

Message from the National Council of Churches

Isaiah had a vision. He looked forward to the day when swords are beaten into ploughshares and spears into pruning hooks (Isa 2:4). This state of peace happens when nations enter God's house to learn God's ways and the Lord's word goes out from Zion.

Do we share Isaiah's vision? The Word has gone out from Zion - Jesus Christ, the epitome of justice, mercy and compassion. Justice, mercy and compassion are values also shared by all Australians, irrespective of their faith. These values must inform and shape our practice of global citizenship.

Social Justice Sunday 2007 is an invitation for all Australians, nationally and individually, to reflect on our conduct in the world. It is a time to review our relationships with our global friends and neighbours. It is a time to be reconciled with our enemies, real or perceived. Australia cannot achieve its security and prosperity alone as our security and prosperity are guaranteed only by the quality of our relationships with others.

Christians are global citizens and disciples of the one Lord. As citizens, we are concerned that Australia acts consistently and responsibly as a global citizen when dealing with other nations concerning matters of security, commerce, human rights and the environment globally. As disciples we carry in our souls the marks of God's Kingdom, knowing that Australia's security and prosperity can be achieved only by working together with justice, mercy and compassion.

We call on all Australians to consider how we might live as responsible global citizens. We believe that everyone has a right to live with security and prosperity. We believe that global security interests are best served through vibrant international partnerships, an unshakable commitment to human rights and nonviolence, and an unwavering effort to limit weapons proliferation, particularly cluster munitions, landmines

and small arms. We believe that fair and just trade will foster the economic interests of all nations. We believe that climate change requires a comprehensive response from all levels of government, business and individuals to live more prudently. It is time for Christians to show how God's justice, mercy and compassion can help Australia become a better global citizen.

This statement has been endorsed as a public statement for the Social Justice Sunday 2007 by the following churches of the National Council of Churches in Australia:

Anglican Church of Australia
Churches of Christ
Coptic Orthodox Church (Sydney Diocese and affiliated regions)
Lutheran Church of Australia
Roman Catholic Church
Syrian Orthodox Church
Uniting Church in Australia