

8045:12/79

**AMERICAN BAPTIST
RESOLUTION ON CHRISTIAN CONSCIENCE AND MILITARY SERVICE**

All persons are created in the image of God and owe their first allegiance to God. All persons have the responsibility to read and interpret the scriptures and to reflect on their religious experience in order to understand God's will for them and the world, and they are called in conscience to live out that understanding. The supreme responsibility of every person is to obey God's will above all human laws and directives.

In light of the reinstatement of registration for military service, the General Board of the American Baptist Churches:

1. Reaffirms the public position consistently taken by this denomination of upholding the right of the individual to participate or to refuse to participate in military service on the grounds of conscience;
2. Urges that all American Baptists support the rights of those who take a position of conscientious objection to military service as well as the rights of those who take a position of conscientious acceptance of military service;
3. Encourages American Baptist youth and adults to think through their positions with regard to military service in order that their acceptance or rejection of the possibility of service in the military be made on the basis of conscience;
4. Urges that persons who come to the conclusion that their position must be one of conscientious objection to military service advise National Ministries through a declaration of their conviction so that an official record will be created and maintained;
5. Requests that if the draft is reinstated at any time in the future, that persons granted conscientious objector status have the right to choose alternate service under voluntary agencies.

Adopted by the General Board of the American Baptist Churches - December 1979
Modified by the Executive Committee of the General Board - September 1993
(General Board Reference #8045:12/79)

POLICY BASE

American Baptist Policy Statement on Human Rights - December 1976

1. The right of every person to choose a religion freely, to maintain religious belief or unbelief without coercion; the right for communities of faith to meet together to engage in public worship, to witness publicly to others, to speak prophetically from religious conviction to government and society, to live out religious beliefs and to be free from governmental intrusion, coercion, and control in the free exercise of conscience and religion.

6. The right to follow the dictates of conscience, to express dissent individually or in groups to prevailing ideas, governments and institutions.

American Baptist Resolutions

1968 Christian Conscience

1964 Conscientious Objectors and Military Service

1961 Military Service

1958 Conscription

1957 Conscription - Conscientious Objectors

1956 Conscription

1955 Conscription

1953 Conscientious Objectors

1952 Conscientious Objectors

1951 Conscientious Objectors

1950 Conscientious Objectors

1948 Amnesty

1947 Conscientious Objectors

1946 Conscientious Objectors