

**FOURTH GLOBAL BAPTIST PEACE CONFERENCE**  
**9-14 February 2009**  
**ROME, ITALY**



*'If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live in peace with everyone.'* Romans 12:18

Gathering together from 59 different nations, representing many diverse communities throughout the world, more than 350 people came to Rome to participate in the 2009 Global Baptist Peace Conference. We came together in the name of the God of peace, who in Christ is the foundation of justice and fulfilment of our peace, and whose Spirit invites us to be peacemakers in the world.

Our purpose was to teach and preach, learn and live, the commitment to peace-building and justice-making that is at the heart of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Together we shared in worship of the God who is our peace. There was joyous celebration, disturbing lament, and deep affirmation of our shared faith. Scripture was preached, and seeds were planted as a sign of our hope for peace.

Together we listened to stories of pain and violence, of tears and despair, of life and renewal, of harmony and hope. Amidst the recognition of the violence and brokenness that scars our world, testimony to the deeper power of God's redeeming and reconciling love was heard with joy.

Together we learned the practice of peacemaking. Rooted in theology and nurtured by the experience of participants from many different places and situations, food was shared for the continuing journey of conflict transformation.

In our meeting together we have confessed and sought repentance for the part our own church communities have played in sustaining a culture of violence, and as God's forgiven people we celebrate our renewal for the task of peacemaking in the name of Christ.

Inspired by our work together and our witness to one another we make the following declarations, and call upon all our Baptist sisters and brothers to join us in the urgent gospel task of being justice seekers and peacemakers in our world by making the same affirmations and commitments.

- a) We affirm as people of faith our commitment to the role of the United Nations in resolving national and international disputes, and we oppose all acts of violence and aggression that ignore UN resolutions.
- b) We affirm as people of faith our commitment to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and, believing that all are made in the image of God, urge that fundamental rights be respected and upheld by all peoples everywhere.
- c) We recognise the reality of conflict between peoples of different faith, and we commit to deepen mutual understanding and dialogue in a spirit of peace and goodwill.
- d) We recognise the reality of ethnic and racial violence, and we commit to bring healing and reconciliation across the barriers of division.
- e) We recognise the reality of poverty and oppression, and we commit to challenging the unjust social and economic structures that perpetuate inequality and destroy life.
- f) We promise to seek God's kingdom, recognising that this means caring for all those who are children and becoming as children ourselves.
- g) We promise to seek God's kingdom, recognising that this means rejecting the power structures of this world that hold the hidden seeds of conflict throughout the world.
- h) We promise to seek God's kingdom, recognising that this means opposing the particular forms of violence and discrimination that are inflicted upon women.
- i) We will follow the way of peace through listening to the voices of the marginalised, including those who are refugees, asylum seekers and migrants, and offering a welcome to those who are strangers in our midst.
- j) We will follow the way of peace through our concern for the whole of creation, including the impact of climate change on our environment, and we will reject privatisation that denies people access to basic needs, such as clean water.

In the midst of a world affected by violence, terror and division, let us stand together as those who have heard and answered the call of God who wills justice and promises peace. Let us seek the joy of those who know the freedom that is found in Christ. Let us seek the hope that is the gift of the Spirit who unites us.