

Statement of the Board of Directors

Alliance of Baptist Annual Meeting
Calvary Baptist Church, Washington, DC
Friday, April 26, 2019

Preface: From time to time, an issue or an event or an action comes about that moves the heart of an individual or a group within the Alliance. When that occurs outside the Annual Gathering statement process, often the Board of Directors will respond within its processes. Thus it is with the following statement, being made by the Board, but not being presented for the consensus process of the body of the Alliance.

Statement on Violence against Places of Worship

The members of the Board of Directors of the Alliance of Baptists decry and mourn recent attacks on places of worship, even as we denounce violence perpetrated against any body. We affirm that all places of worship should be sanctuaries from harm, places of peace and shelter, where love seeks justice and faithfulness. We worship the source of life, and hope for our places of worship to be life-giving spaces, places to resist the forces that deal death.

We recognize that the United States, a nation born in part as a reaction against religious persecution, has a long history of valuing and protecting some religious communities and persecuting or disenfranchising others. We confess we have benefited from our protected status more often than we have experienced persecution. We regret that violence in places of worship continues to be perpetrated, even as we continue to hold to our values of religious freedom, including freedom from religion, and freedom from the fear of violence, within or beyond the bounds of religious communities.

We recognize, too, that the perpetration of violence in places of worship connects to and arises from a multitude of sources. Racism and white supremacy, ethnocentrism and xenophobia have long created animosities among communities and peoples. Fueled by these troubled histories, our current political climate of intolerance and dehumanization and the widespread availability and ease of obtaining weapons make violence in places of worship all too common. We must change this reality.

We know we cannot pray for peace without working for justice. We are grateful for the work different communities are doing in each of these areas. If your community is looking for guidance on working for peace and justice, please reach out to info@allianceofbaptists.org.

We affirm and invite Alliance of Baptist-aligned persons and communities to continue doing all we can -- and to do more than we can now imagine -- to address the seeds of injustice and violence. May we join hands and voices with communities of faith and justice across our land, seeking the well-being of all.