

8112:3/83

AMERICAN BAPTIST RESOLUTION ON CIVIL RIGHTS

While we rejoice in gains made in civil rights in past years, we recognize that much still remains to be done if equal opportunity is to become a reality for all the citizens of this nation. Particularly crucial are the problems in housing, education and employment.

Discrimination in housing prevents many Americans from exercising their right to acquire private property. It limits the choice of housing available to members of minority groups, forcing them to pay high prices for overcrowded, substandard housing.

Therefore, we urge that:

- a. Federal funds not be used to perpetuate or extend segregated housing.

- b. The President and the Department of Housing and Urban Development use their powers to make certain that the programs currently underway and contemplated, that are shaping our urban areas, be used to bring about truly integrated and open communities.

- c. Our churches support national legislation against discrimination in the sale and rental of housing with provisions for the federal administrative enforcement of this legislation.

- d. Our churches participate in and support voluntary local and area groups which work to ensure that all housing in their communities is open to persons of all racial and religious backgrounds.

- e. Our church members work to develop and maintain integrated communities of high standards and refuse to participate in panic selling when persons of other races become their neighbors.

- f. Our church members, when selling or renting their own homes, make them available to prospective buyers of any racial background and patronize realtors who will observe this policy.

Since one of the major problems facing our country is the high rate of unemployment among persons of minority groups, and since an adequate income for recognized useful work is necessary for persons to maintain their own sense of worth and to provide a decent living for their families, we urge our churches to:

a. Discover the facts about unemployment among minority groups in their communities and the problems facing them in becoming employed.

b. Support public and private efforts to provide the education and job training necessary to enable them to get and keep jobs.

c. Support and initiate programs with the business community to open more and better jobs to minority group persons and to provide on-the-job training and counseling.

Since education is fundamental to the development of the potentiality of youth and adults to enable them to provide for their own future welfare and to make their contributions to society, we urge our churches to:

a. Support legislation to enable the Attorney General to bring suit for the desegregation of schools and public facilities.

b. Support quality integrated education.

c. Support the development of programs such as Headstart to give pre-school children from disadvantaged homes the necessary background to be ready for school.

d. Provide or assist programs of tutoring and study halls to help children succeed in school.

e. Support and assist programs of remedial education for adults.

Since justice in the courts is a foundation of freedom we urge that our churches support national legislation to ensure that juries will be selected without discrimination of any kind.

Adopted by the American Baptist Convention - 1966

Affirmed as an American Baptist Churches Resolution by the Executive Committee of the General Board - March 1983

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

(General Board Reference # - 8112:3/83)

POLICY BASE

American Baptist Policy Statement on Human Rights

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

2. The right to the basic necessities of food, shelter, clothing and health care;

3. The right to develop family structures, to build mutually satisfying human relationships and to nurture, train and educate children;

5. The right to grow in mind and self-fulfillment, to secure an education, to develop knowledge, to exchange ideas and to receive, impart and have access to information

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;

SUPPORTING POSITION

Board of Educational Ministries Resolution on Declaration of Commitments on the Churches and Public Education

Committed to share in the maintenance of public schools and in the renewal of public education, the Board of Educational Ministries of the American Baptist Churches will:

1. Support programs and measures which continue to provide as the right of all children and youth integrated education of high quality. Such education must avoid discrimination on the basis of class, race, religion, sex, place of national origin, or of physical, mental and emotional capacities.
