

The Riverside Church



*Interracial • International • Interdenominational
Open • Affirming • Welcoming*

The Riverside Church Statement Advocating for Issues of Domestic Concern

The mission of The Riverside Church is “to serve God through word and witness; to treat all human beings as sisters and brothers; and to foster responsible stewardship of all God’s creation.” In keeping with our mission, we are committed to using the resources God has given us to advocate human advancement with respect to domestic issues including: education, healthcare, civil/human rights, poverty, racism, employment, drug addiction, and equal opportunity. We will, therefore, provide leadership and join like minded advocates in removing barriers/challenges that deny respect for all humankind.

As we enter the twenty-first century, we witness the continuation and escalation of barriers that perpetuate inequality and chisels at the dignity of many of our brothers and sisters. At this time in history, our mission compels us to raise our voices in leadership and in partnership with others to break down these barriers and assure respect for the dignity of all humankind.

We therefore, in keeping with The Riverside Church’s “Prophetic Justice Principles for America,” recommit ourselves to goals such as:

Promoting immigration policies and practices that do not discriminate based on race, national origin or ethnicity

Maintaining the civil liberties/human rights guaranteed by our Constitution and legislation

Assuring equal access to healthcare including effective and humane treatment of people with mental illness

Eradicating barriers that deny respect of our brothers and sisters because of their race, religion, gender, ethnicity, nationality, age, economic or social status, physical or mental disability or sexual orientation

Supporting programs that work to assure educational opportunities for all people

Ending homelessness and providing decent, safe, and affordable housing for all people

Recasting national drug policy to emphasize public health and deemphasize reliance on penal remedies with financial priorities focusing on individualized treatment, education and reform of the criminal justice system

Advocating for full employment, living/prevailing wage and equal employment opportunity

Improving the financial well-being in a sustainable way for all people and supporting economic justice

Encouraging the enfranchisement and participation of all eligible voters and advocating broadening the base of the eligible voting population

Installing a welfare system that provides education/training and the resources to achieve sustainable self reliance

Halting racial profiling of minorities by law enforcement officials and other entities involved in security

Terminating the practice of negative imaging of minorities in the media

Bringing an end to the cycle of Black on Black crime

Reinforcing The Riverside Church Council's resolution endorsing same gender civil marriages adopted May 1997

Prophetic Justice Principles for America
The Rev. Dr. James A. Forbes, Jr.

We the members of faith communities in the United States, inspired by the Hebrew prophets, lift up the following questions to test public policy against the principles of righteousness and justice in our society. We ask the citizens and leaders of America to bear the following issues in mind as they seek to restore the spiritual, moral and democratic values upon which our nation was built.

1. Does the policy represent the common good of society rather than the interest of an elite few?

2. Is the policy based on a true analysis and does it disclose its true intention? How likely is the outcome to achieve its proposed purpose?

3. Does the policy hold the prospect of reducing the polarization and fragmentation of the society due to race, religion, class, gender, sexual orientation or national origin?

4. Does the policy have the capacity to be good news for the poor? Does it reverse the trend toward widening the gap between rich and poor?

5. Is the policy good for children, the elderly and the disadvantaged? Does it show sensitivity to the spirit of the golden rule?

6. Does the policy refrain from the arrogant assumption that the powerful have the right to ignore the interests and subsistence needs of the less advantaged segment of the society?

7. Does the policy provide for free press, free discussion and the expansion of dissent along with fair and just methods of participation in the democratic process?

8. Does the policy encourage respect for persons and nations other than our own? Does it respect the right of self-determination of other nation-states?

9. Is the policy based on commitment to a global vision of cooperation and mutuality of respect rather than relying on unilateral military actions for empire-building and domination strategies? Does it use diplomacy as a valued instrument of statecraft in resolving international conflicts?

10. Is the policy supportive of strong measures to insure ecological responsibility and sustainability?

Adopted at the Annual Meeting May 2005