

**AMERICAN BAPTIST  
RESOLUTION IN SUPPORT OF CHURCH WORLD SERVICE**

Church World Service was organized in 1946. World War II had just ended and there were massive needs for reconstruction and rehabilitation. Fifteen denominations in the United States including the American Baptist Convention came together in an effort to seek the resources needed for the task. In 1990, CWS merged with the Division of Overseas Ministries and the International Affairs Commission to become Church World Service and Witness. In 2000 Church World Service and Witness became a separate 501©3 and incorporated as Church World Service Inc.

One Great Hour of Sharing offerings and CROP\* walks for hunger have encouraged church and community-wide efforts for world relief and are sources of major funding for Church World Service Witness. The generous response has shown the strength of church lay and pastoral leadership across our nation and the power of united effort.

In addition, the cooperation of many denominations has resulted in relief and development efforts that are cost effective and impartial. Through the years, tens of thousands of refugees have been resettled. Assistance has been given to whole populations of displaced persons in Asia, Africa, the Caribbean, Latin America, Europe and the Middle East. In recent years a continuing ministry in situations of disaster and emergency has been conducted both overseas and in the United States. Church World Service has been respected for its ability to provide a rapid and effective response to need.

In addition to dealing with immediate catastrophes, Church World Service has studied underlying causes that produce poverty, long-term hunger and malnutrition. This has resulted in programs for the local production of more adequate food supplies, medical care emphasizing disease prevention, environmental programs to provide clean water, and forest rebuilding to restore the soil and produce a fuel supply.

In such endeavors, the churches have given witness to reconciliation in the name of Christ and have lifted up the vision of servant and neighbor as described in the New Testament parables. They have promoted the nurture of the earth and its resources to provide for the needs of humanity as commanded in the creation story in Genesis. They have acted in the spirit of unity as described in John 17:23, "so that the world may know that thou hast sent me and hast loved them..."

In recognition of the ministry of Church World Service and the continuing urgent task of ministering to needs throughout the world, the General Board of American Baptist Churches, USA, adopts the following resolution:

1. We see the role of service as manifested in the ministry of Church World Service as a way in which our verbal testimony to the name of Jesus Christ is coupled with our obedience to the commands of our Lord to show compassion and love for all persons.
2. We commend and give thanks for the work of Church World Service and for the tremendous achievement in disaster relief and recovery, refugee resettlement, and developmental assistance carried out by Church World Service through the years.
3. We are grateful that the Church World Service program has been administered with such integrity as to merit respect for its ability to respond quickly to needs throughout the world, to

conduct its ministry in a cost effective way and to reach out directly with persons as well as with material aid so that there is a personal Christian witness in each act of sharing.

4. We recognize that beyond the needs arising from catastrophe and disaster there is the continuing imperative of dealing with root causes that give rise to hunger, disease and malnutrition worldwide. We commend the effort to continue a strong program to deal with these root causes. This is basic to the struggle for the development and advancement of people and the achievement of an acceptable quality of life for all.
5. We reaffirm our denomination's commitment to Church World Service and its ministry of healing a wounded, divided world and actively expressing responsibility for the welfare of humankind. The American Baptist Churches USA participates in Church World Service with significant funds and personnel time. Our participation is a major expression of our commitment to ecumenical service and mission.
6. We commend to American Baptist Churches continued prayer for the spiritual and material needs of our world. We urge support through the One Great Hour of Sharing Offerings and through CROP for such denomination-related programs of worldwide assistance as Church World Service represents.

\*CROP is the acronym for Christian Rural Overseas Program.

Adopted by the General Board of the American Baptist Churches - December 1986  
155 For, 0 Against, 0 Abstentions  
Modified by the Executive Committee of the General Board - March 1988  
Modified by the Executive Committee of the General Board - September 1992  
Modified by the Executive Committee of the General Board - September 1996  
Modified by the Executive Committee of the General Board - September 2000  
Modified by the Executive Committee of the General Board - September 2004  
Modified by the Executive Committee of the General Board - September 2008  
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#### **POLICY BASE**

**Statement of Purpose of American Baptist Churches in the U.S.A.**

**American Baptist Policy Statement on Christian Unity**

**American Baptist Policy Statement on Hunger**

**American Baptist Policy Statement on Human Rights**

**American Baptist Policy Statement on Immigration and Refugee Policy**

#### **Supporting Position**

**American Baptist Resolution on Sponsorship of Vietnamese and Cambodians**