

**8049:12/80**

**AMERICAN BAPTIST RESOLUTION ON THE  
MIDDLE EAST AND ARAB-ISRAELI ISSUES**

**Introduction**

A Christian approach to the complex situation in the Middle East should be one of moral realism. It should acknowledge that all concrete initiatives and human solutions are imperfect and inevitably partial, and cannot eliminate all the human suffering and injustice experienced in the area. Nonetheless, efforts can and should continue toward a total peace settlement for all the peoples involved in or affected by the conflict. With this in view, and in accordance with the ABC/USA Policy Statements on Human Rights and Military and Foreign Policy,

We state our convictions as follows:

1. We advocate a mediating role for our government in the search for a just and lasting peace in the area.
2. We express our regret for the deep suffering inflicted upon both Jew and Arab by the conflict, its antecedents, and its by-products, and in particular, the losses experienced by the refugees on both sides. We further regret where neglect or errors committed by the Western nations have, in some way, contributed to this situation.
3. We affirm the right of Israel to exist within secure and internationally recognized borders as a Jewish state, and its right to continue to serve as a haven for Jews, and a home for their culture and tradition.
4. We affirm the right of self-determination of the Palestinian Arabs in the West Bank (called Jude and Samaria by others) and the Gaza Strip.
5. We affirm the need to maintain, protect, and equally provide for the basic rights of minority citizens, including freedom of worship and religion.
6. We deplore the use of violence and applaud those who courageously participate in face-to-face negotiations as representatives of their respective peoples.

**Conclusion**

We call upon all parties in the Middle East to accept the following principles for achieving peace:

1. Direct negotiations among all parties (Israel, Jordan, Syria, Lebanon, Egypt, and appropriate representatives of the Palestinian people).
2. Agreement on the part of the negotiating parties to desist from terror and violence.
3. Commitment by all parties to respect the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the other parties.
4. Full recognition of the State of Israel as a sovereign state by all parties.
5. Recognition by Israel that the Palestinian Arab people have the right to self-determination.
6. Security agreements endorsed by all parties, by the United Nations and backed by the major powers.

**We call upon our people:**

1. to pray for those presently involved in negotiations, in efforts toward reconciliation, and in partnership in the struggle for human dignity and justice and a reduction of tensions in the area;
2. to study the Scriptures with care to avoid over simplifications and distortion;
3. to inform themselves through a careful reading of responsible publications regarding the Middle East.

Adopted by the General Board of the American Baptist Churches - December 1980  
115 For, 12 Against, 3 Abstentions  
(General Board Reference # - 8049:12/80)

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**POLICY BASE**

**American Baptist Resolution on Human Rights - 1976**  
**Military and Foreign Policy - 1978**

**Background Data** - Through interviews and conversations with persons in official positions representing both Arab and Israeli points of view, a U. S. diplomat, and Christian officials administratively related to the Middle East conflict; testimony of the American Friends Service Committee to Congress, 1980. Message from the Middle East Council of Churches, November 1979.

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