



# MESSAGE FROM THE NATIONAL COUNCIL OF CHURCHES

This is an age of uncertainty. The confidence some had that human progress would do away with fear has now been replaced with a creeping dread. In the face of the complex global and local issues of our day, it is not surprising that security has become a key issue.

Reports of terrorism and war dominate the public consciousness. Racist violence, religious, political and ethnic persecution, poverty and hunger, and the abuse of women and children are pervasive. In our local communities, our families and our homes, security can feel threatened by those who are different from us, by financial pressure and by broken relationships. We are willing to go to great lengths to feel safe and secure.

We believe it is time for us to stop and think about where we should draw the line in our search for security. The 2004 Social Justice Sunday theme invites us to consider this issue at a critical point in our history.

Christians trust in Jesus Christ, and believe that he restored the relationship between God and the world. Jesus taught that security rests in God. He showed that it does not flow from wealth or power but from godly faith and justice. Like the prophets he also taught that the institutions and laws of religion do not establish our security. It is a gift received from the source and object of worship – God.

Only a self-obsessed society pursues security at all costs, with the result that the barriers that divide people from

each other and their natural environment grow higher and stronger. As long as we continue to arm our nations, suspicion and threat will increase. As long as we continue to exploit the environment for our own comfort, the future for our children and our planet will be uncertain and insecure.

Jesus came to tear down the barriers that separate people from each other. He sets the path of peace before us and calls his followers to live as neighbours with all people. Christians are called to love their enemies and to care for everyone with mercy and compassion, whatever their differences.

The path of faithful discipleship does not mean that we retreat from the difficulties of the world, but rather get involved in finding a better way. We are not called to avoid life and all its struggles but rather to take risks, standing up for what is just, acting as neighbour to those most in need and sharing the great love of God in all we do and say.

When we live securely in the presence of God, we seek the true security of all humankind, whom God loves and nourishes, and the security of the whole creation.

We encourage the members of our Churches to use the opportunity provided by Social Justice Sunday to reflect on how we seek security and to celebrate God's grace in our lives so that we might build communities of justice and peace in harmony with one another, and without fear.

---

**This statement has been endorsed as a public statement and for inclusion in the Social Justice Sunday kit 2004 by the following churches of the National Council of Churches in Australia:**

*Anglican Church of Australia  
Antiochian Orthodox Church  
Armenian Apostolic Church  
Assyrian Church of the East  
Churches of Christ  
Congregational Federation of Australia  
Coptic Orthodox Church  
Greek Orthodox Church  
Lutheran Church of Australia  
Religious Society of Friends  
Roman Catholic Church  
Romanian Orthodox Church  
Salvation Army  
Syrian Orthodox Church  
Uniting Church in Australia*