

8107:12/82

**AMERICAN BAPTIST RESOLUTION ON
MEDICAL SOCIETIES AND CAPITAL PUNISHMENT BY LETHAL
INJECTION**

WHEREAS, American Baptists have stated their opposition to capital punishment on numerous occasions, (1958, 1966, 1980, 1982) and;

WHEREAS, the American Medical Association and other medical societies have opposed the participation by physicians in capital punishment by lethal injection:

Therefore, the General Board:

- commends the American Medical Association and the other medical societies for their courageous stand opposing participation by their members in capital punishment by lethal injection;
- once more condemns capital punishment as a judicial alternative and;
- urges all American Baptists to express opposition to the expansion of the federal death penalty.

Adopted by the General Board of the American Baptist Churches - December 1982
97 For, 21 Against, 17 Abstentions
Modified by the Executive Committee of the General Board - March 1992
(General Board Reference # - 8107:12/82)

POLICY BASE

American Baptist Policy Statement on Human Rights

THEREFORE, as American Baptists we declare the following rights to be basic human rights, and we will support programs and measures to assure these rights:

6. The right to follow the dictates of conscience, to express dissent individually or in groups to prevailing ideas, governments and institutions;
13. The right to be free from arbitrary arrest and detention and from torture; the right to a

just and open trial with the opportunity to confront accusers and the right to humane treatment if incarcerated.

Supportive Positions:

American Baptist Resolution on Capital Punishment

Adopted 1958 and 1966. Affirmed 9/80. Combined into one resolution 3/82.

Therefore, the General Board of the American Baptist Churches recommends the abolition of capital punishment in those states which still practice it and urges churches and members of our American Baptist constituency to support groups and agencies working for the abolition of capital punishment in those governmental jurisdictions of the U.S. where it is still authorized by law.

American Baptist Resolution on Capital Punishment III Adopted 6/77

Now that the death laws in some states have been upheld, over 400 persons nationwide face possible execution by hanging, firing squad, asphyxiation, or electrocution. Such punishment has been abolished in Canada and most of Europe, where it is seen as morally unacceptable and a form of cruel and unusual punishment inconsistent with religious and/or ethical traditions.

Therefore, we as American Baptists, condemn the current reinstatement of capital punishment and oppose its use under any new or old state or federal law, and call for an immediate end to planned executions throughout this country.

We urge American Baptists in every state to act as advocates against the passage of new death penalty laws, and to act individually and in concert with others to prevent current executions from being carried out.

We appeal to the governors of each state where an execution is pending to act with statesmanship and courage by commuting to life imprisonment without parole all capital cases within their jurisdiction."
