

Alliance of Baptists  
A Statement on Racism and Repentance  
Birmingham Commitments  
April 22, 2006

Having declared in our 1990 statement on racism and race, "A Call to Repentance," our intent to "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" we confess that in April of 2006 racism continues to be a real presence not only in our country but in our churches, in our communities and in our Alliance.

As we continue our journey of faith and justice:

- We are coming to understand that racism is our racial prejudices coupled with the misuse of power. We must examine our life as a faith community and ask ourselves how racial prejudice, coupled with the misuse of power, exists in the Alliance of Baptists. When racism is identified it must be met with confession, repentance, and resistance.
- We are coming to understand that repenting of our racism is not a one-time event but a long and demanding process. As an expression of our repentance we commit to engage and re-engage in the hard process, the necessary process, the life-giving process of turning away from our racism and turning toward the goal of an Alliance in which there is increasing racial and ethnic diversity, an Alliance in which there is profound respect for all persons, an Alliance in which there truly is "no male or female, slave or free, Jew or Greek."
- We are coming to understand that the existence of racism is detrimental to all communities, including communities of color, the community called the Alliance of Baptists and the communities that make up the Alliance. The continuing existence of racism is detrimental to our ability to incarnate the reign of God, our efforts to be an effective gathering of justice seekers and peacemakers, and our ability to live as disciples of Jesus Christ.

Racial and ethnic segregation and isolation must not be acceptable options in either society or the church. They must not be acceptable options for the Alliance of Baptists. Their continuing existence must mean that we have not yet achieved our goal of living in a way that is "worthy of the Gospel."

Thus, we commit ourselves anew to discerning the ways in which racism is present in the Alliance of Baptists. We commit ourselves anew to an intentional process of becoming an anti-racist organization. We commit ourselves anew to the establishment of meaningful relationships with communities of color. We commit ourselves anew to the full inclusion of persons of color in the paid staff and volunteer leadership of the Alliance. We commit ourselves anew to address issues of importance to communities of color at each meeting of the Alliance of Baptists.