A Statement on Supporting the Right of Dissent
Submitted for the Alliance of Baptists Annual Meeting, April 2017
By Justice in Palestine and Israel Community of the Alliance of Baptists

Statement: In defense of free speech and religious liberty, we will promote the right of churches, individuals and organizations to engage in speech and nonviolent direct action to help end the unjust practices and policies in Israel and Palestine. Specifically, we oppose efforts by Congress and state legislatures to punish entities that engage in Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) or that provide sanctuary for immigrants.

Comment: BDS has become a widespread and effective tool in bringing pressure on the government of Israel to stop the illegal and unjust occupation of Palestinian land, military and police actions against civilians, and expanding settlements in the occupied territories. Specifically, we oppose efforts by Congress and state legislatures to punish entities that engage in BDS. We support nonviolent acts of conscience in this country and throughout the Middle East and oppose any limits to freedom of speech or the rights to peaceful assembly. The Alliance affirmed a statement on BDS at the 2016 Annual meeting.

A Statement in Support of the Freedom of Religion and Freedom from Persecution and Harassment Based on Religion
Submitted for the Alliance of Baptists Annual Meeting, April 2017
By Justice in Palestine and Israel Community of the Alliance of Baptists

Statement: Specifically, we recognize the importance of the Middle East to Jews, Christians and Muslims and support right of access to holy sites for all, particularly in Jerusalem. We support measures to ensure the viability of the historic Christian community in Israel and Palestine and the entire region. As Christians and U.S. citizens, we also pledge to stand with Muslims and Jews in the United States in opposing anti-Muslim and anti-Semitic speech and acts of violence or vandalism.

Comment: The historic rights of Muslims and Christians to have access to their holy sites in Jerusalem are currently under attack. Within Palestine and Israel as well as parts of Syria and other parts of the region, the very survival of viable Christian communities is at stake. At the same time in the United States, a growing climate of hostility threatens Muslims and Jews and their institutions and communities. We stand with all who are under threat because of their religious beliefs and practices.

A Call to Action Submitted by the Justice in Palestine and Israel Community of the Alliance of Baptists
The Justice in Palestine and Israel Community reminds Alliance of Baptists congregations and individual members of the commitments we made in past resolutions – calling us to work for peace with justice in the Holy Land. It is a Kairos moment for the Alliance to convert these powerful statements into persistent actions. Now, more than ever, it is our time to claim our prophetic voice and be God’s hands in bending the long moral arc of the universe toward justice.

We invite our Alliance family to select one or more of the suggestions we have developed. These include:
1. Learning about the history and current situation in the Holy Land so that we can discern our role to bring peace with justice to Palestinians and Israelis;

2. Prayer for the victims on all sides of the oppression and injustice in the Holy Land; and

3. Countering the dangerous and growing climate of hatred and hostility by avoiding stereotyping and publicly challenging all forms of racism and religious bigotry directed against Jews and Muslims.

More suggestions for action are in the 2013 and 2016 statements at: http://allianceofbaptists.org/OurAlliance/statements

As our ministry partner and good friend, Rev. Dr. Mitri Raheb tells us, “HOPE is not just a feeling, it is what we stubbornly do every day.” Let us renew our commitment to stubbornly hope and work each day to be Baptists on the frontier doing justice in the Holy Land.