

8052:9/82

**AMERICAN BAPTIST RESOLUTION
IN SUPPORT OF FEDERAL RECOGNITION
OF UNRECOGNIZED INDIAN NATIONS**

The American Baptist Policy Statement on Native Americans states: "We recognize that the unique relationship between Indian nations and the United States government makes it essential that we keep abreast of federal and state legislation and regulations affecting Indian nations. We must promote passage and implementation of legislation that enables Indian self-determination and self development and that maintains Indian rights."¹

There are approximately 500 Indian nations in the United States. About 130 remain unrecognized and, therefore, their official status is undefined. They are deprived of the federal services guaranteed them by the federal trust responsibility of the United States to Indian people. They do not have the benefit of food commodities, health services, education and other federal services which they, as Indians, would be entitled to receive if they are recognized.

The Final Report of the American Indian Policy Review Commission ² in its section on "Policy Analysis and Recommendations Concerning Unrecognized Tribes" stated: "There is no legal basis for withholding general services from Indians, with the sole exception of specific termination acts. There is no legitimate foundation for denying Indian identification to any tribe or community."

Numerous unrecognized tribes are seeking federal recognition³ as Indian nations. We understand that the Acknowledgment Office of the Bureau of Indian Affairs has only enough administrative capability to handle less than ten applications annually⁴, a small percentage of the applications being submitted. This capability seems drastically inadequate in light of the number of potential applicants.

The General Board of the American Baptist Churches:

1. Supports the efforts of unrecognized Indian nations to secure prompt federal recognition and directs its staff to register that support with the appropriate government officials, and

2. Urges American Baptists to become informed about the problems facing Indians of unrecognized nations and to be supportive of the efforts of those nations to become recognized.

3. Urges the federal government to support its present leadership in the Acknowledgment Office of the Bureau of Indian Affairs by providing increased administrative capability for the purpose of processing all applications for recognition expeditiously.

1 American Baptist Policy Statement on Native Americans, Section A2, Governmental Policy.

2 A joint Congressional Commission chaired by Senator James Abourezk of South Dakota undertook a study of Indian problems and federal responsibility for them. It was the first comprehensive look at federal Indian policies since 1928. Known as the America Indian Policy Review Commission (AIPRC), it gathered data primarily from Indian sources. AIPRC released its final report on May 17, 1977.

3 Among those currently seeking recognition are the Mashpee and Nu-Ma (Mono) tribes.

4 Documentation for an application is extensive. Documentation for the Mashapee Tribe has taken over 800 pages.

Adopted by the General Board of the American Baptist Churches - June 1980

119 For, 1 Against, 0 Abstentions

Modified by the Executive Committee of the General Board - September 1982

Modified by the Executive Committee of the General Board - March 1993

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POLICY BASE

Policy Statement on Native Americans - June 1979

Policy Statement on Human Rights - December 1976

10. The right of ethnic or racial groups to maintain their cultural identity and to develop institutions and structures through which that identity can be maintained;

11. The right of citizenship in a nation, to participate in the political process, to form political parties, to have a voice in decisions made in the political arenas, to be secure

from the fear of deportation or expulsion, to emigrate and to have political asylum;

12. The right to organize into groups to bargain with structures or powerful persons, to seek redress of grievances or to promote particular concerns.
