

A Call to Repentance

Adopted March 10, 1990, by the Southern Baptist Alliance

[since 1992, The Alliance of Baptists]

A Statement on Racism and Repentance

The Scriptures record in Numbers 14:18-19, that Moses pled with God for the people of Israel saying, "The Lord is longsuffering and abundant in mercy, forgiving iniquity and transgression; but God by no means clears the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers [and mothers] on the children to the third and fourth generations. Pardon the iniquity of this people, I pray, according to the greatness of your mercy, just as you have forgiven this people, from Egypt until now."

Following World War II, the people of Germany publicly repented of the sins of Adolph Hitler and of their own sins against Jewish people and against all the people of the world. In the past several years the German Baptists have publicly repented of their compliance with the Nazi regime.

In the summer of 1988 the Soviet Communist Party in like manner publicly repented of the sins of Joseph Stalin and of their own sins against the Soviet people and against the people of the world.

These acts of confession have reminded Southern Baptists that there is a significant sin in our own heritage for which we have never publicly repented. One of the precipitating factors in the formation of the Southern Baptist Convention was the protection of the institution of slavery and of slave owners in the South. The sins of slavery and of condoning slavery committed by Southern Baptists are a spiritual blight upon the relationships between African-Americans and whites in the south which has lasted unto this generation. The time is long overdue for Southern Baptists to repent of these sins.

We move, therefore, that the members of the Southern Baptist Alliance meeting on this March 10, 1990, in St. Louis, Missouri, as members of the Southern Baptist family, publicly repent and apologize to all African-Americans for condoning and perpetuating the sin of slavery prior to and during the Civil War. We reject the racism, segregation, and prejudice in our past and the continuing pattern of racism, segregation, and prejudice which has persisted throughout our history as a Christian denomination, even unto this present day.

Likewise, we call upon our fellow Southern Baptists meeting in convention in New Orleans, Louisiana on June 11-13, to help cleanse our denomination of the blight of racism by adopting a similar statement of confession and repentance.

Furthermore, from this day forth we pledge to work to remove all forms of racism, segregation, and prejudice from our Southern Baptist family. We acknowledge with regret that at the present time our Alliance has few members or participating churches from among African-Americans. We pledge

ourselves to seek out such participation in ways that are sensitive to African-American church concerns. We urge all Southern Baptists to do the same.