



Statement of Faith Against Modern Slavery

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Australian Baptists affirm the supreme authority of the Bible, the living Word of God, in all matters of faith and conduct, and seek to thoughtfully and diligently apply biblical teaching to issues of public and private morality.

From the Bible we are assured that all persons are created in the image of God, and should be treated with dignity and respect; and all persons are created equal, and should be treated with justice and compassion (Genesis 1:26-27; Amos 5:24; Micah 6:8; Matthew 22:37-40; Luke 10:25-37; James 5:1-6).

We believe that all slavery – whether chattel slavery, serfdom or debt bondage – is contrary to the will of God, who sees and hears the suffering and injustice caused by slavery (Exodus 3:7-8). We believe that slavery alienates humankind from God and from one another; that no person should be owned or exploited as the property of another; that workers are not to be considered as merely instrumental in the production of goods and services; that work done should be justly remunerated; and that workers have a right to adequate rest from their employment.

We believe that an essential element of the mission of God, expressed in the life and teaching of Jesus Christ, is to proclaim good news to the poor, freedom for prisoners, and release from oppression – including the physical and psychological oppression of slavery (Luke 4:18-19). All those who seek to follow Jesus are called to join him in this work.

We believe that, while the Bible does not explicitly outlaw slavery, the church of Jesus Christ constitutes a new kind of society which enables and empowers social transformation, including the elimination of slavery in all its forms. We are confident that the consistent application of the biblical principles of human dignity and equality, supported by universal human rights, will result in equality before God that is no longer a hidden, metaphysical reality but a social one, and that delivers freedom for slaves everywhere.

We commend the prophetic witness of all who work toward the noble goal of freedom from slavery and an end to its evil institutions. We commend the actions of governments and non-government organisations dedicated to ending slavery in our time.

We commit ourselves to expose the sin of slavery, to serve as Christ's presence in support of enslaved people, and to help to bring healing and wholeness to individuals and families and communities broken by slavery, for the glory of God and the realisation of the kingdom of God.

We further commit ourselves to work together with others of similar convictions toward a world where economic injustice and discrimination are eliminated – or, as the Apostle Paul put it, where “there is neither Jew nor Greek, neither slave nor free, nor is there male or female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus” (Galatians 3:28).