



Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf unstopped; the lame shall leap like a deer, and the tongue of the speechless sing for joy. (Isaiah 35:5, 6)

Everyone is entitled to a social and international order in which the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration can be fully realized. (Article 28)

Why do you say, O Jacob, and speak, O Israel, “My way is hidden from the Lord, and my right is disregarded by my God?” Have you not known? Have you not heard? The Lord is the everlasting God, the creator of the ends of the earth. He does not faint or grow weary; his understanding is unsearchable. He gives power to the faint, and strengthens the powerless. Even youth will faint and be weary and the young will fall exhausted; but those who wait for the Lord shall renew their strength. They shall mount up with wings like eagles. They shall run and not be weary. They shall walk and not faint. (Isaiah 40:27-31)

EACH YEAR THE BAPTIST WORLD ALLIANCE encourages local congregations to observe a special Human Rights Sunday in connection with the anniversary of the December 10, 1948, adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights by the United Nations.

It is fitting for the Christian community to observe a special emphasis on human rights and to do so during the Advent season before Christmas. As Baptists, we have a revered history of championing the cause of religious liberty, a very basic human right. The Christmas story itself can be read as a human rights story. Recall that Jesus, Mary and Joseph were refugees after the birth in Bethlehem; recall Herod’s brutal policy of extermination in the “slaughter of the innocents” story in Matthew’s Gospel.

This litany was developed for BPFNA ~ Bautistas por la Paz by Rev. Paul Hayes. Scripture quotations are from the *New Revised Standard Version*. Text cited from the Universal Declaration of Human Rights was ratified by the General Assembly of the United Nations in 1948. Adaptations are for brevity and gender inclusiveness.

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A Human Rights Litany for Advent Advent Scriptures and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights

The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who lived in a land of deep darkness—on them light has shined. (Isaiah 9:2)

Whereas recognition of the inherent dignity and of the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family is the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world; whereas disregard and contempt for human rights have resulted in barbarous acts which have outraged the conscience of humankind, and the advent of a world in which human beings shall enjoy freedom of speech and belief and freedom from fear and want has been proclaimed as the highest aspiration of the common people. (Preamble)

A voice cries out: “In the wilderness prepare the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a highway for our God. Every valley shall be lifted up, and every mountain and hill be made low; the uneven ground shall become level, and the rough places a plain.” (Isaiah 40:3, 4)

All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brother and sisterhood. (Article 1, Adapted)

For a child has been born for us, a son given to us. (Isaiah 9:6a)

Everyone has the right to life, liberty and security of person. (Article 3)



Authority rests upon his shoulders; and he is named Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. (Isaiah 9:6b)

No one shall be held in slavery or servitude; slavery and the slave trade shall be prohibited in all their forms. No one shall be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment. (Articles 4 & 5)

The Spirit of the Lord shall rest on him, the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and might, the Spirit of knowledge and fear of the Lord. (Isaiah 11:2)

Everyone has the right to recognition everywhere as a person before the law. All are equal before the law and are entitled without any discrimination to equal protection of the law. (Articles 6 & 7, Adapted)

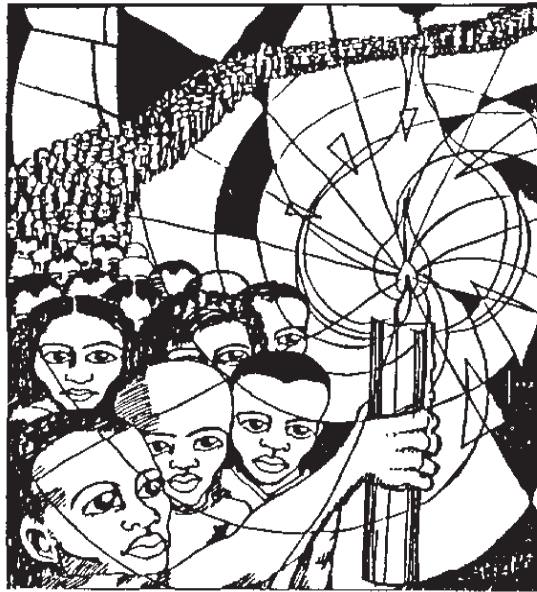
His delight shall be in the fear of the Lord. He shall not judge by what his eyes see, or decide by what his ears hear. (Isaiah 11:3)

No one shall be subjected to arbitrary arrest, detention or exile. (Article 9)

But with righteousness he shall judge the poor, and decide with equity for the meek of the earth. (Isaiah 11:4a)

Everyone is entitled in full equality to a fair and public hearing by an independent and impartial tribunal, in the determination of his or her rights and obligations and of any criminal charge against him or her. No one shall be subjected to arbitrary interference with his or her privacy, family, home or correspondence, nor to attacks upon his or her honor and reputation. (Articles 10 & 12, Adapted)

His authority shall grow continually, and there shall be endless peace for the throne of David and his kingdom. He will establish and uphold it with justice and with righteousness from this time onward and



forevermore. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will do this. (Isaiah 9:7)

Everyone has the right to freedom of movement and residence within the borders of each state. Everyone has the right to leave any country, including their own, and to return to their country. Everyone has the right to seek and to enjoy in other countries asylum from persecution. Everyone has the right to a nationality. (Articles 13-15, Adapted)

He will feed his flock like a shepherd; he will gather his lambs in his arms and carry them in his bosom, and gently lead the mother sheep. (Isaiah 40:11)

Men and women of full age, without any limitation due to race, nationality or religion, have the right to marry and to found a family. The family is the natural and fundamental group unit of society and is entitled to protection by society

and the state. Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of him or herself and of their family, including food, clothing, housing and medical care and necessary social services, and the right to security in the event of unemployment, sickness, disability, widowhood, old age or other lack of livelihood in circumstances beyond his or her control. Motherhood and childhood are entitled to special care and assistance. All children, whether born in or out of wedlock, shall enjoy the same social protection. (Articles 16 & 15, Adapted)

The wolf shall live with the lamb, the leopard shall lie down with the kid, the calf and the lion and the fatling together, and a little child shall lead them. (Isaiah 11:6)

All have the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion; this right includes freedom to change their religion or belief and freedom . . . to manifest their religion or belief in teaching, practice, worship and observance. Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference. . . . Everyone has the right to freedom of peaceful assembly and association. (Articles 18-20, Adapted)