

# INDY

SBC 24

## PROPOSED RESOLUTIONS



## ***On Integrity in SBC Leadership***

WHEREAS, Integrity in leadership is consequential to the furtherance of God's mission and the health of the flock of God, whether the authority is over the family, the church, the state, or private institutions, (Psalm 78:72; Proverbs 10:9, 11:3); and

WHEREAS, Scripture teaches that leaders must uphold the highest standards of integrity, live above reproach (1 Timothy 3:1-7; Titus 1:5-9), serve others (Matthew 20:26), walk in a manner worthy of imitation (Hebrews 13:7), set an example in godly speech and doctrine (Titus 2:7-8), remain faithful (1 Corinthians 4:2), fear God, be trustworthy, hate a bribe (Exodus 18:21), feed the sheep (John 21:15-17), model humility (James 4:10), be honest (Proverbs 11:3), love from a pure heart (1 Timothy 1:5-6), and continually practice genuine repentance and sincere faith (Psalm 51; Luke 3:8; 1 Timothy 1:5-6); and

WHEREAS, Scripture also reminds leaders that they must pay careful attention to themselves (Acts 20:28) because they will give an account to God (Romans 14:12), who will expose the deeds done in darkness and judge more strictly those who lead (Ephesians 5:11-14; Hebrews 13:17; James 3:1); and

WHEREAS, God also pronounces woes and warnings to those leaders who fail to uphold the highest standards of integrity, destroy and scatter the sheep (Jeremiah 23:1), set their heart on gain (Ezekiel 33:31), neglect the hurting (Ezekiel 34:4), rule with harshness (Mark 10:24), lead others to stumble (1 Corinthians 8:9), and demonstrate false piety (Matthew 23:1-36); and

WHEREAS, Southern Baptists have been blessed with countless leaders who have walked in integrity of heart in individual churches, local associations, state conventions, national entities, and other ministries to cooperate for the sake of the Great Commission (Psalm 101:2; Matthew 28:19-20); and

WHEREAS, We celebrate the legacy of faithful leaders who bolster the faith of others, model holiness that others strive to imitate (1 Corinthians 11:1), and call others to salvation in Jesus, who is able to keep us from stumbling and present us blameless before the presence of his glory with great joy (Jude 1:24); and

WHEREAS, The legacy of faithful leadership in the Southern Baptist Convention has been tarnished by public failures of leadership that have exposed private sin, indifference to abuse, financial impropriety, sexual scandals, deceptive practices, and abuse of power; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That the messengers to the Southern Baptist Convention meeting in Indianapolis, Indiana, June 11-12, 2024, affirm and thank God for the righteous and godly leaders within this Convention, acknowledging the faithful service of those, many in obscurity, who are worthy of double honor (1 Timothy 5:17); and be it further

RESOLVED, That we call to repentance leaders who have engaged in public or private sin, abused their power, misused Convention funds, committed crimes, engaged in deception, covered for the sin of others, resisted God-ordained authority, or violated trust; and be it further

RESOLVED, That we reject the notion that giftedness, charisma, or influence supersede character and qualification, knowing that “man looks on the outward appearance, but the LORD looks on the heart” (1 Samuel 16:7); and be it further

RESOLVED, That we reaffirm our 2018 Resolution “On The Holiness and Integrity of Ministry Leaders,” which states that “leaders are to be examples by their faith in Christ and their lives of ongoing repentance of sin” and should be “held to a high standard for their doctrine, speech, and conduct, the standard being the very character and example of Jesus Christ”; and be it further

RESOLVED, That we urge leaders to cultivate a sincere dependence on Jesus, imitating him in servanthood, humility, and obedience, and to resist prioritizing results over character; and be it further

RESOLVED, That we implore leaders who are in disqualifying sin to examine themselves, call upon the Lord in repentance, and voluntarily remove themselves from their position in order to pursue conciliation, knowing that they might be permanently disqualified; and be it further

RESOLVED, That we entreat Southern Baptist churches to call their leaders to be above reproach, subject those in unrepentant sin to church discipline, and remove those who have disqualified themselves, understanding that accountability by the church is a grace from God (Matthew 18; Galatians 6:1; 1 Timothy 1:19-20); and be it finally

RESOLVED, That we call on all leaders to cultivate integrity as they “Pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, steadfastness, gentleness. Fight the good fight of the faith. Take hold of the eternal life to which you were called” (1 Timothy 6:11-12), knowing that “the tested genuineness of your faith—more precious than gold that perishes though it is tested by fire—may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ” (1 Peter 1:7).

## ***On Defending Religious Liberty***

WHEREAS, The Lord Jesus Christ drew a clear distinction between his church and the governments of this world (Matthew 22:15-22) and reserved the judgment between believers and unbelievers for himself alone (Matthew 13:36-43); the Apostle Paul urged Timothy to pray for religious liberty (1 Timothy 2:1-5) and demonstrated that religious belief is subject to personal persuasion (Acts 17:22-31); and the Apostle John revealed “each one” will be judged “according to their works” (Revelation 20:12-13); and

WHEREAS, Baptists in America have consistently championed Constitutional protections against the establishment of state religion and for the free exercise of religion, believing the importance of religious liberty necessarily made it the “first freedom” to be articulated in the Bill of Rights; and

WHEREAS, Messengers to the meetings of the Southern Baptist Convention, from its inception in 1845, have adopted numerous resolutions advocating religious liberty and recognized that true faith cannot be legislated, coerced, or inherited; and

WHEREAS, When adopting the Baptist Faith and Message in 1925, Southern Baptists saw a need to emphasize religious liberty by adding Article XVIII on “Religious Liberty” (subsequently Article XVII in the 1963 and 2000 editions), thereby affirming the lordship of Christ, the separation of church and state, that “a free church in a free state is the Christian ideal,” and that “the state has no right to impose penalties for religious opinions of any kind”; and

WHEREAS, Through nature and conscience, others have come to recognize that our natural rights and responsibilities derive from our Creator, an open truth that the founders of the American nation also explicitly recognized; and

WHEREAS, Baptists have historically affirmed that nothing in the public square is truly neutral and have promoted active and holistic participation in society which should reflect biblical values as outlined in Article XV of the Baptist Faith and Message, “The Christian and the Social Order”; and

WHEREAS, Our Christian witness is better preserved by the separation of church and state, and Scripture and history have shown that true revival comes through the Spirit of God by means of fervent prayer, gospel evangelism, and biblical discipleship; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That the messengers to the Southern Baptist Convention meeting in Indianapolis, Indiana, June 11-12, 2024, boldly affirm that God has endowed every human with religious liberty, for “God alone is Lord of the conscience” (Article XVII); and that “Civil government being ordained of God, it is the duty of Christians to render loyal obedience thereto in all things not contrary to the revealed will of God” (Article XVII); and be it further

RESOLVED, That we encourage and support robust Christian engagement in the public square, including individual Christians who pursue elected or appointed office in order to influence government by living out their Christian worldview while advocating Christian morals with respect for the consciences of all people; and be it further

RESOLVED, That we reaffirm the 2023 resolution “On Christ’s Sole Lordship over Every Human Conscience” in its declaration that “we decry any effort which seeks to supplant the sole lordship of Christ over consciences through confusing the separate covenants and responsibilities of the church and the state”; and be it further

RESOLVED, That we reaffirm Article XVII of the Baptist Faith and Message, which states that “the gospel of Christ contemplates spiritual means alone for the pursuit of its ends” and “the state has no right to impose penalties for religious opinions of any kind,” along with numerous Southern Baptist resolutions throughout our history which reject government restriction of religious opinion and limit government infringement of religious expression; and be it further

RESOLVED, That we oppose any effort to establish a state religion of any nation, including the United States of America; that we refute the idea that God has commanded any state to establish any religion or any denomination; and we reject any government coercion or enforcement of religious belief, including blasphemy laws; and be it further

RESOLVED, That we oppose any effort to use the people and the churches of the Southern Baptist Convention to establish Christianity as the state religion of the United States of America; and be it finally

RESOLVED, That we object to any suggestion that our historic, God-given distinctive of religious liberty should be abandoned in favor of a state-mandated religion.

## ***On Just War and the Pursuit of Peace***

WHEREAS, The Lord Jesus Christ is the Prince of Peace (Isaiah 9:6), his followers are called to be peacemakers (Romans 12:18), and we eagerly anticipate the perfect peace of eternity with him (Isaiah 11:6); and

WHEREAS, Jesus assured us that “wars and rumors of wars . . . must take place,” teaching us that war is a sadly recurrent reality in this fallen world (Matthew 26:4); and

WHEREAS, Scripture teaches that the government has been “instituted by God” and “does not bear the sword in vain” but is a “servant of God, an avenger who carries out God’s wrath on the wrongdoer” (Romans 13:1-7); and

WHEREAS, The historic Christian stance on war and peace has traditionally been defined by the just war tradition; and

WHEREAS, Southern Baptists have lamented war as a “sorrowful calamity” (“Resolution on Peace,” 1917) and declared our “abhorrence of war,” yet we have simultaneously concluded that “some things are worth dying for; and if they are worth dying for they are worth living for; and if they are worth living for they are worth defending even unto the death” (“Resolution on Peace,” 1941); and

WHEREAS, Southern Baptists have served in the United States government and armed forces during World War II that called for a “just and righteous peace” after the war (“Resolution on Peace,” 1943), and called on all nations to seek an “honorable solution that will bring a just and durable peace that recognizes the dignity and values of human personality and the inalienable right of all men to be free” during the Vietnam War (“Resolution on Peace,” 1968); and

WHEREAS, Southern Baptists have previously condemned al-Qaeda’s attack on the United States affirming America’s right of self-defense (“On the War on Terrorism,” 2002), argued that the 2003 War in Iraq was “a warranted action based upon historic principles of just war” (“On the Liberation of Iraq,” 2003), and condemned Russia’s invasion of Ukraine affirming Ukraine’s right of self-defense (“On the War in Ukraine,” 2022); now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That the messengers to the Southern Baptist Convention meeting in Indianapolis, Indiana, June 11-12, 2024, affirm the historic, Christian principles of the just war tradition; and be it further

RESOLVED, That war must be fought for a just cause, to defend, vindicate, and restore public order, peace, and justice when they have come under attack; and be it further

RESOLVED, That war must be fought by right authority, a duly constituted sovereign government; and be it further

RESOLVED, That war must be fought with right intention and love for our enemies, truly intending to achieve peace and justice for ourselves, our enemies, and the world; that an otherwise just war may not be used as pretext to fight for glory, profit, revenge, or conquest; and be it further

RESOLVED, That war, so far as possible, must be waged only as a last resort and only if there is a reasonable chance for success, though we give allowance for the great uncertainty inherent in such prudential judgments; and be it further

RESOLVED, That war must be fought with proper discrimination between combatants and civilians, civilians may not be deliberately targeted for attack, and war is not an excuse for murder or terrorism; and be it further

RESOLVED, That war must be fought with proper proportionality and the scale of death and destruction must be proportional to the scale of peace and justice at stake in the conflict; and be it further

RESOLVED, That military personnel should adhere to the principle of military necessity and are permitted to use the degree of force necessary to achieve military goals, no more and no less; and be it further

RESOLVED, That policymakers' obligation is not discharged once the fighting stops; that wartime leaders must pursue order, justice, and conciliation in the aftermath of war; that war plans that take no heed of war's aftermath are fundamentally unjust; that an otherwise just war that fails to consolidate order, justice, and conciliation in its wake is not a fully just war; and be it further

RESOLVED, That Southern Baptists reaffirm our stance on the freedom of the conscience and on conscientious objection, that “those who for reasons of religious conviction are opposed to military service should be exempted from forced military conscription” (“Resolution on Conscientious Objectors,” 1969); and be it finally

RESOLVED, That Christians everywhere should pray for our brothers and sisters serving in the armed forces, for their safety and the state of their hearts as they serve; for Christians and non-Christians alike caught in conflict zones or living under threat of political violence, for their safety; for our leaders, that they would discern wisely and govern righteously, especially in times of war; and for the world, that God would show mercy and bless us with a just and lasting peace among nations, as far as possible in this sinful world.



## ***On Justice and Peace in the Aftermath of the October 7 Attack on Israel***

WHEREAS, On October 7, 2023, the nation of Israel was attacked by Hamas, an organization designated by the United States Department of State as a Foreign Terrorist Organization, which committed unspeakable atrocities such as the murder of 1,200 people, the abduction of 253 people, and the rape, torture, and other cruel and inhumane treatment of countless others including children, women, and the elderly, with nearly half of the hostages being foreign nationals or having multiple citizenships; and

WHEREAS, While no modern nation-state is above reasonable critique, Hamas unequivocally bears responsibility for the atrocities committed and the devastating repercussions that have affected the Jewish people, Palestinians living under the tyranny of this terrorist organization, our Christian brothers and sisters in the region, and all neighboring people; and

WHEREAS, Hamas' leadership openly declared that they will repeat such attacks until Israel ceases to exist as a nation; and

WHEREAS, Incidents of antisemitism have dramatically increased both domestically and abroad since the terrorist attack on October 7; and

WHEREAS, While theological perspectives on Israel and the Church vary within the Southern Baptist Convention, we are unified in calling current antisemitic attacks against Jewish people especially heinous, as the Jewish people have often been targeted by their neighbors since God called them as his people in the days of Abraham; and

WHEREAS, True peace will not be achieved until the return of Jesus Christ (Revelation 21:4); now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That the messengers to the Southern Baptist Convention meeting in Indianapolis, Indiana, June 11-12, 2024, condemn Hamas' terrorist attacks of October 7, commit to standing with the Jewish people and those suffering in the region, and oppose all forms of antisemitism; and be it further

RESOLVED, That we deny assertions of moral equivalence between Israel and Hamas; and be it further

RESOLVED, That we are appalled by anti-Israel and pro-Hamas activities on university campuses, within professional associations, and in the culture at large; and be it further

RESOLVED, That we commit to supporting biblical solutions to the conflict, advocating for principles of justice, mercy, and humility in all actions taken by Israel in its pursuit of a just peace (Micah 6:8); and be it further

RESOLVED, That we oppose those calling for the nation of Israel to lay down its arms, repudiating any calls for a ceasefire that do not also result in the immediate release of all hostages; and be it further

RESOLVED, That we call for the international community to redouble its efforts to support the nation of Israel toward a just and lasting peace, addressing underlying issues such as terrorism, human rights violations, and regional instability, consistent with biblical calls to defend the oppressed and promote justice, especially among non-combatants and civilians (Psalm 82:3-4; Isaiah 1:17); and be it further

RESOLVED, That we recognize the dignity and personhood of all people living in the Middle East and affirm God's love and offer of salvation to them through Jesus Christ, honoring the difficult ministry of Jewish and Palestinian believers who labor for the gospel as we pray for their protection and ministry; and be it finally

RESOLVED, That we encourage Southern Baptists to pray diligently for a peaceful resolution to the war and all affected by warfare, petitioning God for wisdom, protection, and the ultimate blessing of a just and lasting peace among nations (1 Timothy 2:1-2).

## ***On the Pro-Life Ethic in a Post-Roe Society***

WHEREAS, Regardless of the stage of development or location, all human beings are created in the image of God, and this reality is the foundation of God's call upon Christians to "love one another as ourselves," especially the most vulnerable among us (Genesis 1:26-28; Psalm 139; Matthew 22:37-39); and

WHEREAS, The Baptist Faith and Message states that "God has ordained the family as the foundational institution of human society" and that "children, from the moment of conception, are a blessing and heritage from the Lord" (Article XVIII); and

WHEREAS, We joyfully celebrate and thank God for the 2022 Supreme Court decision in *Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization* that overturned the deadly precedent in *Roe v. Wade* and *Planned Parenthood v. Casey*; and

WHEREAS, Nothing is value-neutral, and pro-choice policies and court decisions have reinforced the idea for almost 50 years that abortion was morally good and promoted a particular vision of "the good life" centered on moral autonomy with phrases like, "my body, my choice"; and

WHEREAS, Many states have rightfully restricted access to abortion and abortion pills while others have lamentably expanded access, resulting in an even greater number of abortions; and

WHEREAS, Chemical abortions now account for over 60% of all abortions in the United States and not only take a precious preborn life but also lead to medical complications for 1 in 5 women; and

WHEREAS, In 2022, messengers to the Southern Baptist Convention encouraged the development of policies that "eradicate any perceived need for abortion" ("On Anticipation of a Historic Moment in the Pro-life Movement"); and

WHEREAS, 73% of women who choose to have an abortion cite economic insecurity as the primary driver of their decision; and

WHEREAS, Southern Baptists and other pro-life Christians have sought for decades to serve vulnerable women and children despite character attacks in media and culture amid mounting opposition from the deadly and dehumanizing abortion industry; and

WHEREAS, Messengers to the 2015 annual meeting of the Southern Baptist Convention resolved to “show grace and mercy to those individuals who grieve with repentance over past abortions” (“On the Sanctity of Human Life”); and

WHEREAS, The Apostle Paul reminds us in Ephesians 6:12 that our battle is not against flesh and blood but against the principalities and power of evil in this age; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That the messengers to the Southern Baptist Convention meeting in Indianapolis, Indiana, June 11-12, 2024, redouble our commitment to upholding, protecting, and cherishing the precious lives of the preborn; and be it further

RESOLVED, That we celebrate the invaluable work of Christians advocating for the pro-life cause in families, churches, counseling rooms, pregnancy resource centers, and the voting booth; and be it further

RESOLVED, That we remain steadfast in our work toward robust regulation with the ultimate goal of abolishing all abortions including the dangerous, life-ending chemical abortion drugs used in elective abortions; and be it further

RESOLVED, That we champion conscience protections for medical professionals who may be asked to prescribe or dispense these abortion drugs but object to their use; and be it further

RESOLVED, That we affirm legislative policies that assist abortion-vulnerable women and promote family flourishing by making adoption more affordable and accessible, eliminating marriage penalties, bolstering the important work of pregnancy resource centers, providing a baseline of security for new families to bond with their children, and ensuring that necessary resources are available around the birth of a child; and be it further

RESOLVED, That we support collaborative partnerships between civil society and government that bolster social support and increase excellence, availability, and affordability in maternal healthcare and childcare; and be it further

RESOLVED, That we call on all of our Southern Baptist churches to share the gospel with and minister to men and women who have suffered at the hands of the abortion industry and to actively engage in ministries of healing and restoration by providing opportunities for individuals to share their stories, receive support, and experience the healing power of God's love and forgiveness; and be it finally

RESOLVED, That we desire to see a culture of life that embraces and celebrates the formation of families and promotes their flourishing as we champion the dignity and value of all people, including the most vulnerable among us, and pray "for the day when the act of abortion will be not only illegal, but also unthinkable" ("On Thirty Years Of Roe v. Wade," 2003).

## ***On the Ethical Realities of Reproductive Technologies and the Dignity of the Human Embryo***

WHEREAS, Every human being is made in God's image (Genesis 1:27-28) and is thus to be respected and protected from the moment of fertilization until natural death, without regard to developmental stage or location; and

WHEREAS, Human beings possess an inherent right to life and the opportunity to reach their full developmental maturity (Exodus 20:13); and

WHEREAS, Governments are ordained by God to safeguard human dignity and promote human flourishing at all stages of life (Genesis 9:5-6; Romans 13:1-7); and

WHEREAS, Biblical creation order portrays the embodied union of husband and wife as the singular normative expression for procreation (Genesis 1:27-28); and

WHEREAS, Infertility affects many married couples who have the good and godly desire to bring children into the world; and

WHEREAS, Couples who experience the searing pain of infertility can turn to God, look to Scripture for numerous examples of infertility, and know that their lament is heard by the Lord, who offers compassion and grace to those deeply afflicted by such realities (Genesis 16:1-16, 25:21; Judges 13:2; 1 Samuel 1:11; Luke 1:5-13); and

WHEREAS, All children are a gift from the Lord regardless of the circumstances of their conception (Psalm 127:3); and

WHEREAS, Though all children are to be fully respected and protected, not all technological means of assisting human reproduction are equally God-honoring or morally justified; and

WHEREAS, Southern Baptists have historically affirmed the value of every human life and opposed the use of technology that disregards the sanctity of human life; and

WHEREAS, The In Vitro Fertilization process routinely generates more embryos than can be safely implanted, thus resulting in the continued freezing, stockpiling, and ultimate destruction of human embryos, some of whom may also be subjected to medical experimentation; and

WHEREAS, In Vitro Fertilization most often participates in the destruction of embryonic

human life and increasingly engages in dehumanizing methods for determining suitability for life and genetic sorting, based on notions of genetic fitness and parental preferences; and

WHEREAS, Estimates suggest that between 1 million and 1.5 million human beings are currently stored in cryogenic freezers in an embryonic state throughout the United States, with most unquestionably destined for eventual destruction; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That the messengers to the Southern Baptist Convention meeting in Indianapolis, Indiana, June 11-12, 2024, call on Southern Baptists to reaffirm the unconditional value and right to life of every human being, including those in an embryonic stage, and to only utilize reproductive technologies consistent with that affirmation especially in the number of embryos generated in the IVF process; and be it further

RESOLVED, That we affirm all children, no matter the circumstances of their conception, are gifts from God and loved by him; and be it further

RESOLVED, That we call on Southern Baptists to love all of their neighbors in accordance with their God-given dignity as image bearers and to advocate for the government to restrain actions inconsistent with the dignity and value of every human being, which necessarily includes frozen embryonic human beings; and be it further

RESOLVED, That we encourage Southern Baptists to continue to promote adoption as one way God may call upon couples to grow their families and to consider adopting frozen embryos in order to rescue those who are eventually to be destroyed (Proverbs 24:11-12); and be it further

RESOLVED, That we grieve alongside couples who have been diagnosed with infertility or are currently struggling to conceive, affirm their godly desire for children, and encourage them to consider the ethical implications of assisted reproductive technologies as they look to God for hope, grace, and wisdom amid suffering; and be it further

RESOLVED, That we commend couples who at great cost have earnestly sought to only utilize infertility treatments and reproductive technologies in ways consistent with the dignity of the human embryo as well as those who have adopted frozen embryos; and be it finally

RESOLVED, That we commit to pray to our God who hears, sees, and remembers on behalf of those couples struggling with infertility (1 Samuel 1:11-20).

## ***On the God-Given Rights and Responsibilities of Parents***

WHEREAS, God has created all people in his image, male and female, with inherent dignity and value (Genesis 1:26-28; Psalm 139:13); and

WHEREAS, God has established the family as the first and most foundational institution of society that existed prior to the state, and the relationship between parent and child, whether biological or legal, is a unique bond in society (Genesis 1:27-28; Psalm 24:1); and

WHEREAS, God possesses sovereign authority over all (Ezekiel 18:4; Colossians 1:16; Hebrews 1:2) and has entrusted to parents certain rights and responsibilities as the primary stewards of their children (Deuteronomy 6:6-7; Proverbs 22:6; Ephesians 6:4), teaching them “spiritual and moral values and to lead them, through consistent lifestyle example and loving discipline, to make choices based on biblical truth” (Baptist Faith and Message Article XVIII); and

WHEREAS, God has ordained the state to promote good and restrain evil, thereby cultivating the conditions necessary for the flourishing of children and families which are not defined by arbitrary or subjective moral claims, but by basic moral goods rooted in the character of God (1 Peter 2:14); and

WHEREAS, The United States Supreme Court in the 1925 *Pierce v. Society of Sisters* decision rightly stated that parents have the right “to direct the upbringing and education of children under their control”; and

WHEREAS, Parental rights are not absolute, and the state has a compelling interest to intervene in certain situations where children are being abused, neglected, or endangered; and

WHEREAS, It is becoming increasingly common for some in the medical, educational, business, and legal sectors to encroach upon and attempt to supersede these God-given rights and responsibilities of parents in the name of autonomy and expressive individualism; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That the messengers to the Southern Baptist Convention meeting in Indianapolis, Indiana, June 11-12, 2024, affirm that parents are the primary stewards of and decision-makers for their children, rather than teachers, doctors, or the state; and be it further



RESOLVED, That we honor God's good design for the family and the flourishing of children, and desire to see a culture that embraces and celebrates the formation of families; and be it further

RESOLVED, That we call upon parents to exercise their rights and responsibilities to make decisions regarding the upbringing of their children, under the authority of God, recognizing that they will be held responsible for their choices (Matthew 25:14-30); and be it further

RESOLVED, That we encourage the state to partner with, rather than act contrary to, the family unit, enacting legislation that protects and upholds parental rights, ensuring that parents have the freedom to make decisions regarding the upbringing, education, and healthcare of their children without undue interference, recognizing that parents are the primary arbiters of a child's moral and spiritual formation; and be it finally

RESOLVED, That we call upon churches, pastors, and all Southern Baptists to advocate for policies and practices that support and strengthen the family unit, recognizing it as the primary institution for the nurturing and upbringing of children.

## ***On the Danger of Abusing Non-Disclosure and Non-Disparagement Agreements***

WHEREAS, Scripture teaches that we should “walk in the light, as he is in the light” (1 John 1:7), and that “everything exposed by the light becomes visible, for everything that is illuminated becomes a light itself” (Ephesians 5:13-14); and

WHEREAS, The Baptist Faith and Message 2000 states that “every person of every race possesses full dignity and is worthy of respect and Christian love” (Article III) and “Every Christian should . . . [be] careful to act in the spirit of love without compromising their loyalty to Christ and His truth” (Article XV); and

WHEREAS, Non-disclosure or confidentiality agreements and non-disparagement agreements are common practice in both secular and Christian organizations; and

WHEREAS, Appropriate uses for these agreements include but are not limited to the protection of proprietary technology and information, personally identifying information, donor records, and confidential information learned in private counseling sessions; and

WHEREAS, Non-disclosure agreements and non-disparagement agreements can be abused and weaponized, resulting in the silencing of victims, the perpetuation of harmful acts, an absence of biblical transparency, and the protection of institutions over individuals; and

WHEREAS, Misuse of these agreements can foster an environment where abuse, misconduct, and other forms of harmful behavior are shielded from accountability, and their use can prevent the truth from being known; and

WHEREAS, Recent public examples of Christian organizations utilizing non-disclosure and non-disparagement agreements in instances involving sexual abuse have highlighted the danger posed by the misuse of such agreements and the harm done to those who are silenced under the threat of legal action; and

WHEREAS, While Christians are called to “speak the truth in love” (Ephesians 4:15) and “speak what is right” (Proverbs 16:13), the incentives typically associated with the abuse of these agreements, financial and otherwise, can pressure victims into unjust silence; and

WHEREAS, State legislatures and judiciaries have begun to acknowledge the misuse of non-disclosure and non-disparagement agreements and have enacted laws and issued rulings preventing them from being enforced in certain instances; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That the messengers to the Southern Baptist Convention meeting in Indianapolis, Indiana, June 11-12, 2024, condemn non-disclosure and non-disparagement agreements that oppress or harm individuals, promote unnecessary secrecy, or deter accountability, and we call for the appropriate use of such agreements; and be it further

RESOLVED, That we affirm the inherent dignity and worth of every individual, standing against any practices that perpetuate harm or injustice; and be it further

RESOLVED, That we call on all organizations to revoke any non-disclosure or non-disparagement agreement which prevents victims of abuse from speaking the truth of their experience and sharing the redemptive ways in which God can restore and heal; and be it further

RESOLVED, That we urge all Christian organizations, including Southern Baptists, to diligently and prayerfully review their practices in light of Scripture and consider revoking harmful non-disclosure and non-disparagement agreements with those whose consciences have been bound by the threat of legal action, prioritizing the call of Jesus in the Great Commandment as they examine the use of such agreements with outgoing employees and victims of abuse; and be it further

RESOLVED, That we call to repentance anyone who has knowingly and intentionally used non-disclosure or non-disparagement agreements for the express purpose of silencing victims or whistleblowers, covering for abusers, hiding criminal actions, or protecting the reputations of those who have sinned; and be it further

RESOLVED, That we affirm those state legislatures and judiciaries which have limited or curtailed the use of non-disclosure and non-disparagement agreements, and we call on other states to enact similar legislation; and be it finally

RESOLVED, That we commit to fostering a culture of openness, accountability, and justice in all our dealings, thus honoring our calling to model the love and truth of Christ in all aspects of our shared mission.

## ***On Evangelism and the Great Commission***

WHEREAS, The Father desires all people to come to repentance and saving faith, Jesus commands his followers to go and make disciples of all nations, and the Holy Spirit empowers his witnesses in local and global contexts (Matthew 24:14, 28:19-20; Acts 1:8; 2 Corinthians 5:20; 2 Peter 3:9; Revelation 7:9); and

WHEREAS, The Baptist Faith and Message states that “It is the duty and privilege of every follower of Christ and of every church of the Lord Jesus Christ to endeavor to make disciples of all nations” (Article IX); and

WHEREAS, More than 174,000 people die daily without Christ, over 3,000 people groups are not only unreached but unengaged, and 59% of the world’s population has little or no access to the gospel; and

WHEREAS, The Southern Baptist Convention is a family of churches—consisting of people from many different ethnicities, cultures, and nations—that cooperate for the propagation of the gospel (Matthew 12:48-50); and

WHEREAS, The North American Mission Board is commissioned to “equip Southern Baptists for faithful evangelism, encourage churches in evangelism and discipleship, implement direct evangelism projects, prioritize spiritual awakening, and develop an evangelism strategy for reaching North America with the gospel”; and

WHEREAS, The International Mission Board is commissioned to “develop and maintain a systematic strategy for gospel proclamation and planting churches that will result in the rapid reproduction and multiplication of local indigenous congregations that will make the gospel accessible to all persons among every ethno-linguistic people group”; and

WHEREAS, Christ gives some as evangelists to equip the Body of Christ to share the gospel and accomplish the Great Commission (Ephesians 4:11); now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That the messengers to the Southern Baptist Convention meeting in Indianapolis, Indiana, June 11-12, 2024, commit to make every effort as a witness to share the gospel message of Jesus Christ, his life, his death, his resurrection, and his second coming; and be it further

RESOLVED, That we celebrate and support the work of the North American Mission Board, the International Mission Board, and our other Southern Baptist entities which empower and assist churches in the work of evangelism, church planting, and missions; and be it further,

RESOLVED, That we call churches to evangelistic cooperation through all means possible, including joint mission trips, the sharing of church buildings, school release time programs, Vacation Bible School, student conferences, community ministries, sports evangelism, special evangelistic services, and other efforts, building a lasting legacy to hand off the mission to the next generation; and be it further

RESOLVED, That we urge Southern Baptists to pray for those around the world who are persecuted because of their evangelistic efforts and nevertheless pursue the mission of God through great sacrifice; and be it further

RESOLVED, That we call Southern Baptists to evangelize underreached people groups in their local communities including the deaf, migrant workers, and refugees who have come to live in the United States; and be it further

RESOLVED, That we charge Southern Baptist churches to call out the called, praying for, supporting, and sending those the Spirit has led to serve as evangelists, associational missionaries, urban and rural church planters, Journeymen, and short- and long-term missionaries as they take the gospel to the ends of the earth and sacrifice all for the sake of the mission; and be it finally

RESOLVED, We pray for boldness and discernment to seize each evangelistic opportunity as we seek to be obedient to the Great Commission of our Lord Jesus Christ.

## ***On Appreciation for Indianapolis***

WHEREAS, The messengers to the Southern Baptist Convention meeting in Indianapolis, Indiana, June 11-12, 2024, have gathered in the name of Jesus Christ to cooperate, fellowship, and worship together for his honor and glory; and

WHEREAS, We have gathered to celebrate in one mind and one voice our Great Commission mandate to take the gospel to the nations by commissioning and sending missionaries to the ends of the earth; and

WHEREAS, We have enjoyed the gracious hospitality of the city of Indianapolis and are grateful for it accommodating this large group of messengers, exhibitors, and guests; and

WHEREAS, We acknowledge, celebrate, and honor the work of our local associations, state convention, local churches, and the hundreds of volunteers for making our annual gathering possible; and

WHEREAS, We commend the servant-like commitment and work of our Southern Baptist Convention president, officers, committee members, musicians, and other personnel to conduct the affairs of this meeting; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That the messengers to the Southern Baptist Convention meeting in Indianapolis, Indiana, June 11-12, 2024, express our profound gratitude to the Lord for allowing us to meet together in Christian unity and service to him and our deepest appreciation to the city of Indianapolis for hosting the 2024 Annual Meeting and Pastors' Conference.

