



# Church Women United

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## **CHURCH WOMEN UNITED SUPPORT FOR THE INTERNATIONAL CRIMINAL COURT**

A Resolution Passed by Common Council in Special Session, August 25, 2005

WHEREAS Church Women United has a vigorous history of commitment to human rights, justice and peace and, since its founding in 1941, has declared on many occasions its vision of a global community in which justice and peace prevail and in which all persons enjoy the dignity and rights enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights; \*

WHEREAS the International Criminal Court reflects the profound hope of Church Women United that a global consensus is emerging about human rights and justice that was, long ago, revealed in God's promise in Biblical history and, like our spiritual ancestors, we glimpse a common and vibrant humanity underlying all of our separate identities;

WHEREAS today, that still awakening awareness of common humanity tragically falters in the chaos of terrorism and yet grows stronger in global humanitarian efforts and in acts of justice and reconciliation;

WHEREAS genocide and rape are grossly wrong and never should be dismissed as unfortunate mistakes of military or political policies;

WHEREAS the International Criminal Court addresses the large scale and notorious crimes that grossly violate a fundamental moral sensitivity reflected in the vision of a common humanity, a vision revealed in Jesus' life and teachings, in the history of Christian thought and in the moral laws of the great religions;

WHEREAS the International Criminal Court, now permanently located in The Hague, came into being in July 2002 when the required minimum of 60 nations ratified the treaty establishing the Court;

WHEREAS the Treaty, called the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court, was formulated on the basis of previous international agreements, such as the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights, on precedents established in the Nuremberg and Tokyo tribunals – in which the United States played major roles – and on more recent learning from the criminal tribunals for the former Yugoslavia and for Rwanda;

WHEREAS the United States was an influential participant throughout the negotiations that in 1998 led to the initial approval of the treaty by 120 nations and, to date, has resulted in ratification by nearly 100 nations, including most democratic nations worldwide;

WHEREAS the International Criminal Court (ICC), though initiated through the United Nations, is a fully autonomous international criminal court that will investigate and bring to justice

individuals who commit the worst crimes known to humanity, specifically the **crimes of genocide, war crimes and crimes against humanity**;

WHEREAS the ICC is not intended to replace national courts but rather to strengthen and complement them and will only undertake investigations and prosecutions of a case if the nation of the citizen accused cannot or will not hold the individual accountable;

WHEREAS, while in December 2000 the United States joined 138 other nations to become a signatory to the Rome Statute, thus indicating continuing participation but not necessarily readiness for ratification, in May 2002, in an unprecedented and hostile act, the Bush Administration severed all diplomatic contact with the emerging Court and withdrew the American signature from the Treaty and since then has sought to undermine the Court's credibility and international support;

WHEREAS a citizen of the United States would not be prosecuted by the ICC unless our government refused to make a good faith effort to investigate the alleged crime – and only if the allegation itself were the horrific claim of genocide, war crimes or crimes against humanity;

WHEREAS the Rome Statute resolves “to guarantee lasting respect for the enforcement of international justice” and safeguards the rights of persons accused of atrocities in ways that are compatible with the Constitution of the United States;

WHEREAS the International Criminal Court provides unprecedented protection and roles for victims, and fully respects the prior claims of jurisdictions that belong to courts within nations, limits the concept of punitive justice by prohibiting the death penalty and affirms the increasingly fruitful concept of restorative justice, wherein the restoration of relationships and accountability to victims and the community are essential;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that Church Women United will educate and advocate on behalf of the International Criminal Court, as an international institution that sustains the advancement of human rights and, within the norms of international law, supplants impunity with accountability concerning crimes of genocide, war crimes and crimes against humanity;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that we urge that, for reasons of moral leadership and national interest, the United States should, once again, fully participate in the shaping of the policies of the International Criminal Court,

AND, BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that we urge the President of the United States to restore our signature to the Treaty establishing the International Criminal Court and to cease efforts to undermine the Court's effectiveness and international support, and to prepare for eventual ratification by the Senate of the United States;

\* Refer to *Church Women United Social Policies 1941-2004* on the subjects of genocide (1948, 1956 and 1968), human rights (1949-1997), terrorism (1986) and violence (1999).