

THE RIVERSIDE CHURCH STATEMENT ON TORTURE AND POLICIES ENABLING TORTURE

“Remember those who are in prison, as though you were in prison with them; those who are being tortured, as though you yourselves were being tortured.” – Hebrews 13:3 NRSV

WHEREAS: Torture, any conduct, whether physical or psychological, whether active or passive, which is likely to deny the inherent human value in any incarcerated person, violates the basic human dignity all religions hold dear. As Christians we are taught ‘*do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good*’ – *Romans 12:21*

WHEREAS: Torture degrades everyone involved – policy-makers, those represented by the policy-makers, perpetrators and victims.

WHEREAS: Torture contradicts our nation’s most cherished ideals and the rights of individuals during times of global conflict, which have long been protected under international law, such as the Geneva Conventions and those provisions of the United States’ Constitution such as the rights to confront the accuser and to habeas corpus.

WHEREAS: The Riverside Church’s existing resolution, “Achieving Peace & Justice: An Alternative to War,” opposes policies and practices that escalate militarism and violence and its Prophetic Justice Principles demand protection of the vulnerable, guard freedom of thought and discussion, respect other nations and peoples, and provide moral leadership.

WHEREAS: Both the American Baptist Churches, USA and the United Church of Christ have, as members of The National Religious Campaign Against Torture, resolved to end United States’ policies permitting torture.

LET IT BE RESOLVED THAT: The Religious Society of the Riverside Church:

Opposes the torture of human beings, in any form, with no exceptions.

Opposes, and will foster the repeal of, any policies, including the Military Commissions Act of 2006, that may tend to legalize or legitimize torture, violate provisions of the Geneva Conventions regarding torture, suspend or eliminate any Constitutional protection including the rights to confrontation and habeas corpus, protect torturers from prosecution of war crimes with such artifice as redefining “unlawful enemy combatant” to include legal immigrants or United States citizens.

Calls for cessation of extraordinary rendition and payment of reparations to current and former detainees and their families for violations of human rights.

Joins the National Religious Campaign Against Torture to participate in the leadership seeking to end United States policies permitting torture, and will display this Resolution on the Riverside Church website and disseminate it to political leaders and the media.