

The Statement - Evangelicals for Nuclear Reduction

Click Here for a PDF Matthew 5 Project: Evangelicals for Nuclear Reduction Summary 1. Introduction: As Bible-believing Christians, we recognize Christ's lordship over all areas of life. The end of the Cold War and the rise of global terrorist networks call for a renewed application of Jesus' lordship and our own best moral convictions to meet the challenges of our time. 2. Jesus Christ Commands Us to Go, Make Peace with Our Adversary: Matthew 5:21-26 is a command, not an option; the apostle Paul followed it; so must we. This is the central theme of our statement. 3. Jesus Christ is Lord Over Every Area of Life, in Our Relations with All the World: The sanctity of all human life created in the image of God includes all persons. The Holy Spirit empowers us to make our witness to even the remotest part of the earth. God is revealed in Christ and sovereign over the whole world. 4. Overcoming the Nuclear Threat Requires International Cooperation: Our church experience of getting adversaries to talk together, as well as the historical examples of North Korea, Libya, Iran, and sixteen nations that were persuaded not to develop nuclear weapons, show the realism in our context of Jesus' command to go talk with an adversary to make peace while there's time. 5. Governments Need International Checks and Balances: Government is part of God's good creation, but is also fallen and therefore in need of checks and balances, and respect for law. This applies also to governments that have the power to create enormous destruction. We honor our elders, who saw the devastating destruction of World War II, and dedicated themselves to creating international networks so that the scourge of war might be prevented. 6. Nuclear Weapons are a Physical and Moral Threat that Need International Agreement: Nuclear weapons are a physical threat to the survival of human life on earth. They are also a grave moral threat. Prominent national security experts have recently called for reducing and abolishing reliance on nuclear weapons, by verifiable international agreement, in order to enhance national security. This cannot be accomplished unilaterally; it requires international cooperation and verification. 7. A Call for Action: In order to safeguard life, liberty, community, and security for its own citizens and for the world, the United States must demonstrate moral leadership in protecting the human rights of the most vulnerable, strengthening the rule of law in the international community, and seeking diplomatic negotiations with allies and enemies alike. Christians should pray for our leaders and leaders of other nations. We urge churches to teach members ethics for discernment, including just peacemaking practices based on the teachings of Jesus, so they are well prepared to meet today's challenges in ways faithful to Christ. We encourage church groups to consider engaging in interfaith dialogue and witness, and in building international partnership with fellow Christians around the world. We call for governmental action to oppose the rise in global terrorism by working for international justice and peacemaking. We call for verifiable international reduction of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction. We affirm that overcoming the threat of global poverty, global warming, global terrorism, regional insecurity, and nuclear war requires international cooperation. We call for obedience to the Lordship of Christ in all that we do, including talking with an adversary and seeking to make peace.

1. Introduction 1.1 It has now been over twenty years since the National Association of Evangelicals published the first guidelines for evangelical engagement with matters of U.S. foreign policy and defense.[1] Since then, the threat of communist totalitarianism has largely dissipated, only to be replaced by the dangers posed by international terrorism and weapons of mass destruction. An adequate response requires international cooperation; we cannot do it alone. American evangelicals can demonstrate Jesus' ministry of reconciliation by listening to and learning from their evangelical sisters and brothers in Christ, in international partnership around the world. 1.2 From a statement in 1972 concerning "Religious Freedom Around the World," to "Guidelines: Peace, Freedom and Security Studies" in 1986, to more recent statements on religious persecution and human rights,[2] evangelical engagement with foreign policy has largely been based on the sanctity and dignity of human life as a gift of God, as well as religious freedom and other basic human rights. We identify with that tradition. We are grateful for the balanced and wise statement, "For the Health of the Nation," adopted unanimously by the board of the National Association of Evangelicals and signed by a very broad range of evangelical leaders, and for Toward an Evangelical Public Policy, on which that statement was based. They give us firm, biblically-based ground on which to stand. 1.3 As Bible-believing Christians we seek first and foremost to be followers of Jesus, and we believe in living his good news and sharing it with the world. We seek humility ourselves, and recognize that there may be differences on some details of our humble effort; yet we seek agreement on our basic message of reconciliation and international cooperation in line with Jesus' commands in Matthew 5:21-26. The gospel and the way of Jesus are sure; we need to obey them in ways that are concrete and not left suspended in abstract principles (Matthew 7:13-28). Therefore, we seek to discern concrete implications of our convictions, while recognizing room for mutually respectful discussion and disagreement. 2. Jesus Christ Commands Us to Go, Make Peace with Our Adversary. 2.1 In Matthew 5:21-26. Jesus commands that if we are about to give a gift to God at the altar, but become aware of anger between us and another, drop the gift there, go at once and make peace with that other. And if an adversary or enemy is taking us to court, make peace with that enemy quickly while there is still time. These are commands, imperatives, from Jesus; they do not depend on the other being someone who meets our approval. 2.2 These commands apply to fellow Christians and to enemies or adversaries in general. In Matthew 5:21-26, Jesus is teaching about relations with a brother, adelpho, which likely means a fellow believer, and relations with an adversary, antidiko, which means an enemy or opponent in general.[3] In Matthew 5:41, "if someone forces you to go one mile," Jesus is referring to Roman soldiers who compelled Jews to carry a pack one mile. In Matthew 5:43-45, "Love your enemies," Jesus was interpreting Leviticus 19:17-18, "love your neighbor as yourself," and answering the question, "Who is to be included in the

community of neighbors?’ His answer: Everyone to whom God gives sunshine and rain.[4] All are included by God, even our enemies. 2.3 Jesus’ concern was not only for peacemaking with fellow Christians, but with Rome as well—and the Jerusalem hierarchy. He went to Jerusalem, taught in the Temple area, talked directly with the Jerusalem hierarchy. They refused to repent, and instead plotted his crucifixion, and eventually plotted their rebellion against Rome. People’s concern about enemies especially included Romans who were occupying Israel. Jesus made peace with a Roman centurion (Matthew 8:5-13; 27:54-55; Mark 15:39; Luke 7:1-10 and 23:47). He wept over Jerusalem because they did not know the practices that make for peace, and warned in five passages in the Gospels that Jerusalem and the temple would be destroyed. His warning came true: Jerusalem and the Temple were destroyed, by the Romans, in 70 A.D., because instead of making peace with the Romans, Israel made war against them, and because Romans practiced punitive violence against rebels. 2.4 The apostle Paul’s letters regularly call on Christians to talk with one another and make peace. They begin and end with “grace” and “peace.” Paul says that while we were God’s enemies, God came in Christ to die for us and make peace with us (Romans 5:10). He is telling us that obeying Jesus’ command to make peace with enemies is participating in the way of grace that God has taken toward us in Christ, while we were God’s enemies. Paul called on Jewish and Gentile Christians in Rome who were not speaking with each other to “welcome one another, as Christ has welcomed you.” (Romans 15:7). 2.5 Paul did not limit peacemaking to fellow Christians. Being warned that going to Jerusalem would lead to his death, Paul nevertheless turned his face toward Jerusalem as his Lord, Jesus Christ, had done. He took actions to make peace with those in Jerusalem (Acts 17:21-26). When “the whole city” was aroused against Paul, and the Roman commander arrested him, he asked to speak to the commander, and made peace with him (Acts 21:30-40). Then he spoke to the crowd of his fellow Jews. Next he spoke to both the centurion and the commander, seeking to make peace with them (Acts 22:25-30). And when he got to Rome as a prisoner, he did not refuse to speak with the Jewish leaders, but worked “to convince them about Jesus from the Law of Moses and from the Prophets.” He “welcomed all who came to see him.” (Acts 28:17-31). Peacemaking was an integral part of Paul’s practice of evangelism, and evangelism was an integral part of his practice of peacemaking. “Grace and peace” are the way of faithfulness to Jesus Christ. 2.6 “For the Health of the Nation” declares: “The peaceful settling of disputes is a gift of common grace. We urge governments to pursue thoroughly nonviolent paths to peace before resorting to military force. . . . We urge followers of Jesus to engage in practical peacemaking locally, nationally, and internationally. As followers of Jesus, we should, in our civic capacity, work to reduce conflict by promoting international understanding and engaging in nonviolent conflict resolution.”[5] Toward an Evangelical Public Policy declares: “A key test of the seriousness of governments’ claims to be seeking peace is whether they initiate negotiations or refuse them and whether they develop imaginative solutions that show they understand their adversary’s perspectives and needs. Jesus said that when there is anger between us and another, we must drop everything, go to the other, and make peace. It is a command, not an option (Matt. 5:23ff.)”[6] 3. Jesus Christ is Lord Over Every Area of Life, in Our Relations with All the World 3.1 In the past, some have made a split between one area of life where Jesus’ lordship applies, and other areas where Jesus’ lordship does not apply. But we welcome a quiet Reformation happening in our time, when many are growingly sincere about seeking to follow Jesus in all of life. “For the Health of the Nation” states clearly that “Jesus is Lord over every area of life. To restrict our political concerns to matters that touch only on the private and the domestic spheres is to deny the all-encompassing Lordship of Jesus (Rev. 19:16)”[7] Jesus teaches no Platonic split between the spiritual and the real. How we live our lives in the world—in all of life—is a spiritual matter.[8] 3.2 Therefore, we affirm a principled commitment to following Jesus in seeking out an adversary, and seeking to make peace—in all areas of life. We want to try to understand what motivates our adversary, and be willing to talk about reasons for the antagonism, instead of hating our adversary and avoiding all conversation. We recognize that different kinds of talk are appropriate in different contexts. It may include a clear and realistic warning of consequences of present action. When British Prime Minister Chamberlain talked with Hitler at Munich prior to World War II, he should have warned with unmistakable clarity of the realistic consequence of war with England, France, and the United States, and also with The Soviet Union—terrible devastation for Germany. The error at Munich was not that Chamberlain talked with Hitler; it was what he failed to say. When U.S. Ambassador April Glaspie talked with Saddam Hussein prior to Iraq’s attack on Kuwait that set off the first Gulf War, she should have been instructed to make clear that attacking Kuwait would bring about war with the United States and its allies. And she should have urged both Iraq and Kuwait to practice conflict resolution and ask for international cooperation in resolving Iraq’s claims that Kuwait was stealing Iraqi oil, owed payments to Iraq, and was blocking Iraqi access to its seaport. Talk may sometimes need to be blunt, but it should always be based on listening and trying to understand what is motivating our adversary. 3.3 This applies to all persons. We affirm the basic conviction of the sacredness of all human life in “An Evangelical Declaration on Torture: Human Rights in an Age of Terror”: The sanctity of life is the conviction that all human beings, in any and every state of consciousness or self-awareness, of any and every race, color, ethnicity, level of intelligence, religion, language, nationality, gender, character, behavior, physical ability/disability, potential, class, social status, etc., of any and every particular quality of relationship to the viewing subject, are to be perceived as sacred, as persons of equal and immeasurable worth and of inviolable dignity. Therefore they must be treated with the reverence and respect commensurate with this elevated moral status. This begins with a commitment to the preservation of their lives and protection of their basic rights. Humans are given life by the breath of God (Gen. 2:7) and are made in the image of God (Gen. 1:26-28). The imago Dei serves as a common denominator for all of humanity. Every human being, therefore, deserves respect. . . . Ultimately, it is the Cross of Jesus Christ that demonstrates how much God values human life. God-in-flesh dies, at human hands, for human beings who do not love him and are not worthy of his costly sacrifice. “While we were yet sinners, Christ died for

us.”[9] 3.4 As evangelicals, we take seriously Jesus’s call to make disciples of all nations (Matt. 28:18-20). Every human being, created by God, deserves to hear the good news of Jesus Christ, no matter how much they have rebelled against God or committed crimes against humanity. We should never treat anyone as beyond the reach of the Holy Spirit to bring conviction, conversion, change, and redemption. Even though the apostle Paul had formerly terrorized Christians, his heart was changed when he encountered Jesus on the road to Damascus (Acts 9). He then crossed boundaries of all kinds to preach that no person is beyond the reach of God’s love, grace, mercy, and redemption. As Christians we refuse to dehumanize our enemies or deny that they, too, have been created in the image of God. Every opponent is a potential brother or sister in Christ. Christians hold “a conviction that changed people and transformed communities are possible.”[10] 3.5 In Acts 1:8 Jesus said to his disciples, “you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even in the remotest part of the earth.” Evangelicals believe that Jesus calls us to follow him and empowers us to be faithful as we share his good news with the world. Doing what Jesus calls us to do is not always easy: to share our resources with those in need (Acts 2:45), to talk with our enemies (Matthew 5:21-26), or to “obey God rather than people” (Acts 5:29). However, we believe that we are led and enabled by the Holy Spirit to live out authentic and transformative faith humbly in a conflicted world. 3.6 Luke describes Jesus as “led by,” having “the power of,” and “full of”; the Holy Spirit (Luke 4:1, 14). Before Jesus began his ministry he quoted Isaiah and applied it to himself, “The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to release the oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor” (Luke 4:18-19). Jesus claimed that this included foreign military leaders like Naaman the Syrian in Elisha’s time. That angered his audience so much they tried to kill Jesus (Luke 4:20-30). 3.7 Our worldwide witness to the gospel of Jesus Christ is truer and more persuasive when we are making a peacemaking witness than when we appear to stand for antagonism toward other nations. The disciples knew Jesus called them not to make war against Rome, but to spread the gospel with love. That was a far more faithful and effective witness strategy in the Roman Empire then, than to make a war against Rome as Israel did in 66 A.D., and it is a far better missiological strategy for us now. As citizens of the kingdom of heaven (Phil. 3:20), reconciled to God through the atoning life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ, we are called as Christians to be ambassadors of Christ in spreading the message of reconciliation to the world (2 Cor. 5:16-20). 4. Overcoming the Nuclear Threat Requires International Cooperation 4.1 A major threat in our time is that a rogue nation or an uncontrolled nation will develop nuclear weapons, and a nuclear weapon will fall into the hands of terrorists, who will then create horrible destruction. In a July 2006 interview with Religion and Ethics Newsweekly, evangelist Franklin Graham stated, “I want to encourage the president, I want to encourage this administration, those in Congress—we need to talk to the North Koreans face to face, period. Eyeball to eyeball. And there is a lot that can be accomplished if we simply just do that.” Saddleback Pastor Rick Warren said of last July’s North Korean missile tests: “I am not a politician. I am a pastor. But I do know that in any conflict—whether in a marriage, in business or between nations—as long as the parties keep talking, there is hope. My plea to everyone involved in this diplomatic process is to please, keep talking.” 4.2 Franklin Graham and Rick Warren are here pleading for what is faithful to the Lordship of Christ and what is urgently needed in a world threatened by nuclear weapons. The validity of Jesus’s way of talking directly to make peace was recently demonstrated by the very effort to persuade North Korea not to develop nuclear weapons that they were urging. Initially, neither the Clinton nor the Bush administration agreed to talk with North Korea. Instead they both relied on threats. North Korea responded by building what they called a nuclear deterrent against possible U.S. attack. They produced enough plutonium for perhaps ten nuclear bombs and tested one bomb in October, 2006. Wiser heads in both administrations saw that refusing to talk was not working. Former president Jimmy Carter in 1994, and U. S. Assistant Secretary of State Christopher Hill in 2007, each talked directly with North Korean negotiators. They quickly worked out solutions. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice and President Bush have affirmed the result of the 2007 talks, North Korea’s Yongbyon reactor is closed down, international inspectors are monitoring it, and removing the plutonium is in prospect. Talking works better than merely threatening while refusing to talk. 4.3 Similarly, Libya continued its pursuit of chemical, biological, and nuclear weapons for several years. Only after quiet, direct engagement with U.S. and British officials for over a decade, and offers of normalized trade and diplomatic relations, an end to sanctions, and increased foreign investment, did Libya agree in December 2003 to renounce these weapons. 4.4 Ever since the Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty of 1968, there have been many successes in persuading nations not to develop nuclear weapons. In those forty years, only India and Pakistan have developed nuclear weapons. North Korea, Brazil, Argentina, Libya, South Korea, and South Africa began to, but each was persuaded to reverse course. The two authoritative studies of these cases conclude that the keys to the decisions of sixteen nations that decided not to develop nuclear weapons were direct talks, international nonproliferation agreements, the international consensus against nuclear proliferation, and awareness that nuclear weapons are not very useful. In not a single case were nations motivated to avoid going nuclear because the United States or some other nation refused to talk with them. It was just the reverse; other nations did talk with them, made clear the penalties they would pay if they developed nuclear weapons, and guaranteed support for their security if they stayed with international cooperation.[11] 4.5 What has persuaded these countries not to develop nuclear weapons? The biggest factor is confidence in support from the United States or another major nation that makes acquiring a nuclear deterrent unnecessary, combined with awareness that neighbors would react negatively if they went nuclear. “Misgivings and concerns about the long-term direction of U. S. policy on global strategy and nuclear policy are, and will continue to be, the single most decisive factor guiding the direction of would-be proliferators. . . . U. S. policies regarding the development, testing, and use of its nuclear weapons. . . may well affect their perceptions of the long-term viability of the nonproliferation regime.”[12] Treaties exist banning testing of nuclear weapons, banning production of chemical weapons, banning land mines, and banning production of fissionable uranium and plutonium for

nuclear weapons. We urge the United States to support such treaties.[13] 4.6 Ever since the Iranian hostage crisis during the Carter administration, the U. S. government has refused to talk with the Iranian government. But in May, 2006, President Bush and his aides wisely reached the decision to offer conditional talks to Iran. "Mr. Bush's search for a new option was driven, they say, by concern that the path he was on two months ago would inevitably force one of two potentially disastrous outcomes: an Iranian bomb, or an American attack on Iran's facilities." [14] Therefore, U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice announced on May 31, 2006 that the United States would join multilateral talks with Iran on its nuclear program "once Iran suspends disputed nuclear activities. Kazem Jalali, spokesman for the Iranian parliament's Foreign Policy and National Security Committee, said the U.S. move might be viewed positively in Tehran if preconditions were dropped." [15] 4.7 To give in to the U.S. demand that they suspend enrichment of uranium even before talks begin is very difficult in a culture that values honor. It would mean giving up the right to enrich uranium for generating electricity—a right universally recognized for other nations. David Isenberg writes in *Defense News*: "After all, nearly 30 years after the 1979 revolution, we need to consider what the policy of no official U.S. dialogue with Iran has achieved in terms of influencing Iranian behavior. In a word: nothing." [16] Howard Baker, Secretary of State in the first Bush administration, pointed out that despite major disagreements, the United States and the Soviet Union talked directly many times, helping us avoid nuclear war and achieve a peaceful end to the Cold War. Former U. S. foreign policy officials, both Republican and Democratic, including Zbigniew Brzezinski, William Perry, Henry Kissinger, Madeline Albright, Richard N. Haass, and Richard L. Armitage, support direct US-Iranian unconditional negotiations. 59% of Americans support negotiations even if Iran refuses to suspend enrichment. [17] 4.8 In the spring of 2003 Iran offered to grant formal recognition to Israel, and to cut off assistance to Palestinian armed groups and pressure them to halt terrorist attacks within Israel's 1967 borders, and a "stop of any material support to Palestinian opposition groups (Hamas, Jihad, etc.)" along with "pressure on these organizations to stop violent actions against civilians within [Israel's] borders of 1967." They offered to accept much tighter controls by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) in exchange for "full access to peaceful nuclear technology," with access to any facility IAEA inspectors would request, making cheating much more difficult. [18] Is this offer real, or is it propaganda? The only way to tell is to sit down and talk, and then verify the results. "Trust but verify," as President Reagan used to say. 4.9 The United States has crucial disagreements with Iran, but Jesus does not say talks should be refused until we approve of the conduct of the adversary. A *New York Times* editorial by Thomas Friedman [19] asks which nation produced fifteen of the nineteen hijackers on 9/11, has helped fund both the Taliban and Al Qaeda, has most of its population hostile to the U.S., has a dictatorship without democracy, and severely restricts women's rights and religious freedoms? On the other hand, which nation actively helped the United States defeat the Taliban, has one of the most progressive and forward-looking populations, does hold a form of democratic elections, affords its women more rights and freedom than many other Islamic countries, and is asking for broad negotiations to establish friendly relations? The dictatorial nation is Saudi Arabia, an ally of the U. S. government. The democratic nation is Iran. Friedman advocates opening up talks. 4.10 Jesus is the realist. Talking with Iran, as with Libya and North Korea, may bring surprising peace. Or at least avoid horrible war perpetrated on millions of God's loving creation—mothers, fathers, brothers, sisters, and children. Similarly, we observe that on July 27, 2007, thirty-four evangelical Christian leaders in the United States wrote supporting a reinvigorated push for Israeli-Palestinian negotiations to achieve a lasting peace in the region. [20] They urged new efforts to utilize the vast influence of America to demonstrate creative, consistent and determined U.S. leadership to create a new future for Israelis and Palestinians. (What such talks might or might not produce is beyond the scope of our call for obedience to Matthew 5:21-26. All we are pointing to is the wisdom in Jesus's command.) 4.11 In light of Jesus's teachings, we call on our nation to be willing to talk with and listen to antagonists. Talking is often helpful for avoiding war, and for curtailing nuclear weapons programs. International cooperation is also a necessary component toward making progress on other global issues that evangelicals care about. Reducing global poverty requires coordinated efforts between international agencies like the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, nongovernmental service and development agencies like World Vision, and governments, to eliminate oppressive third world debt, provide relief and development projects, and encourage economic and political reform. Similarly, advocacy for human rights, democracy, religious freedom, and creation care cannot be achieved by one nation acting alone. 5. Governments Need Checks and Balances 5.1 With Romans 13:1-7 and Colossians 1:15-20, we affirm that government, and powers and authorities, were created with Christ as their head. They were created for good, for justice, for peace and reconciliation. With Revelation 13 and Colossians 2:15, we also affirm that government and the powers and authorities are fallen. They crucified Christ, and then God "disarmed the principalities and powers and made a public example of them, triumphing over them" in Christ. "We know that since the Fall, people often abuse power for selfish purposes. As Lord Acton noted, power tends to corrupt and absolute power corrupts absolutely." [21] Hence the prophets of Israel frequently confronted governments for their injustice, and Jesus confronted the reigning powers in Jerusalem for their injustice. Government is good; but it also needs to be kept accountable to its God-given tasks of promoting justice and correcting wrongdoing. Since governments are not immune from the effects of human sinfulness, Christians will oppose idolatrous claims to absolute authority or policies that violate biblical teachings of justice. The only one without sin and able to command our complete and absolute obedience is Jesus Christ. 5.2 Therefore, the historic wisdom of the United States has been to build checks and balances where there is concentration of power. We know that a profound biblical understanding that we all sin demands more than trust in particular individuals to rule. "We thank God for a constitutional system that decentralizes power through the separation of powers, fair elections, limited terms of office, and division among national, state, and local authorities." [22] 5.3 America has enormous power economically, culturally, and militarily. The U.S. economy is over three times the economy of second-place Japan, and U.S. military spending exceeds the combined military budgets of the next 16 countries. In light of the warnings of the Bible and the founders of our nation that

concentrated power needs checks and balances, this enormous U. S. power needs the checks and balances of talking with and listening to other nations. Realistic awareness that all sin and fall short of the glory of God (Romans 3:23) tells us we all sometimes need checks and balances against rash action. Other nations do; so does the United States. 5.4 With power comes temptation to use the power in inappropriate ways. Christians in America, therefore, must call America to use its power for the mutual benefit and restraint of the family of nations, and to show respect where possible for the wisdom of treaties, laws, and other nations. In our globally interconnected world, this wisdom is spreading internationally: the treaties to which America has added its name, and international organizations, serve as checks and balances, so that governments are less likely to act rashly or unjustly. We reject world government, but we encourage the facilitation of dialogue, trust-building, and working together for the common good. 5.5 Historic wisdom also includes the principle of government as the rule of law rather than the whim of rulers. Repeatedly the Old Testament teaches that kings are subject to the rule of law, and law is not merely the whim of the ruler, but is based on God's will for justice, which is above all rulers. Hence the prophets of Israel had a strong basis for confronting unjust rulers.[23] Because of the dramatic increase in world trade, the internationalization of finance and economies, the dramatic increase in communication, media, email, and plane travel among nations, the increase of immigration and emigration, the spread of support for human rights, and awareness of the need to prevent war, nations have worked together to develop international law, especially in treaties, embedded by U.S. ratification as the law of our own land. The United States benefits greatly from a world of relative order and justice rather than anarchy and war. 5.6 As evangelicals who know biblical teachings about the depth of sin, we want our nation to be law-abiding. We have a much more just and peaceful world in which to live, to travel, and to share our witness, if we have a world in which our nation and other nations respect international law. Religious liberty is more respected in a world of international law and human rights than a world of naked and unchecked power. Furthermore, many people confuse American policies with Christian faith; we do not want reactions against our witness to the gospel of Jesus Christ. 5.7 "For the Health of the Nations" declares: "As Christians we confess that our primary allegiance is to Christ, his kingdom, and Christ's worldwide body of believers, not to any nation. God has blessed America with bounty and with strength, but unless these blessings are used for the good of all, they will turn to our destruction. . . . We must also balance our natural affection for our country with a love for people of all nations and an active desire to see them prosper. We invite Christians outside the United States to aid us in broadening our perspectives on American life and action." [24] 5.8 Many of our parents, grandparents, and great grandparents saw the devastating destruction of World War II. When they returned from that war, they dedicated themselves to creating international networks in order to enhance national security. Those war-preventing networks include practices of conflict resolution, treaties, trade relationships, the Marshall Plan, regional organizations like NATO and the Organization of American States, the European Union, and the United Nations—all imperfect, as the U.S. Congress is imperfect—but all serving as partial checks and balances against rash action by imperfect national governments. These, along with international law, have worked to prevent World War III and nuclear war. Political scientists report that nations cooperating actively in this web of security have experienced less war than other nations.[25] We honor the wisdom of our elders who were a part of that "greatest generation," who worked to build these international networks of security so we would not have to fight a world war again. 6. Nuclear Weapons are a Threat to National Security and Morality 6.1 We know about the sudden destruction of lives and homes by two "small" atomic bombs in Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 1945. Therefore, we can partly imagine the tragic and immoral outcome of an attack with nuclear bombs somewhere else. If nuclear bombs kill millions of lives, in another country or in our own country, we would lack words for describing what we know and feel about the wrongness of that devastation to sacred human lives, loved by God. Surely those words have to include "horrible sin," and "the work of Satan." 6.2 Nuclear weapons are a physical threat. By intention, by accident, or by escalation of war out of control, they could kill millions and even billions of human beings created in the image of God, whose lives are sacred to God and to their families. The United States and the Soviet Union still have thousands of nuclear weapons. England, France, China, India, Pakistan, and unofficially Israel, have far fewer—but still enough to do horrible, unimaginable destruction of sacred human lives. If a terrorist gets one, we are in greater danger. 6.3 Nuclear weapons are also a moral threat. Possessing them includes preparing to use them. Some presidential candidates tell us these weapons need to be "on the table," a euphemism that could anesthetize our moral convictions so we might be ready to use them. Presidents are given possession of "the football"—the communication device that orders them to be detonated over the lives of our fellow human beings. Military are trained in the routines to fire them off; and trained that it would be their duty actually to do so. In this way, nations are nudged toward acting as if they believed it would be right to kill millions or billions of people for whom Christ died. Such preparation, given the sinfulness that the use of nuclear weapons would be, is tantamount to a discipline toward sinfulness, the inverse of sanctification. 6.4 Love of self and kin leads us to work to reduce nuclear weapons, since so long as they exist, they may be used against ourselves. The longer they exist, and the more of them there are, the greater that chance becomes. The fact that only a few nations have nuclear weapons is due to international support for the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty of 1968. The NPT is a bargain: the non-nuclear weapons states agreed not to acquire them, and the nuclear weapons states agreed to eliminate their own arsenals in due course. Good-faith efforts for step-by-step reductions influences other nations to keep that treaty. If not, and if more nations get nuclear weapons, their spread to a terrorist group is much more likely. 6.5 Because the use of nuclear weapons inflicts indiscriminate damage and death, because their fallout cannot be controlled and they thus cannot adequately minimize civilian casualties, because they poison the land and destroy infrastructure necessary for post-bellum recovery, and because a single instance of their use may cause rapid escalation into nuclear war and legitimize their widespread use, they violate the command to love our neighbors as ourselves. 6.6 Just war theory has been most developed in the Catholic tradition. Six years before the end of the Cold War, The U. S. Catholic Bishops issued an influential moral

assessment of nuclear weapons and churches' responsibilities.[26] The bishops affirmed both the tradition of nonviolence and the tradition of just war theory as authentic faith responses for Christians, and then also called for the development of a positive theology of peacemaking, which has come to be called just peacemaking theory. Toward an Evangelical Public Policy similarly affirms these three traditions in Christian ethics. 6.7 Based on just war theory the bishops conclude: "Under no circumstances may nuclear weapons or other instruments of mass slaughter be used for the purpose of destroying population centers or other predominantly civilian targets." Nor should "limited nuclear war" be initiated. "Commanders operating under conditions of battle probably would not be able to exercise strict control; the number of weapons used would rapidly increase, the targets would be expanded beyond the military, and the level of civilian casualties would rise enormously. . . . The chances of keeping use limited seem remote, and the consequences of escalation to mass destruction would be appalling. . . . The danger of escalation is so great that it would be morally unjustifiable to initiate nuclear war in any form. . . . It involves transgressing a fragile barrier—political, psychological, and moral—which has been constructed since 1945." The bishops strongly support a policy of "no first use." They conclude: "We therefore express our view that the first imperative is to prevent any use of nuclear weapons, and our hope that leaders will resist the notion that nuclear conflict can be limited, contained, or won in any traditional sense." [27] 6.8 Moreover, nuclear weapons require a major investment of human resources. The allocation of such resources toward weapons whose use would be categorically sinful is all the more unconscionable in the face of the world's desperate need for relief from poverty, illness, and other systemic issues. This led Pope Benedict XVI to urge nuclear disarmament: The resources which would be saved could then be employed in projects of development capable of benefiting all their people, especially the poor." [28] 6.9 But can we do anything about it? An influential editorial by seventeen conservative U.S. former national security policy-makers, including George P. Shultz, William J. Perry, Henry A. Kissinger, and Sam Nunn, declared that the existence of large numbers of nuclear weapons in the world threatens to destroy untold numbers of humankind; and it decreases U.S. security. Today's problem is not deterring the Soviet Union, but preventing proliferation of nuclear weapons into potentially dangerous hands. Therefore, continuing Cold-War reliance on nuclear weapons is a grave danger to U.S. security as well as world security. The United States would be far more secure in a nuclear-free world. The power of the U.S. military to deter a conventional attack is more effective than nuclear weapons are against a nuclear attack. This means that if Christians work toward eliminating nuclear weapons, we have influential allies. 6.10 These conservative national security experts advocate specific steps: reducing the size of nuclear forces internationally, ratifying the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty, halting production internationally of fissile materials for weapons, and redoubling efforts for resolving regional conflicts. The more worldwide reductions in nuclear weapons are achieved, the safer we all are. But unilateral disarmament would not solve the problem. It must be achieved by international cooperation and agreement. We have to talk. 7. A Call for Action 7.1 In order to safeguard life, liberty, community and security for its own citizens and for the world, the United States must demonstrate moral leadership in protecting the human rights of the most vulnerable, strengthening the rule of law in the international community, and seeking diplomatic negotiations with allies and enemies alike. Injustice and broken relationships undermine security and expose the most vulnerable to loss of religious freedom, economic opportunity, and political participation. They foster conditions easily exploited by terrorist and totalitarian ideologues. 7.2 As Christians, we commit ourselves to pray for our nation's leaders and for the leaders of other nations "so that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and dignity" (1 Tim. 2:1-2). 7.3 We call on churches to engage in the practice of teaching for discernment. We advocate that churches teach the three approaches to the ethics of peace and war summarized in Toward an Evangelical Public Policy so that church members are not left without Christian criteria for guidance as wars and rumors of wars roll over us. Churches can help members stand firm in Christ and not get blown about by every shifty wind of ideology (Ephesians 4:14). 7.4 We encourage church members to engage in the practice of participating in a small group with an inward journey of prayer and study and an outward journey of witness in the world. The witness may be mentoring youth, working to overcome poverty and world hunger, planting churches, supporting human rights, care of the creation, reconciliation and peacemaking, or other forms of witness outlined in Toward an Evangelical Public Policy. 7.5 Churches might consider the practice of respectful interfaith listening and sharing focused on peacemaking practices. In our time of interreligious tension, churches might organize a series of meetings with persons from another faith in which we study peacemaking practices taught by each others' scriptures, asking how each practices those teachings. The ground for sharing our own faith is much better prepared by showing respect for others' faiths, and by developing relationships of trust. 7.6 We will examine our own lives to see how we might be better stewards of the gifts that God has given us. We will limit our consumption of the earth's resources so that others will have greater access to them. We will seek to make economic and political choices that contribute to greater justice for the poor and the vulnerable in our own nation and around the world. 7.7 As Christians, we seek to express our citizenship in ways that prioritize faithfulness to biblical standards of justice and protection of the weak, rather than allowing our political decisions to be driven by prejudice, racial/ethnic injustice, or narrow nationalism. We commit ourselves to build international partnership with fellow Christians around the world. 7.8 As citizens, we call for our government to oppose the current rise in global terrorism as a threat to human rights and a violation of the sanctity of human life. Finding terrorist networks, cutting off their funding, arresting them, and, most importantly, creating a society and culture of justice and peacemaking in which potential recruits are discouraged rather than encouraged to become terrorists, depends on international cooperation by many nations. International problems require international solutions. Terrorist networks, global poverty, and causes of global warming are present in many nations; overcoming them requires international cooperation. We call on our government to exercise moral leadership by strengthening adherence to international law, and to uphold international treaty agreements. 7.10 We give thanks that since the end of the Cold War, the United States and the Soviet Union have made helpful reductions in the size of their nuclear arsenals. This has been bipartisan U. S. policy. We are all safer for it. We urge international

cooperation in continued step-by-step reductions, working toward ways to verify abolition of nuclear weapons worldwide. We urge halting production of additional fissile materials for nuclear weapons internationally, and support for a treaty to achieve that cutoff with inspections and verification. We urge support for verification procedures for the existing treaty banning chemical weapons. 7.11 We urge redoubling efforts for resolving regional conflicts generally, including peace and justice for the Middle East. This will include a willingness to enter into talks with adversaries, with respect though not with agreement to all that adversaries demand. Regional security is crucial for persuading nations to refrain from developing nuclear weapons or making war with conventional weapons. 7.12 Finally, we call for obedience to the Lordship of Christ in all that we do. When we experience anger with a brother or a sister, we will go talk and seek to make peace, as Jesus calls us to do.

[1] Guidelines: Peace, Freedom and Security Studies (PFS), (National Association of Evangelicals, 1986). [2] Recent examples include the “Statement of Conscience Concerning Worldwide Religious Persecution” (1996), “Second Statement of Conscience Concerning Worldwide Religious Persecution with Special Examination of Sudan and North Korea” (2002), and “An Evangelical Declaration Against Torture” (2007). The themes are also prominent in Ronald J. Sider and Diane Knippers, eds., *Toward An Evangelical Public Policy* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2005), and “For the Health of the Nation: An Evangelical Call to Civic Responsibility” (2004). [3] William F. Arndt and F. Wilbur Gingrich, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1957), 73. [4] Ronald J. Sider and Diane Knippers, eds., *Toward an Evangelical Public Policy* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2005), 284-292. [5] “For the Health of the Nation,” 11, http://www.nae.net/images/content/For_The_Health_Of_The_Nation.pdf. [6] *Toward an Evangelical Public Policy*, 303. In the ethic of just peacemaking, this is called “cooperative conflict resolution.” See *Just Peacemaking: The New Paradigm for the Ethics of Peace and War*, 3rd ed. (Cleveland: Pilgrim Press, 2008), chapter 3. [7] “For the Health of the Nation,” 2. [8] Ronald Sider, *One-Sided Christianity*. [9] “Evangelical Declaration on Torture: Human Rights in Age of Terror,” 2-3, 4, <http://www.evangelicalsforhumanrights.org/Declaration.pdf> [10] “For the Health of the Nation,” 3. [11] Kurt Campbell, Robert Einhorn, and Mitchell Reiss, eds, *The Nuclear Tipping Point: Why States Reconsider Their Nuclear Choices* (Brookings: 2004), 329-30. Mitchell Reiss, *Without the Bomb: the Politics of Nuclear Nonproliferation* (NY: Columbia University, 1988), 263-268. [12] *Ibid.*, 21, 27, and 323. [13] Mark Wheelis, Malcolm Dando, and Catherine Auer, “Back to Bioweapons?” *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists* 59:1 (January/February, 2003), 40-47 [14] Helene Cooper and David E. Sanger, “With a Talk Over Lunch, a Shift In Bush's Iran Policy Took Root,” *New York Times*, June 4, 2006. [15] David Isenberg, “Talk is Win-Win,” *Defense News*, July 17 2006, p. 76. [16] *Ibid.* [17] “Americans Distrust Iran, But Back Talks,” Fox News poll 20 June 2006. www.angus-reid.com/polls/index.cfm/fuseaction/viewItem/itemID/12283. [18] Gareth Porter, “Iran Proposal to U.S. Offered Peace with Israel,” *Inter Press Service*, May 25, 2006. [19] Thomas L. Friedman, “Not-So-Strange Bedfellow,” *The New York Times*, January 31, 2007. [20] Letter to President Bush From Evangelical Leaders, *The New York Times*, July 29, 2007. [21] *Ibid.*, 367. [22] *Ibid.*, 367. [23] *Toward an Evangelical Public Policy*, 157-158. [24] “For the Health of the Nation,” 368. [25] Glen Stassen, ed., *Just Peacemaking: The New Paradigm for the Ethics of Peace and War* (Cleveland: Pilgrim Press, 1998, 2004, 2008), chapters 5 and 7. [26] National Conference of Catholic Bishops, *The Challenge of Peace: God's Promise and Our Response* (Washington, D.C.: United States Catholic Conference, 1983). [27] *Ibid.*, §§ 146-161 [28] Castle Gandolfo, Italy, July 29, 2007 (Zenit.org).