

EUROPEAN BAPTIST FEDERATION
Council Meeting
22-25 September 2005

***RESOLUTION OF SUPPORT FOR THE MICAH CHALLENGE AND
THE GLOBAL CALL TO ACTION ON POVERTY***

‘The Lord has told you what is good,
and what it is that the Lord requires of you:
only to act justly,
to love loyalty,
to walk humbly with your God.’
Micah 6:8

Today, the gap between the rich and poor in our world is wider than ever. The lives of vast numbers of people are controlled by global injustices such as poverty, disease, illiteracy and conflict, and the cry of so many is for freedom and justice. Despite the commitment of world leaders to agreed United Nations Millennium Development Goals, including halving global poverty by 2015, the achievement of these goals remains a distant dream. But it doesn't have to be this way.

- 1 The Council of the European Baptist Federation calls upon member Unions, Conventions and Churches to support the aims of the ‘Micah Challenge’ of
 - deepening Christian engagement with the poor, and
 - challenging world leaders to achieve the Millennium Development Goals.

We believe that, through a commitment to prayer giving and a campaigning programme of advocacy work, our biblical mandate is to ‘act justly’ for those who are poor and marginalized.

- 2 The Council of the European Baptist Federation calls upon governments and international decision makers to make key policy commitments in four vital areas:

Aid

We believe

- That rich countries should immediately give at least 0.7% of national income in international aid.
- That aid should not be tied to contracts with donor countries, or linked to economic conditions that adversely affect the poor.
- That aid should support poor communities’ own plans and paths out of poverty.

Debt

We believe

- That the world’s poorest countries should be set free from their unpayable debts.
- That there should be a fair and transparent process for deciding how much debt should be cancelled to ensure that human needs take priority.
- That poor countries should not be forced to fulfill economic conditions that harm those who are the poorest.

Trade Justice

We believe

- That there should be freedom for poor countries from trade rules that prevent them choosing the best solutions to end poverty and protect the environment.
- That there should be an end to export subsidies that damage the livelihoods of poor rural communities around the world.
- That big business should be regulated to prevent profiting at the expense of people and the environment.

National-level Action

We believe

- That the Millennium Development Goals need to be applied to each national context, ensuring that adequate resources are allocated to providing high quality public services accessible to all.
- That civil society and the poor should share in determining national development priorities, policies and plans.
- That national governments should reform structures that prevent the development of secure livelihoods for poor people, be fully accountable and transparent in their use of public funds, and strive to end corruption.

As representatives of the European Baptist Federation, we declare our faith that all people everywhere are made in the image of God, and have the right to live in freedom from poverty, injustice and violence.

Jesus said:

'The Spirit of the Lord is upon me,
because he has appointed me to bring good news to the poor.
He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives
and recovery of sight to the blind,
to let the oppressed go free,
to proclaim the year of the Lord's favour.'

Luke 4: 18-19
