



**BAPTIST  
WORLD  
ALLIANCE**

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## HARARE DECLARATION

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In 1983, spurred by the official report of the Special Commission of Baptists against Racism, the BWA General Council adopted the Harare Declaration during its meetings in Zimbabwe. The statement, which expanded upon the need for the Baptist family to love all of God's children equally regardless of race and ethnicity, was used as liturgy during worship at the same meetings.

1. We affirm that:
  - 1.1. God's healing has come in the presence of human alienation.
  - 1.2. God's reconciling love is made known in the midst of fragmentation.
  - 1.3. God's redemption is revealed, as the presence of Jesus Christ unmask and defeats the power of sin.
  
2. We resolve therefore, that as members of the body of Christ:
  - 2.1. We will seek to stand as a prophetic witness that exposes and challenges the sin of racism.
  - 2.2. We will endeavor to serve as Christ's presence, healing that which is broken through a ministry of reconciliation, uniting us with God, neighbors and ourselves.
  
3. We affirm that:
  - 3.1. In the beginning, God made humankind in harmony with the Creator, with neighbors, with nature and with self, a harmony shattered by the demonic rise of human self-centeredness.
  
4. We resolve therefore that:
  - 4.1. We will announce courageously God's new and true humanity where the dignity and value of every person is affirmed and celebrated.
  
5. We acknowledge that:
  - 5.1. Racism is rooted in the sinfulness of humankind and is evident where a group or groups of people:
    - a. Assert that by heredity and by nature they are superior to the rest of humanity.
    - b. Oppress others through economic and political means to find security and self-acceptance, privilege and power.
    - c. Project onto another group or groups their own anger, hostility, hatred and failures in order to rationalize feelings of superiority.
  
6. We resolve therefore to:
  - 6.1. Respond to God's intention of wholeness for all, seeking to bring people together, as brothers and sisters in Jesus Christ, whatever may be their ethnic identity.

7. We affirm that:
  - 7.1. All people are made in the image of God and have the potential to live in the way God intends people to live.
8. We resolve therefore that:
  - 8.1. We will work strenuously to ensure that our own and our congregational attitudes, enhance and affirm love and respect for all God's children.
  - 8.2. We will address the vital issue of congregational attitudes in a variety of creative ways being challenged by God's Word which says, "be not overcome by evil but overcome evil with good."

For example:

- a. Through EVANGELISM which proclaims the Gospel of Jesus Christ to be the power that brings radical change to human attitudes and behavior.
  - b. Through WORSHIP events which celebrate the richness and wholeness of the body of Christ as it is experienced in its ethnic fullness and beauty.
  - c. Through EDUCATION programs that develop curricula with biblical and ethical values that make people sensitive to the evil of racism.
  - d. Through FELLOWSHIP experiences and initiatives that bring different people together and help validate and affirm persons of various ethnic backgrounds.
  - e. Through PROPHETIC ACTION that addresses matters of justice, peace and other major issues, which can produce understanding and combat racial attitudes among people.
9. We further resolve that:

Our attitude towards God's children should be modeled on the example of the Christ who gave his life so that all may have opportunity to experience the grace of God experienced through the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, Son of God, Savior.
  10. Our Response:

As followers of Jesus Christ, we commit ourselves to seek to carry out the spirit and intent of this declaration. In the power of the Holy Spirit we covenant to recognize and accept all humankind as God's creation, revealed in God's Holy Word and further, to accept and affirm with joy the unity and diversity of our membership in the community of faith.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>"Harare Declaration," Adopted during BWA General Council in Harare, Zimbabwe August 4-10, 1993.