

2018-1

Resolution on the Freedom of Religion in the Lugansk region in eastern Ukraine

The Baptist World Alliance General Council, meeting in Zurich, Switzerland, July 2-6, 2018:

EXPRESSES concern that that the situation for religious communities is precarious in the eastern part of Ukraine – the Lugansk region. The region is part of a conflict area now widely understood to be under the control of Russia, which has recognized the area as “The Lugansk Peoples Republic (LPR).” Recently the LPR launched a law on religion (LPR law #211-II “On the freedom of conscience and religious associations”) from 02/02/2018. This law violates universal human rights, restricts religious freedom, and threatens the existence of existing religious groups and organizational networks;

REGRETS that all religious organizations within the LPR, except the Moscow Patriarchate of the Russian Orthodox Church (ROC), must now prove their loyalty to LPR authorities through a re-registration procedure in order to maintain their legal status. This includes an obligation for all religious organizations to report in detail their activities;

NOTES that these limitations and regulations are violating Article 18 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Article 18 of the International Convention of Civil and Political Rights, and Article 9 of the European Convention on Human Rights;

AFFIRMS our commitment as Baptists to the biblical concept that all people are created in God’s image and endowed with freedom to worship and practice their religion according to the dictates of their own hearts;

URGES the Lugansk Peoples Republic, regarding Baptist and other churches, to change the law in order to make it compatible with Freedom of Religion or Belief as stated in the international declarations, conventions, and agreements;

ENCOURAGES the Russian Republic to influence the Lugansk Peoples Republic to change the law in order to make it compatible with full Freedom of Religion or Belief; and

CALLS upon the United Nations Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Religion or Belief to gather information on the situation in the Lugansk region and to visit the Lugansk area and the authorities in order to put pressure on them to change the law.

2018-2

Resolution Opposing Violence and Abuse of Women and Girls

The Baptist World Alliance General Council, meeting in Zurich, Switzerland, July 2-6:

AFFIRMS that women and girls are created in the image of God and invested with inestimable worth and dignity as gifts from God, and are essential to the health and vitality of families, churches, communities, and national life;

ACKNOWLEDGES that the church has at times stood silent or has been guilty of perpetuating biblical and theological interpretations regarding women and girls that render them vulnerable to violence and abuse in the home, the church, and society; and hinder their ability to live into the fulness of God;

NOTES that harassment and violence against women and girls worldwide are immoral and antithetical to the freedom of all people as expressed in the Gospel, and that the church has too often been guilty of abusing and demeaning women and girls and of covering up instances of abuse;

RECOGNIZES that the #MeToo movement has been catalytic in calling attention to the harassment and violence toward women and girls;

CALLS the BWA member bodies to:

- Enhance the appreciation of the worth and dignity of women and girls in all aspects of family, church life, and in society;
 - Develop programs, policies, and practices that safeguard and empower women and girls;
 - Provide access to counseling and safe places for women and girls who are victims of abuse;
 - Ensure a system of transparent accountability that includes reporting of suspected abuse to appropriate authorities both inside and outside the church;
 - Design and implement culturally contextualized curricula to educate ministerial leadership and congregations about the multi-faceted problem of violence on women and girls and processes to prevent such violence.
-

2018-3

Resolution on Preserving the Primacy of Family in Immigration

The Baptist World Alliance General Council, meeting in Zurich, Switzerland, July 2-6, 2018:

RECOGNIZES that the human desire to preserve and protect one's family from violence, disease, economic depravity, and other threatening conditions is universal and drives millions of people to leave their homelands seeking better lives for themselves and their family members;

AFFIRMS the clear biblical mandate to welcome the stranger and for followers of Jesus to respond with love and justice to the plight of immigrants, migrants, and refugees (Micah 6:8; Matt. 22:34-40, 25:35, 40; Rom. 12:13; Heb. 13:1-3.);

ASSERTS our belief that God created the family as the primary social unit, and that families are integral to a healthy society;

REAFFIRMS our past resolutions noting our position on the rights and dignity of immigrants, migrants, and refugees, including those adopted in 2013, 2016, and 2017;

LAMENTS recent actions by the U.S. government that separated more than 2,000 migrant children from the parents, many of whom remain in detention even as their parents have already been deported;

REJECTS claims by some U.S. government officials that the Bible justifies a policy of forced separation of families, and urges the U.S. government to work toward reuniting each family and prevent such separations in the future;

CALLS upon individuals, churches, and religious organizations to be involved in immigration issues supporting the primacy of family solidarity;

ENCOURAGES all Baptists to prophetically challenge immoral policies that seek to undermine the rights and dignity of immigrants, migrants, and refugees; and

URGES all governments to follow international law regarding the proper treatment of immigrants, migrants, and refugees, and to uphold the primacy of the family unit.

Baptist World Alliance®
©July 6, 2018