

**8068:12/80**

**AMERICAN BAPTIST RESOLUTION ON THE RESURGENCE OF THE KU KLUX KLAN**

The mood of America is characterized by growing economic unrest, unemployment, rapid social change and a sense of impotency and futility. That mood is contributing to a resurgence of the Ku Klux Klan, or to a "new Klan," and to other white-supremist movements in the United States.

Public opinion has encouraged the growth of the Klan and racism in general when it has sympathized with it or indirectly supported it by endorsing the attitude that America's minorities have "come too far, too fast." Public tolerance has been demonstrated by voter acceptance of Klan political candidates, widespread distribution of printed material which accepts KKK actions, and by the failure of the criminal justice system to investigate effectively and end Klan-related violence.

**THEREFORE:** In accordance with the American Baptist Policy Statement on Human Rights which supports the right of all persons to be protected against discrimination and in light of its concern over the current manifestations of racism as evidenced in the resurgence of the Ku Klux Klan, the General Board of the American Baptist Churches urges local congregations and individuals to:

1. Indicate publicly their opposition to the Klan by statement and action wherever the Klan appears;
2. Encourage politicians and governmental bodies to take active positions against the racism, terrorism and acts of violence fostered by the Klan;
3. Educate members, especially children, about the nature of the Klan and about the myths which it seeks to foster related to racial superiority;
4. Design and implement programs to educate people, especially children, about the biblical imperatives for racial justice;
5. Take every opportunity afforded by the media to affirm our support of racial justice; and
6. Become actively involved in local and national efforts to achieve and assure racial justice.

We call upon the agencies and the leadership of the regional and national units of American Baptist Churches in the USA to:

1. Provide informational materials and other forms of support to individuals and to congregations engaged in efforts to educate their members about the nature of the Klan and about racial justice;
2. Represent American Baptist Churches in ecumenical efforts to combat the Klan;
3. Encourage public media to use their resources to promote racial justice;
4. Commend those media which have carried out investigative reporting about the Klan and its activities; and
5. Express our repugnance for the philosophy and activities of the Klan through appropriate governmental and legal channels.

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Adopted by the General Board of the American Baptist Churches - December 1980  
130 For, 0 Against, 0 Abstentions,  
Modified by the Executive Committee of the General Board - September 1994  
Modified by the Executive Committee of the General Board - September 1998  
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## **POLICY BASE**

### **American Baptist Policy Statement on Human Rights**

As American Baptists we declare the following rights to be basic human rights and we will support programs and measures to assure these rights:

9. The right to human dignity, to be respected and treated as 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;

## **Additional Supportive Positions**

### **American Baptist Convention Resolution on the Race Relations Adopted by the Annual Meeting of the American Baptist Convention in 1957 and reaffirmed in 1958.**

...we dedicate ourselves to the following objectives:

5. That we shall not align ourselves with any organized group or movement that works to retain segregation whether in country clubs, sororities, fraternities, service clubs, organizations of property owners, the Ku Klux Klan, White Citizen's Councils, and all exclusive groups that deny any membership to others on the basis of race.

### **American Baptist Convention Resolution on Anti-Semitism Adopted by the Annual Meeting of the American Baptist Convention in 1962.**

We register our opposition to anti-Semitism which persistently raises its ugly head, creating tensions, hatred and violence. Remembering the deep foundation which Christianity has in Judaism, let us build upon these that our own faith might be deepened and that our understanding and appreciation of our Jewish neighbors might be enriched. The New Testament can never be properly used as a basis for anti-Semitism, but rather an understanding of Jesus, who was himself a Jew, must strengthen the bonds between Jews and Christians. We call upon our Baptist people and fellow Americans to strive for the elimination of all prejudice and discrimination against the Jewish people in every walk of life, and to work for a closer relationship between our Christian and Jewish groups.