A Statement on Stopping Violence and Injustice Against Transgender Persons

Background:

The Alliance of Baptists is increasingly shaped by “a commitment to inclusiveness, each person valued as God’s beloved, uniquely gifted to reveal and enable God’s work in the world” and “A hunger and thirst for social justice, each believer called to do the transformative work of Christ in the compassionate spirit of Christ.”¹ This commitment is in keeping with the Alliance Covenant and Mission which calls us

“In our personal and corporate response to the call of God in Jesus Christ to be disciples and servants in the world, we commit ourselves to...the proclamation of the Good News of Jesus Christ and the calling of God to all peoples to repentance and faith, reconciliation and hope, social and economic justice.”

In light of our commitment to this calling it is with great distress that we hear of the injustice that transgender individuals face on a daily basis. This injustice is best highlighted by Injustice At Every Turn: A Report of the National Transgender Discrimination Survey. This 2011 report outlines the following evidence: Discrimination was “pervasive against transgender men and women, and the combination of anti-transgender bias and persistent, structural racism was especially devastating.”

- Many transgender individuals live in extreme poverty, and are four times more likely to have a household income of less than $10,000/year compared to the general population.
- Forty-one percent of the respondents to the At Every Turn survey “reported attempting suicide,” compared to 1.6% of the general population.
- Transgender individuals face two times the rate of unemployment as the general population.
- Studies have shown that more than 50% of transgender individuals face sexual violence. Additionally, transgender people face very high rates of physical violence. In a report from Virginia, it was shown that 59% of the respondents had been physically assaulted, and of those who had reported being victimized, 18% reported one incident, 23% reported two incidents, 30% reported three to five incidents, 17% reported six to 19 incidents, and 12% reported 20 or more incidents of physical violence.

Our Hebrew Scriptures teach us that when the oppressed cry out, God sees, God hears, God feels their plight, and God comes. We acknowledge that our prophetic witness is one of the ways that God comes to bring shalom to this crisis. It is appropriate to remind ourselves that the defining of any group of persons as “other” in such a way as to make violence toward and/or oppression of them

¹ http://www.allianceofbaptists.org/learn/about
acceptable is contrary to the Gospel of Christ. We need further to acknowledge that many of these persons are our brothers and sisters in Christ and that all are part of creation loved by God. Finally, we need to remember that Jesus told us that as we do to the least, we also do to Him. Consequently, when we stand in solidarity with the transgender victims of violence and injustice, we also stand in solidarity with the Christ who suffers with them.

**Because of our commitment to God’s shalom and to Jesus’ picture of the New Creation in which justice and inclusion are paramount, we, the Alliance of Baptists, call upon community leaders and persons of faith in all communities marred by violence and injustice toward transgender persons to work together with persons from that community to seek just solutions to this blight of violence and hatred.**

**Specifically in regard to the current injustice and violence in our nation, we call upon**

1. Elected officials and politicians to work with the transgender community to find ways to end this injustice and violence,
2. Police officials and social work organizations to develop new ways of making direct care providers more aware of the safety needs of transgender persons and to actively combat stereotypes regarding these individuals;
3. Faith communities, particularly our Baptist brothers and sisters, to join with us and lead in prayer, repentance, teaching, and preaching regarding the blindness that has allowed many to let violence toward this community be a “non-issue”;
4. All our Alliance of Baptists congregations to join in this effort through efforts of education, prayer, and solidarity.

**Pertinent News Stories:**