BWA Resolutions 2016

2016-1

Resolution on Ministry to Refugees

The Baptist World Alliance General Council, meeting in Vancouver, Canada, July 6-8, 2016:

ACKNOWLEDGES the profound challenges created in many parts of our world by the massive flow of refugees and displaced persons,

CALLS upon its member bodies, affiliated churches, and individual believers to actively embrace opportunities for Christian ministry and witness that exemplify the biblical teaching to love the stranger (Lev. 19:18b) and Jesus’ teaching to love our neighbors as ourselves (Matt. 22:37-40), being salt and light in ways that bring the values of our Lord into our culture;

ENCOURAGES Christian believers to personally engage with all refugees and displaced persons, generously showing God’s love and care as we demonstrate the sufficiency of God made known through Jesus Christ.
Resolution on Violations of Religious Freedom in Nigeria and the Lake Chad Region

The Baptist World Alliance General Council, meeting in Vancouver, Canada, July 6-8, 2016:

RENEWS its concern about the continuing humanitarian crisis in Nigeria previously addressed by a BWA resolution in 2012;

LAMENTS the deteriorating situation in Nigeria and the Lake Chad region that has been called “the world’s most neglected humanitarian crisis;”

UNDERSTANDS that the violence, murder, and kidnapping has directly impacted more than 14 million people with between three and five million being internally displaced, resulting in rampant malnutrition, leaving thousands of persons on the verge of starvation;

RECOGNIZES that people of faith and houses of worship have been intentionally targeted, including the damage or destruction of thousands of churches and numerous mosques; the devastation of primarily Christian Local Government Areas by Fulani militants in the Middle Belt; the deliberate efforts of Boko Haram to kill and displace those who do not adhere to their particular ideology; as well as vigilante groups who engage in reprisal attacks;

APPRECIATES that President Buhari of Nigeria and his administration have significantly worked to address these complex realities;

STANDS at this critical juncture with the Nigerian Baptist Convention, other Christian believers and people of goodwill across the region and especially all those who are suffering;

CALLS upon the United Nations to designate Nigeria and the Lake Chad Region as a “most severe large scale humanitarian crisis” (Level 3); and

URGES all Baptists to stand in solidarity with Nigeria and the Lake Chad Region, to pray for the development of transformative peace throughout the country and region, and to actively work to build a context of justice, human rights, rule of law, and religious freedom for all people.
Resolution on the Paris Agreement and Climate Change

The Baptist World Alliance General Council, meeting in Vancouver, Canada, July 6-8, 2016:

CONTINUES TO BELIEVE AND AFFIRM:
• God is the creator, sustainer, and Lord of all, delights in creation, and is committed to its care and renewal;
• The biblical teaching that the earth is God’s creation and we, also as God’s creation, are to nurture and care for it;

RENEWs its desire to follow-up the implications of the climate change resolutions made at the General Councils in Prague, the Czech Republic (2008); Ede, the Netherlands (2009); and Santiago, Chile (2012);

RECOGNIZES that leaders from 195 countries gathered in Paris in December 2015 for a United Nations Conference on Climate Change, which led to the signing of the Paris Agreement by 174 countries on Earth Day (April 22) in 2016;

NOTES that this is the most widely endorsed climate agreement to date and one that includes many legally binding provisions;

LAMENTS that climate change is a current reality, resulting in rising sea levels, droughts, the spread of diseases, more violent storms, disruptions to animal species, and greater food insecurity;

EXPRESSES special concern for nations with fewer resources to address the negative consequences, including the increasing number of climate refugees;

ACKNOWLEDGES that all of us have contributed to historic carbon levels, damaging God’s creation and harming our global neighbors, and that those of us in nations contributing more to climate change need to listen to the stories of those already impacted; and

URGES global Baptists to develop a vibrant theology of creation care, educating and advocating for practices based on love of neighbor over economic gain.