

## **A STATEMENT ABOUT GLOBAL SECURITY BY THE PENNSYLVANIA COUNCIL OF CHURCHES**

Christians believe that God is our security. In a world filled with threats and death, we need not fear because God is with us in Word and Spirit. Through Jesus Christ, we come to know God's blessings of forgiveness, truth, justice, peace, joy, laughter, love, healing, and release. We believe that we are called to respond to these divine gifts by embracing and healing God's creation and by witnessing to the security God offers as the framework for all of life.

And yet, we know that in this country we are still a protected people—many of us healthy, well-fed and employed. We know so little yet of buses that explode and buildings that collapse. We know so little of a world in which every drop of blood threatens our sense of security. We know so little of any life in which betrayal, ignorance, corruption, despair, horror, hate, suspicion, poverty, pain, hunger, thirst, or disease are as common as barbecues or trips to the grocery store. We know just enough to wonder what security would look like to those of God's children who aren't so comfortably placed.

Christians believe that God is our only hope. We believe that God is the creator of all families in the world. We see God as shepherd, host, rock, fortress, refuge, keeper, stronghold, father, mother, shade. Because in Jesus Christ we become one Body, and as sisters and brothers with all God's children, we come to know the sadness and violence that stand outside our experience and we become able to witness to what we all have received of comfort and grace.

As the Body of Christ, we are called to stand with all humankind in the search for justice. Christians are called, then, to embrace the security that God has given and to pursue the security that God intends for creation. We are called to treat others fairly and justly and to care about the safety of other people's children. We are called to feed the hungry, find shelter for the homeless, create jobs for the unemployed, and work for the day when poverty ends. We are called to turn our swords into plowshares, to love our enemies, to take those actions with other nations that will prevent future acts of terrorism, to stop the spread of weapons of mass destruction that threaten to undo God's creation, and to invest in productive lives rather than violent deaths.

Finally, to the extent to which our pursuit of security is motivated by fear instead of faith, or assumes power we do not have, or exchanges freedom for control, we call on God to move our hearts until the barriers which divide us crumble, suspicions disappear, and hatreds cease so that we might all live together in justice and peace.

Therefore, the Pennsylvania Council of Churches endorses the following Sensible, Multilateral, American Response to Terrorism (SMART) Security platform:

### **Prevent Acts of Terrorism and Future Wars by Working Cooperatively with Other Nations, Strengthening International Institutions and Supporting the Rule of Law.**

- Reject unilateral preemptive war as a means of resolving international conflict.
- Increase support for the United Nations and other international forums like the International Criminal Court that can root out terrorist networks, peacefully resolve conflicts, and bring terrorists to justice.
- Increase funding for humanitarian programs which address the root causes of instability and terrorism, like hunger, illiteracy and unemployment.

**Reject the Development of New Nuclear Weapons and Stop the Spread of Nuclear and Other Weapons of Mass Destruction.**

- Set an example for the rest of the world by renouncing the first use of nuclear weapons, the development of new nuclear weapons (“mini-nukes”), and the testing of nuclear weapons.
- Abide by the commitment made under the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), to the goal of “complete elimination of nuclear weapons”- starting by reducing U.S. and Russian stockpiles to no more than 1000 on each side.
- Increase funding for programs to secure Russian nuclear weapons and materials so they won’t fall into the hands of terrorists.
- Strengthen US commitment to international treaties like the Biological Weapons Convention and the Chemical Weapons Convention.

**Change Budget Priorities to Reflect Real Security Needs**

- End military spending for Cold War era weapons and invest those resources in strengthening local “emergency responders” (fire, police, public health infrastructure) as well as in urgent domestic needs for health care, education, jobs and the environment.
- Provide dramatic new investments in renewable and safe energy alternatives that will reduce U.S. dependence on foreign oil and the growing threat from global warming.
- Provide adequate peacekeeping and development, funding in troubled nations like Afghanistan and Iraq to secure long-term peace and stability.

Further, the Pennsylvania Council of Churches calls upon our elected leaders to support it as our nation’s policy for the future, and urges its member church bodies to join it in its endorsement.

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