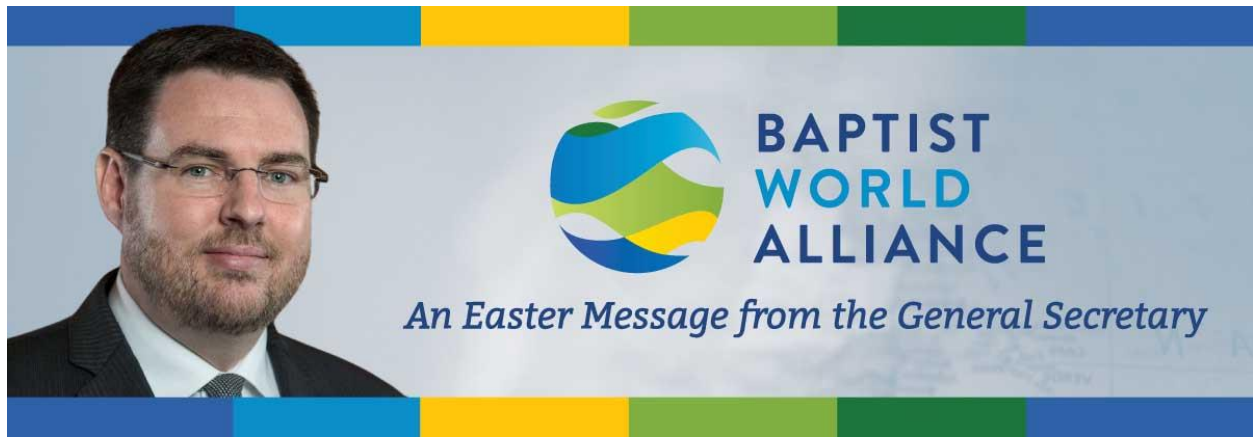




"They went and made the tomb secure by putting a seal on the stone and posting a guard." – Matthew 27:66

In his life and death, Jesus shatters the seal of every barrier of sin and invites his followers to live in the hope of resurrection peace. The day after Jesus' burial, Governor Pilate commanded, "...make the tomb as secure as you know how" (Matthew 27:65). Affixed to the stone was the governmental imperial seal. Though state-sponsored power seems successful for a moment, Jesus is the barrier breaker of sin's false seals to bring **resurrection peace**.

The women came to the tomb in their uncertainty, "Who will roll the stone away?" (Mark 16:3) The women arrived with questions, but as is possible for disciples when we encounter the resurrection today, they left as evangelists commissioned to carry the Gospel of Jesus. The guards came to the tomb in their strength. Yet when the angel appeared, they became so afraid that at the very place of resurrection they "became like dead men" (Matthew 28:4). Salvation is not in self-sufficient strength but when we come to Jesus with uncertainty that welcomes miracles. Though great military power seems successful for a moment, Jesus is the barrier breaker of sin's false seals to bring **resurrection peace**.

It was a select group of religious leaders who sought to use their influential position and economic resources to forever silence Jesus. The leading religious authorities demanded government intervention to maintain their culture and heritage. They were among the first to hear the truth of Jesus' resurrection but willingly paid a "large sum of money" to foster a lie (Matthew 28:12). Religious nationalism leads to corruption of faith and justification of injustice. The people of the Way must refuse the seduction of religious nationalism. Though religious oppression seems successful for a moment, Jesus is the barrier breaker of sin's false seals to bring **resurrection peace**.

These patterns of sin and injustice continue today. Around the world there are powerful governments perpetuating injustice. In their chaos they upend human dignity, reject the sojourner, unleash devastating aerial destruction on civilians, and rapidly dismantle aid to people facing war, persecution, and extreme hunger. Militaries trade weapons of violence and act as if strength makes right while non-state actors hold onto hostages and inflict their own terror. People, more often full of religion than faith, vacillate between approval and silence as they view their own economic wellbeing.

But the weight of these temporary seals cannot contain Jesus. The church has learned over 2,000 years there will come a time in every situation, no matter how intractable and terrible, that wars will end and earthly kingdoms will fall. Let us hold the faith, serve others, and share boldly. Let us help people from our neighborhood to every nation turn from sin to the salvation of Jesus, the barrier breaker. The seeds planted today will by the Holy Spirit yield fruit in the proper time in the Kingdom of God. For those standing at the edge of what feels like a sealed tomb, know that the risen Christ is already there – calling your name. Let us stand in the reality of eternity and the greater truth, "The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Messiah, and he will reign forever and ever."

This Easter, on behalf of the Baptist World Alliance, a family in 134 countries and territories, Jesus shatters the seal of every false barrier of sin to invite us to live in the hope of **resurrection peace**.

Rev. Dr. Elijah M. Brown | BWA General Secretary & CEO