

## **Separation of Church and State**

WHEREAS the Word of God plainly teaches the separation of powers, namely church from state in declaring, "Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's" (Mark 12:17), and assigns specific responsibilities to each as delineated in Romans 13:1-7; and

WHEREAS all powers in the home, the church, and the state are responsible to God, "For there is no power but of God; and the powers that be are ordained of God"; and

WHEREAS it is an historical stand of Baptists, and declared to be a Baptist distinctive, with many of our forefathers in like faith suffering pain, torture, and death for this important doctrine of the church; and

WHEREAS the First Amendment to the Constitution of this great United States of America states, "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion or prohibiting the free exercise thereof"; and

WHEREAS our churches are daily faced with constant violations of the separation of church and state by the government in her expanding bureaucracies, who demand the separation of the church from the state, but persist in the attachment of the state to the church, thus placing the church and her ministries in grave danger; and

WHEREAS this persistent persecution is evidenced by the least forty-one pending actions against churches or church organizations in the State of Michigan alone; and

WHEREAS the "Charitable Trust Doctrine" of the Attorney General's offices throughout the U.S. results from a formulation meeting in 1973 and a position paper in 1977. It is now finding its way into statutory law in a number of states. The new California non-profit code effective January 1, 1980, is the precedent-setting legislation for other states. The position paper sets forth the idea that "reasonable legislation" may be employed to sidestep the complete prohibition of governmental interference. The Charitable Trust concept places the local church in the position – because of tax exemption and the receipt of public funds (offerings, gifts, legacies) – as a trust agent for the general public. This is the idea: the local church holds in trust the property, assets, and funds for the state in which it is located;

BE IT RESOLVED that we, the messengers of the 49<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference of the General Association of Regular Baptist Churches meeting at San Diego, California, June 23–27, 1980, declare our firm commitment to the separation of church from the state and the state from the church; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that we will resist any violation of the sovereignty of the church, and that we will obey God, rather than man, in matters where the Scripture has clearly taught a responsibility to evangelize, enlist, and educate our people, (Matthew 28:19, 20); and

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED that we will support men of like faith in this hour of oppression, and encourage our churches not to allow the state to take the place of Christ, who is Head of His church, in allowing the church, her ministries, or ministers, to be licensed, approved, or controlled by the dictates of the state; that while we are obligated to follow the state in the areas designated by God, we call for a cessation of bureaucratic condemnation, rulings, harassment, and oppression that would cause the church to be hindered in her God-given direction.

*San Diego, California  
June 23–27, 1980*