

The Alliance of Baptists

A Statement on Cuba

Adopted April 6, 2002

Four decades ago, the U.S. government first imposed a comprehensive economic embargo on Cuba. These sanctions were authorized in a series of executive orders issued between 1962 and 1996. In the latter year, these sanctions were strengthened and codified in the Helms-Burton Act. As a consequence, the repeal of sanctions now requires action by both Congress and the White House.

In response to growing pressure and thanks to a strong bipartisan effort, Congress last year passed the Trade Sanctions Reform Act, thereby easing the embargo by permitting the sale of food and medicine to Cuba by the U.S. government. This legislation then was signed into law by the president. We commend the Congress and President Bush for this significant breakthrough.

Consistent with our stated position over the past several years, the Alliance of Baptists renews its call upon Congress and the president to build on the progress so recently made by enacting new legislation:

1. To allow the unrestricted sale of food and medicine to Cuba with private financing.
2. To lift the currently cumbersome process of licensing which inhibits normal humanitarian trade with Cuba.
3. To eliminate the ban on travel to Cuba by most U.S. citizens.

We believe these to be reasonable next steps on the journey to normalization of relations with our Caribbean neighbor and commend them urgently to our nation's leaders.

We also reiterate our solidarity with our partner group, the Fraternidad de Iglesias Bautistas de Cuba, specifically with reference to its consistent commitment to the spiritual and material well-being of the Cuban people.