

Resolution on the Origin of Human Rights

Whereas we often speak of our “constitutional” right to free speech or our “constitutional” right to bear arms as if the Constitution is what grants us our rights (Psalm 75:7), and

Whereas a misunderstanding of where our rights come from often undermines many of our political debates and policy-making discussions, and

Whereas this misconception has led many to look to the government to grant favors, though it is not their place to do so (Romans 13:1-5; 1 Peter 2:14), and

Whereas this entitlement perspective of government is the result of a lack of understanding regarding our founding documents, the Declaration of Independence, and the Constitution of the United States of America, as well as our founding fathers, who viewed government, not as the all benevolent grantor of rights but rather a necessary evil, preferable to anarchy, but still a potential threat to liberty (Acts 5:27-29; Romans 14:4-8), and

Whereas America’s separation from the British empire was the first time a people declared their own independent right to found a political community based not upon heritage, wealth, or “divine right of kings,” but upon the sovereignty of the people, and

Whereas addressing the sovereignty of individuals, Dr. Robert Ketchum wrote, “One of the famous and historic characteristics of Baptists is that they hold that the individual soul is answerable to Almighty God and to Him alone,” and “There is no man or pope or priest or system or convention which can in anywise interpose anything between a soul and its God (Romans 14:10 & 12; Philippians 2:10)” (*Can a Baptist Body Define the Requirements of Its Own Membership without Violating the Sovereignty of the Local Church*).

Therefore Be it Resolved that we, the messengers of the Pennsylvania Association of Regular Baptist Churches meeting in State College, Pennsylvania, on September 12-14, 2022, do hereby acknowledge that, rather than granting us our rights, the United States Constitution protects our God-given rights *from* government, and

We resolve that, as stated in the Declaration of Independence, we are “endowed by our Creator” with these unalienable rights, NOT the government (Acts 17:28; Colossians 1:17).

We also resolve, that the First Amendment phrase, “congress shall make no law regarding...” states that the government has no rightful authority over those things but rather is *blocked* from infringing upon the rights of every American citizen.

We further resolve that these “self-evident” truths confirm our Founding Fathers’ belief in God’s general revelation, the concept that God, not man, is the source of stated universal principles and rights; and, therefore, it is to Him which we will one day give an account.