must decide whether those words and deeds represent us or are an affront to our core values. In such circumstances, we recall Jesus' words that the ways in which we treat those regarded as "the least" among us are the ways in which we are treating Jesus himself. (Matthew 25:40-45)

In other words, we renounce words and ways that demean any nation or people group. Instead, we lift up our shared human identity of dignity and beauty as those created in the image of God.

God be with us as we work together and respond to God's call until it is on earth as it is in heaven.

In Christ,



Sharon T. Koh
Executive Director / CEO