



ICUJP

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MISSION OF
INTERFAITH COMMUNITIES UNITED
FOR JUSTICE AND PEACE

OUR REFLECTIONS ON JUSTICE AND PEACE

JANUARY 2002

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Agape International Spiritual Center
All Saints Episcopal Church – Pasadena
American Friends Service Committee
*Baptist Peace Fellowship
of North America*
California Peace Action
Calvary CME Church
*Center for the
Advancement of Nonviolence*
City of Angels URI-LA
*Clergy and Laity United
for Economic Justice*
*Coalition for Justice
in Hawaiian Gardens and Jerusalem*
Coalition For World Peace
Coalition LA
*Environment Justice and Peace –
United Methodist/Interfaith*
*Fellowship of Reconciliation –
Los Angeles*
*Immaculate Heart Community –
Peace and Justice Commission*
Jovenes, Inc
Masjid Ibaabilla
Mobilization for the Human Family
Office of the Americas
One Light International Inc
Pax Christi – Los Angeles
*Physicians for Social Responsibility –
Los Angeles*
*Southern California
Ecumenical Council*
*Southern Christian Leadership
Conference of Los Angeles*
*St. Camillus Catholic Church
for Pastoral Care*
St. Phillips Episcopal Church
The Regas Institute
*United University Church –
Peace Centre, USC*
ZCLA Buddha Essence Temple

Guiding Principles and Purpose

Interfaith Communities United for Justice and Peace, in which most of the world's great religions are represented, seeks to be an alternative voice to the "war on terrorism." These reflections on justice and peace are a living document, representing core values concerning the war on terrorism.

The enormity of the evil unleashed on America on September 11 demands a response; we should bring every terrorist to justice. Nevertheless, Interfaith Communities United for Justice and Peace represents a broad spectrum of people of faith who are deeply concerned that the cries for retaliation have led to a wider war.

Interfaith Communities United for Justice and Peace has built its response to the "war on terrorism" on four guiding principles that represent the core of our sacred traditions: (1) the power of love to overcome hatred; (2) the power of mercy to conquer vengeance; (3) the celebration of our common humanity and the sacredness of human life; and (4) our calling to build a just, equitable, and peaceful world.

The principles demand that we not bless war and that we not be silent in the face of an escalating spiral of violence and a voracious war-making system.

The War Has Not Been Successful

We are witnessing the world's greatest military power destroy one of the world's poorest nations, devastating an entire section of its population, and we are told that this war is very successful.

We do not regard the war as a success. We say it is immoral. We will devote our efforts to stopping the war, restoring the destroyed countries, and bringing justice to an impoverished people.

Violence can never be justified. We could have used careful, "restrained," targeted force to seize Osama bin Laden and bring him to trial at the World Court.



Strategic Initiatives for Peace

Interfaith Communities United for Justice and Peace proposes seven strategic initiatives that we believe are constructive and effective, rather than destructive and exacerbating, steps toward peace over the long term.

1. Stop The Bombing

U.S. aerial bombardment in Afghanistan has exacerbated humanitarian problems. Refusing to be part of an enterprise that contributes to more deaths and the deepening of human suffering, Interfaith Communities United for Justice and Peace propose a cessation of all bombing in Afghanistan and in the continued search for terrorists.

2. Support international peacekeepers and a world court

The United Nations is currently the only body prepared and empowered to act on behalf of the world community, and as such it should respond vigorously and strategically against terror with the full political, moral, and financial support of the United States but without the preemptive and unilateral control of the United States.

We support the creation of an effective peacekeeping police force under the control of the United Nations and the use of the World Court as the appropriate judicial body to conduct inquiries and trials of those accused of international terrorism.

3. Rid the world of weapons of mass destruction

We support adherence to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty of 1968, wherein the U.S. and other leading nuclear powers are enjoined to work toward general and complete disarmament.

4. Ensure economic justice for all citizens and all nations in the name of human solidarity

Creating a world safe from terrorists entails creating a world where the seedbeds of poverty, desperation, and powerlessness are eradicated. We must become the world's leader in ensuring economic, political, and social justice for the world's people.

In this interconnected world, our prosperity and freedom increasingly depend on the successful development of countries like Afghanistan. Winning the war on global poverty will require a more substantial commitment of resources from the developing nations over many years than the present war on terrorism. U.S. and other wealthy nations should forgive the debts owed to them by developing countries on the condition that they pursue sound economic policies.

5. Ensure economic justice for all in the U.S., especially America's children

a. Justice for children

One-fifth of our children grow up poor, one-third grow up ignorant, and millions are afflicted with poor health and have no medical insurance. We will push relentlessly for public policies that give priority to the well-being of children.

b. Justice for workers

Any economic stimulus package considered by U.S. legislators must give primacy to America's workers, and not be corporate giveaways to profitable corporations.



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6. Protect civil liberties

Already we have seen signs of the suppression of dissent and intensified incursions of the government into private communications. In the struggle against terrorism, we must not give up the civil liberties that have distinguished this nation through the centuries. President Bush's plan to use secret military tribunals to try terrorists is a travesty of justice.

7. Guard human rights

The crimes of September 11 must not be used as an excuse to engage in domestic campaigns against political opponents. Neither the U.S. government nor international agencies should be allowed to take advantage of the current crisis to justify or intensify crackdowns on political opponents or religious groups or to advance unwarranted or punitive policies against refugees, asylum-seekers, immigrants, and other foreigners.

Conclusion

Violence cannot yield peace. Peace is a result only of peaceableness. This is not passivity. Indeed, it is an active, courageous, rational, and intelligent response to violence, a response that explores and requires alternatives to the destructive and ultimately ineffectual means typically employed to resolve complex global problems.

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The full *Reflections* and
further reading can be found at:
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