

8143:9/85

**AMERICAN BAPTIST RESOLUTION ON
RACIAL SEGREGATION AND NONVIOLENT DIRECT ACTION**

We believe that the moral issues posed by patterns of discrimination and segregation in community life make it imperative that American Baptist agencies, local churches, ministers and laity become actively involved in community efforts to create an open society.

We urge ministers and churches to give leadership in the struggle of oppressed people to seek redress of their grievance through constitutional means, and that denominational agencies and officers seek positive ways of giving them support.

Recognizing that such action may take many forms, we urge:

1. participation in both secular and religious local organizations and councils designed to eliminate injustice;
2. participation in positive programs to aid culturally disadvantaged children, youth, and adults to overcome educational and vocational handicaps;
3. participation in programs of nonviolent direct action.

While social change is normally accomplished through such processes of a democracy as courts, legislation, and public opinion, there arise occasions when an aggrieved people have no recourse to seek redress of their grievances other than protest through direct action demonstrations. It was in view of this that the founders of our nation provided for the right of citizens to assemble peaceably to make their protests. While we regret the need for direct action, we believe that the crisis which we face as a nation often requires the support of Christians by dramatic acts of nonviolent demonstration to arouse the nation to end injustices which neither an oppressed people nor a moral conscience can any longer endure.

The longer the nation delays decisive action, the more minority groups are thrown into frustration and desperate action. While keeping our focus squarely on the evils of injustice and the need to eliminate them now, we also believe that Christian means must be used to obtain these desired ends.

Adopted by the American Baptist Convention - 1964

Affirmed by the Executive Committee of the General Board - September 1985
(General Board Reference # - 8143:9/85)

POLICY BASE

American Baptist Policy Statement on Racial Justice

2. We recognize that the formal and informal structures within our society have been used to institutionalize our racist actions and enable us to avoid personal responsibility. We recognize our individual and corporate responsibility to work for racial justice and will initiate and support actions toward the elimination of institutional racism.

3. We recognize the responsibility to protect the rights of and support opportunities and equity for racial minorities in the political, economic, social, educational, and judicial system in this country. We will initiate and support actions to enable persons of all racial backgrounds to become full participants in and beneficiaries of the life of this country.

6. We recognize that concern for racial justice is not confined to American Baptist churches. We will work with other religious, ecumenical and secular groups with similar concerns to secure racial justice.

American Baptist Policy Statement on Human Rights

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

9. The right to human dignity, to be respected and treated as a person, and to be protected against discrimination without regard to age, sex, race, class, marital status, income, national origin, legal status, culture or condition in society;

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