

Baptist Peace Fellowship of North America

Our Calling, Mission & Values

Our calling: As Baptists, we are called by God to the Gospel of Peace. This calling is rooted in our faith in Jesus Christ, who is our Peace, in whom God is reconciling the world and through whom God calls us to the ministry of peacemaking. Peace is not only our goal but also our means. The foundation of peace is justice. The force of peace is love.

Our mission: The BPFNA gathers, equips, and mobilizes Baptists to build a culture of peace rooted in justice. We labour with a wonderful array of peacemakers to change the world.

God through Christ is calling us to build a culture of justice and peace and to active peacemaking in situations of conflict. Our roots in the Hebrew faith have given us the concept of Shalom, the wholeness of God's peace. Our Muslim friends share a similar understanding of peace in the idea of Salaam.

Within the Baptist churches of Canada, the United States, Puerto Rico and Mexico are strong traditions of peacemaking, and many individuals and churches across the four nations are actively engaged in God's work for peace with justice. The Baptist Peace Fellowship of North America celebrates and supports this work by raising the visibility of these efforts through our publications and web site, by bringing peacemakers together in regional and international gatherings, and by providing resources, including printed and audio-visual resources, speakers and training. We are building a network of field organizers, or Regional Peace Pastors, to support the work of this decentralized network of peacemakers. The BPFNA also actively connects with peacemakers from other traditions, faith-based and secular, to build alliances and work together toward our common goal of a more just and peaceful world.

Our values: Our work together as Baptist peacemakers reflects the following values:

- We value our roots in Baptist faith and tradition. We treasure and uphold the strong but largely forgotten heritage of Baptist peacemakers. When these roots are reclaimed, we experience an outpouring of the spirit in the beloved community.
- We are committed to networking with others who share similar faith commitments and a call to work for justice and peace. In collaborating with those from different faith traditions, we are committed to openness and mutual respect.
- Our work is Gospel-based. We are committed to learning for ourselves and helping others understand what it means to follow Jesus.
- We are committed to nurturing a culture of peace rooted in justice among ourselves, in Baptist churches and institutions, and in the world around us.
- We nourish a spirit of compassion. We act for peace with justice out of a heart space, led by the Spirit of Christ. That Spirit has always sought the best for persons and peoples, even those who do not know the meaning of the word compassion. We confess that compassion is a difficult but vital value to uphold.
- We value prophetic voices and provocative actions. We are willing to take risks, with great likelihood that we will be misunderstood, dismissed as irrelevant, or attacked as dangerous.
- We are willing to be "fools in the eyes of the world." The world can expect us to be different, creative, surprising, and fresh in our perspective and action.
- We value grace and seek to embody God's grace in the world. We strive to be consistently compassionate toward our enemies and perceived enemies, welcoming, forgiving, and reconciling toward both public and personal enemies.
- We are responsible. The board is responsible to the membership in terms of meeting the needs of Baptist peacemakers in four nations. We are all responsible before God for making good use of the gifts we have been given.
- We value protest. The roots of the word protest are in the Latin pro - for, in favor of - and testare - to testify. Giving testimony for God's Reign of peace and justice is very much one of the values we hold.
- We honor both flexibility and faithfulness. On core values we will not compromise, but we always strive to be open to new ways, new voices, the word from the margins.