

# The Riverside Church



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

## **The Riverside Church Statement Achieving Peace & Justice: An Alternative to War**

*From its founding, The Riverside Church has been involved in the struggle for global justice and peace. In this time in history, as the world strives to develop a response to violence, it is important to clarify our understanding of how God would have us respond. In brief, we take the following stands:*

- 1) Love is the path to justice. Responding to violence with violence only begets more violence.
- 2) Poverty and injustice are root causes of violence and should be the focus of our labors to eliminate violence.
- 3) All people, regardless of their own inhumanity to others, are children of God whose civil, political, and human rights must be respected.
- 4) People should not be discriminated against on the basis of their race, religion, gender, ethnicity, nationality, age, economic or social class, physical or mental disabilities, or sexual orientation, for any reason.

*In order to bring about a more peaceful world, we commit ourselves to the following:*

*1) Respond to violence in non-violent ways by:*

- Offering support to victims, offenders and their families through pastoral care and mediation.
- Opposing policies or practices that escalate militarism and violence.  
Respecting in love and friendship people of all faith traditions. Only through interfaith understanding and solidarity can true peace be established.  
Advocating for the use of words rather than violence
- as the means to a just and lasting peace.  
Encouraging all nations and communities to follow the example of South Africa in the use of Truth Reconciliation Commissions to restore peace and understanding.

*2) To eliminate poverty and injustice by:*

- Pledging our time & talent to assist individuals to improve their financial well being in a sustainable way.  
Acknowledging and confessing the harmful impact of those U.S. policies, which have resulted in death, oppression, and impoverishment.
- Giving priority to programs to eliminate hunger and thirst, unemployment, homelessness, illness, and early death worldwide.
- Placing people before profits through corporate accountability and fair trade in our economic policies.
- Advocating for a living wage for all workers.

- Advocating for the repudiation of debt in the developing nations as a step in creating just and sustainable economic relationships in the world.
- Encouraging governments and institutions to acknowledge past wrongs and address calls for reparations.
- Bringing our levels of consumption, especially oil, to a sustainable level following the principles of reduce, reuse, and recycle.

3) *To support full civil, political, and human rights for all by:*

- Opposing the inappropriate use of military tribunals.
- Supporting the use of the International Criminal Court System to try war criminals.
- Working to abolish the death penalty.
- Opposing the detention of immigrants who have not been charged with violent crimes.
- Opposing the expansion of surveillance and covert operations that target religious communities, civil rights leaders and organizations, which hold dissenting viewpoints.
- Reaffirming our commitment as a sanctuary church to provide safe haven.

4) *To end discrimination in all of its forms by:*

- Documenting, speaking out, and working to prevent hate crimes, which blame or scapegoat any group of people.
- Standing against racial profiling.
- Promoting equal rights and full participation for women wherever they may live.
- Promoting respect for those who are different from ourselves in regard to race, religion, gender, ethnicity, nationality, age, economic or social class, physical or mental disabilities, or sexual orientation through education and advocacy.

*Adopted by the Mission & Social Justice Commission on April 8, 2002.*

*Approved by the Church Council April 22, 2002*