

AMERICAN BAPTIST CHURCHES OF CONNECTICUT

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June 19, 2018

Attorney General Jeff Sessions

U.S. Department of Justice

950 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW Washington, DC 20530-0001

Attorney General Sessions,

Respectfully, I am writing this letter to you for two reasons: First, I am writing to affirm the letter written to you by the General Secretary of the American Baptist Churches, USA – The Reverend Dr. Lee Spitzer. I am the Executive Minister of the American Baptist churches of Connecticut. We are 119 American Baptist congregations and pastors in the State of Connecticut that help to make up the 5000 congregations and 1.5 million members on whose behalf Dr. Lee Spitzer spoke.

Secondly, I want to express my personal disagreement with any government policy that allows the rule of law to willfully separate parents from their children and vice versa in an attempt to secure this country's borders. If these actions are based on a "Zero Tolerance" immigration policy designed to protect the nation's borders, I would suggest that the integrity of the family deserves the same, if not greater, respect.

Furthermore, I find it interesting how easily the Bible is used to support injustice. There have been other times in this nation's history when the Bible was used to support inhumane and unjust practices, like those of the current policy. How sad it is to see the Bible, a book that I believe to be a book of love, truth, and transformative power again being made the authority to support such a repugnant and unjust governmental policy towards families all these years later.

Sir, I quote the words of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. who said in his acclaimed "Letter From a Birmingham Jail":

"A just law is a man-made code that squares with the moral law or the law of God. An unjust law is a code that is out of harmony with the moral law... Any law that degrades human personality is unjust."

Respectfully Sir, I have concluded that this "zero tolerance" policy is unjust. Yet, I am not without hope because I believe God is encouraging the administration, you and congress to be able to see your way clear to recant this unjust policy that ultimately degrades the human personality of children – the weakest and most vulnerable among us.

With Hope,

Rev. Dr. Harry L. Riggs, II

Executive Minister American Baptist Churches of Connecticut