

**8098:9/82**

**AMERICAN BAPTIST RESOLUTION ON  
TRANSFORMATION, RECONCILIATION AND RENEWAL**

**Humanity today is disastrously divided and broken. The hatreds and polarities witnessed on every side in our nation are but symptoms of critical illness, resulting from separation from God and fellow human beings which is global in its extent. The churches are not exempt from this condition and its effects.**

**Yet these very divisions should motivate the Church to reexamine its role in redemption, liberation, healing, and reconciliation in today's revolutionary world. This reexamination must be made in consciousness, that God not only speaks to the world through the Word and the Church but God also speaks to the Church through the world.**

**Anything less than total commitment to Jesus Christ and His teachings will find the Church failing in its quest for reconciliation and renewal. If this quest is to be successful we must recognize and reject all prejudices and economic, racial, and cultural agreements and developments which stereotype, separate, and degrade individuals or groups of people; we must be increasingly committed to the proclamation of the Gospel of Christ confronting individuals in their moral dilemmas and society in the unmet needs on our own doorstep and in the stirrings of millions around the world. Failing to implement this will prevent us from entering into and fulfilling the constructive relationships upon which humanity's survival and redemption depend.**

**Fundamental to this implementation is a revolutionary change of attitudes about self, about one's fellow human beings, about this fragile planet, about the meaning of life.**

**Because God is present in history as creator, reconciler and redeemer, the Church must listen as God brings judgment and mercy to people through revolution, reconciliation and renewal.**

**We, therefore, call for an enduring assault on the attitudes that shrivel the heart, narrow the mind, and erode the will. The target is no less than the transformation of the spirit of our own American Baptist community, for we cannot lead until we are worthy to lead.**

**To this end we urge all our cooperating churches and American Baptist boards to build into the flesh and blood and spirit of their programs, their ritual, and their fellowship, an ongoing exploration of the hidden images, judgments, and values that blind us from seeing all of God's children with Christ-like eyes.**

**Adopted by the American Baptist Convention - 1970 (originally as two resolutions "Preamble" and "Postlude")**

**Affirmed as an American Baptist Churches Resolution by the Executive Committee of the General Board - September 1982**

**Modified by the Executive Committee of the General Board - September 1995  
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## **POLICY BASE**

### **Statement on Purpose of American Baptist Churches, U.S.A.**

**American Baptist Churches in the U.S.A., as a manifestation of the church universal, bears witness to God's intention to bring redemption and wholeness to all creation. American Baptists believe that God's intention can be sought and followed in local congregations and other gatherings of Christians and in associational, regional, national and world bodies as they receive from one another mutual counsel and correction...**

**American Baptist Churches in the U.S.A. acknowledges that God's will is also manifested in movements outside the formal structures of Christ's church, and that, therefore, it must respond faithfully to such disclosures...**

**In the light of this affirmation, American Baptist Churches in the U.S.A. intends...**

- **to bear witness to the Gospel of Jesus Christ in the world and to lead persons to Christ;**
- **to seek the mind of Christ on moral, spiritual, political, economic, social, denominational and ecumenical matters, and to express to the rest of society on behalf of American Baptists, their convictions as to the mind of Christ in these matters;**
- **to guide, unify and assist American Baptists in their witness in the world, in preparing members for the work of ministry and in serving both those within and outside the fellowship of Christ...**

## **SUPPORTING POSITION**

### **American Baptist Resolution on Fragmented Society**

**God has called the church to be that part of the world in which genuine reconciliation and true community happen. In Christ we are all one. All sources of hostility and separation have been abolished by Christ's reconciling death. In the church there are to be no strangers or outcasts: all are equal and full citizens. To the**

**extent that the church is faithful to its mission it will be God's model for corporate humanity.**

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