

**A Call to Revive A Fundamental Concern:
NUCLEAR WEAPONS
APRIL 26, 1978**

The World Council of Churches has proclaimed Sunday, May 21, 1978, which is two days before the opening of the United Nations Special Session on Nuclear Disarmament, a Day of Prayer for Peace. We invite the churches in Massachusetts to unite with Christians of all nations in this time of prayer for and rededication to promoting world peace through arms control.

Efforts toward nuclear disarmament affect the well-being of the whole inhabited earth. Yet for many, disarmament is only a casual concern. We have forgotten that a nuclear holocaust is a very real possibility, which we ignore at our peril.

The Creator put human beings on earth "to till it and keep it" (Gen. 2:15) - to be responsible stewards of the earth and all its resources. By placing our trust in the might of nuclear weaponry, we threaten the very existence of God's Creation. It is not radical rhetoric to say that at stake is the survival of humankind.

The United States now has over 30,000 nuclear warheads, capable of killing every person on earth twelve times. The Soviets have approximately equal capabilities. Four other countries - China, France, Britain, and India - possess "the bomb," and experts predict that by 1985, a total of forty countries will be able to manufacture nuclear weapons from the by-products of nuclear power production.

In the face of this world-wide arsenal of destruction, the theory that America should stockpile ever larger and more powerful nuclear weapons to increase international security is absurd. The risks are too great: of unintended accidents, of mass victimization by terrorists, of the escalation of so-called "limited" wars. It is not possible to speak of victory in nuclear war. Everyone would lose.

How can we control the production, prevent the use, and minimize the dangers of nuclear weapons? The United Nations Special Session on Nuclear Disarmament, to be held from May 23 - June 28, 1978, is the latest attempt to address these questions. Because the United Nations provides a unique forum for dealing with this issue, the Session deserves widespread public attention and support.

We urge the churches in Massachusetts to maximize the possibilities for increasing public support for nuclear disarmament, by joining churches throughout the world in prayerful reflection and strategic action on May 21 and throughout the United Nations Special Session. We invite clergy to call special attention to the Day of Prayer for Peace, to read this statement to their congregations, and to use every reasonable means to reawaken a sense of urgency about the need for nuclear disarmament.

We do not know the answers to the nuclear dilemma. However, experience has shown that without continuous pressure on our elected officials to find answers, few changes will occur. Thus, we bear special responsibilities to communicate vigorously and persistently with the President, our Senators, and Congressmen and

women, about this issue.

We have eaten the nuclear apple. From this knowledge there can be no retreat. Our present task is to reverse the momentum of the nuclear arms race, before we destroy all that God has made and entrusted in our care.

SIGNERS

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The Rev. Dr. Paul N. Carnes
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The Rev. Dr. James A. Nash
Executive Director, Mass. Council of
Churches

The above statement was approved by the Board of Directors of the Massachusetts Council of Churches on April 26, 1978, and denominational executives were invited to add their personal endorsements. We pray this statement will achieve what its title implies.