

Essential Christian Concepts



“Recognition of the inherent dignity of equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family is the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world.”

- *Preamble to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights*

1. Every human being is created in the image of God. We do not have rights simply because we exist, but because God chose to give us value, and therefore, rights. (Gen. 2; Matt. 25:31-28:18) This also means that all people are created with equal dignity and equal entitlement to share the benefits of God’s creation and God’s salvation. (Is. 25:6ff, 55:4ff)

2. The secular term “human rights” is consistent with the Christian understanding of human dignity through creation in God’s image and concretizes its consequences for human interaction. The Bible’s provisions for human intention are expressed by the concepts “justice” and “righteousness.” In Biblical terms this means caring for the weak, the poor, the oppressed, foreigners, and even enemies; and rendering just judgment. (Ex. 22:20ff; Deut. 10:18; Is. 1:17, 58:7; Lev. 19:15; Matt. 5-7:25-31ff etc.)

3. For Christians, the God centeredness of rights dictates that their focus is on the desire to serve others in accordance with the teachings of Christ. The Scriptures often point to the rights of both neighbors and strangers and the obligation of those in authority to act with justice. (Prov. 31:8-9; Luke 20:46-47)

Why the International Criminal Court?

- People of faith accept that legal order is necessary. Nevertheless, its prime objective should not only be punishment, but also rehabilitation, protection, compensation, and restitution for the offended.
- The International Criminal Court fights against human injustice and evil through rule of law, which is an essential prerequisite to promoting the reconciliation of peoples and communities.
- The International Criminal Court will provide an international judicial instrument capable of fulfilling the relevant concerns of the United Nations Charter, the International Bill of Human Rights, the Genocide Convention, and all relevant United Nations conventions for justice, peace, and compassionate order.



Buddhist, Hindu, Jewish, Muslim, and other faith-based views of the ICC will appear in forthcoming brochures.

The Faith-Based Caucus for the ICC is a member of the NGO Coalition for the ICC (CICC) and the American NGO Coalition for the ICC (AMICC)

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**The words for
“justice” and
“righteousness” are used
more than 800 times in the
Bible.**

**How can you support these
words here on Earth?**



***Faith-Based Caucus
for the
International Criminal
Court***

Faith-Based Brochure Series:

Christian Concepts



Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court

The ICC Statute was adopted in Rome in 1998 by 120 countries after several years of negotiations at the United Nations. 139 countries ultimately signed the ICC Statute and 89 states had ratified or acceded to it by February 2003. The ICC Statute came into force on July 1, 2002, following the required 60th ratification.



The ICC is supported by many states that have recently experienced severe crises as a result of ongoing impunity or attempts to try human rights violators within their domestic systems, including Argentina, Cambodia, Colombia, Croatia, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Nigeria, Paraguay, Peru, Sierra Leone, South Africa, and Uganda.



Why do we need the International Criminal Court?

There is no existing court like the ICC.

- Unlike the International Court of Justice, a UN organ that can only decide disputes between states, the ICC is a treaty-based criminal court that can only try individuals for designated crimes: genocide, serious war crimes, and crimes against humanity.

After many violent conflicts, states can remain caught in cycles of violence and retribution. Prosecuting individuals for atrocity crimes can:

- Achieve justice for the victims and for society and help create respect for the rule of law;
- Establish an accurate historical record; and
- Act as a deterrent to future criminals.



What else should you know about the ICC?

The ICC is designed as a court of last resort. The Court will defer to national proceedings – whether or not they lead to prosecution – except when the state in question has no functioning judicial system or is unable to act against vested interests because of political manipulation.



The US was involved with the ICC negotiations until early 2002 and made extensive contributions to the ICC Statute and its indispensable supplemental documents. These include provisions giving strong deference to national courts, due process rights drawn from the US Bill of Rights, an important role for the UN Security Council, and the definitions and elements of the ICC crimes.

