Alliance of Baptists Statement on Cuba
First Baptist Church, Greenville, S.C., April 6, 2013

For more than 20 years the Alliance of Baptists has been blessed to be in partnership with its sister group, the Fraternity of Baptist Churches of Cuba. Together we have supported one another in a variety of actions, including the nurturing of more than 20 sister-church partnerships. In every contact with our Cuban sisters and brothers we have sensed the presence of God’s spirit and have been immeasurably blessed.

From our side of this fruitful partnership, the Alliance consistently has asked our government to move deliberately toward the renewal of diplomatic relations and economic ties with the Republic of Cuba. In this effort we have experienced but limited success, including the loosening of restrictions on travel in recent years during the administration of President Obama. This year Cuba has made international travel considerably easier for its citizens as well.

Following the lead of our partner group, the Latin America Working Group (LAWG), we have pressed both the White House and Congress toward the ultimate goals already noted – the restoration of full diplomatic relations with Cuba and the removal of economic barriers in place for the past half century. These policies of the United States government have contributed significantly to the ongoing economic suffering of Cuba’s people and have had no success in their stated objective of regime change.

Along with its sister organization, the Washington Office on Latin America (WOLA), the LAWG has invited the Alliance and many other church bodies to support the current appeal to President Obama and Secretary of State John Kerry to remove Cuba from the annual list of State Sponsors of Terrorism. With this statement, the Alliance of Baptists accepts that invitation at the institutional level and joins with LAWG and WOLA in asking our members to sign a petition to that effect. We do so for the following reasons (wording from LAWG):

1. **Cuba is not a State Sponsor of Terrorism.** State sponsors of terrorism are governments that provide logistical, financial, or political support to groups that carry out terrorist attacks on civilians. Cuba does not.

2. **Cuba has made international commitments to combat terrorism.** Cuba has ratified all 12 international counterterrorism conventions, and Cuba has offered to sign a bilateral agreement with the United States on counterterrorism.

3. **Cuba is a sponsor of the Colombian peace talks.** Cuba is playing a constructive, mediating role (one recognized by the Colombian government) in peace talks between the FARC guerillas and the Colombian government.

4. **Cuba collaborates with the United States in counter-drug efforts.** Together, we interdict narcotics shipments in the
Caribbean, and the United States government acknowledges (even lauds) this cooperation.

In addition, we note the following reasons for removing Cuba from the list of State Sponsors of Terrorism:

1. **Keeping Cuba on the list weakens the credibility of the entire list.**
2. **Removing Cuba from the list would send a positive signal to all Latin American governments** ... and could well improve the image of the United States in the Western hemisphere.
3. **The President can do this without congressional approval.**
4. **Other countries have been removed from the list.** Iraq was removed in 1982 and again in 2004. South Yemen was removed in 1990 following merger with North Yemen. Libya was removed in 2006. North Korea was removed in 2008. At present, only four nations are on the list: Syria (since 1979); Cuba (since 1982); Iran (since 1984); and Sudan (since 1993).

Meeting this day in Greenville, S.C., the Alliance of Baptists hereby encourages our members to sign on to the Latin America Working Group petition to the Obama administration to remove the Republic of Cuba from the Department of State’s list of State Sponsors of Terrorism. *(The petition can be signed online at www.lawg.org.)*