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CLERGY AND LAITY CONCERNED

198 Broadway/New York, New York 10038

Dear Friend,

Did you ever think the words "my brother's keeper" would frighten you? How about "faith," "prayer," "human life" and "family."

In the mouths of the Religious Right, these words take on a twisted meaning. That powerful movement has tried to instill in us a fear that unless we accept their meanings and their values, we are denouncing the word of God and undermining the structure of our nation.

It's time for men and women of all faiths to speak out against what the Religious Right is saying -- time to convert into action your concern and apprehension about the growing power of these extremists.

A new nationwide effort is now under way not only to counter the efforts of the Religious Right, but to unite the many, many Americans who are deeply concerned about rising injustice and hunger -- and to give them the opportunity to do something to help the truly needy of the world.

You are invited to join the tens of thousands of other Americans who have united to make this effort possible. You are invited to join CALC -- Clergy and Laity Concerned.

CALC is a national interfaith, interracial network with more than 20,000 supporters and more than 40 chapters throughout the United States. The men and women of CALC come from all religious groups -- Protestant, Catholic, Jewish -- and from big cities and small towns in every state of the union. We are united in a common concern about those who are denied justice or enough food or their basic human rights. And we are working to change these things.

CALC believes in faith, prayer, human life and family, too. But at the Peace Sabbath observances CALC sponsors each year in churches and synagogues, we pray there will never be another Hiroshima or Vietnam. The human life that concerns us is that of all Americans -- but it is also that of the agrarian priest in South America, the Jew in the Soviet Union and the black person who speaks up against apartheid in South Africa. And the family we belong to also lives in the Dominican Republic, in Southeast Asia and in the slums of Chicago.

It disturbs us to witness the high-handed way in which multi-national corporations take over the resources of smaller, weaker governments -- or the way our government took over land belonging to Native Americans for atomic testing. We know that, despite these actions, no one owns the Earth and the fulness thereof. We are merely its stewards.

We ask you -- we urge you -- to join us now in fighting for efforts that will make this world, God's world, a safe and sane one, a world where justice dwells for all, where the bounty of the Earth is shared by all.

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When CALC was first formed in 1965, its purpose was to mobilize opposition to U. S. intervention in Southeast Asia. At the time, that was not a popular cause. It was as controversial as speaking out against the Religious Right is today.

But CALC is not afraid of controversy. And the issues we tackle are controversial.

Among the major issues CALC is focusing on today is human security. Not the kind of security the Religious Right speaks of. Their way of achieving security is to call for trillions of dollars to be spent on national defense and nuclear arms.

We at CALC wholeheartedly oppose that view. We believe that true security lies in ending production of nuclear weapons and making concentrated efforts toward lasting world peace. Toward this end, CALC is working at all levels -- local, national and international -- for what is the first step to a safer world for all of us: a bi-lateral freeze on nuclear weapons.

Nuclear weapons pose the greatest threat to the future of mankind ever conceived. A freeze on these weapons does not undermine our national security. On the contrary, it enables us to strengthen this nation's greatest asset, its people. It enables us to re-direct the trillions of dollars now being poured down the rabbit hole of "strong national defense" and apply them to desperately needed social programs which have been ended or curtailed by the Reagan administration.

There is no reason not to have a freeze. With the technology now available, we can, via satellite and other means, insure that the freeze on nuclear arms is actually being honored by the Soviet Union. To continue an escalating arms race that could eventually lead to the destruction of life as we know it on this planet is madness.

To those of the Far Right, people who advocate a freeze on nuclear weapons represent a threat, are "un-American." If it is un-American to be concerned about the quality of human life in this country and the world, then yes, we are un-American. If it is un-American to be against arms buildups that are created primarily to give more power to the military and more hefty profits to arms manufacturers, then yes, we are un-American.

If it is un-American to be actively concerned about such things as human rights and hunger, both here and abroad, then yes, we are un-American.

But in our view, it is un-American not to criticize your country when it does wrong.

When the United States increasingly plays politics with food -- not only tolerating but encouraging repressive governments that starve their poor, we feel compelled to speak out. Our government gets involved because we are assured cheap labor, access to national resources in these countries, and unopposed exports of agricultural products to the United States. But at what a price! Today, in a "poor" country like the Dominican Republic, sixty percent of all children die before the age of five. Sixty percent!

And right here in the United States, while we put trillions of dollars into a senseless arms buildup, our own poor are getting poorer, our own hungry

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are getting hungrier. Hunger and poverty are not accidents. They are the fruits of social injustice. Unless people of good will wake up to what is happening and do something to bring about change, they will continue and grow worse.

In the CALC book, "Hunger for Justice," Jack Nelson describes walking through the streets of Calcutta where "the poverty so enraged me that I wanted to scream at God. Then I came to a painful realization. In the suffering of the poor, God was screaming at me, in fact at all of us and our institutions and the social systems that cause and perpetuate hunger, poverty and inequality."

God's screams are heard by many people in the world. Unfortunately, in too many places, those who try to do something about them are deprived of their liberty and increasingly their lives. And in too many places, they are deprived by repressive governments supported by the United States.

What can be done about hunger and poverty? CALC has initiated programs that get to the sources of these problems.

- * CALC has established an education/action program to help concerned Americans challenge U. S. foreign policies and corporations that contribute to the problems of hunger and poverty.
- * CALC was one of the founders of INFAC -- the Infant Formula Action Coalition -- and is active in the national effort to halt the unethical promotion of infant formula in Third World countries by multinational corporations (this includes the Nestle boycott). Infant formula has contributed to the deaths of thousands of babies in Third World countries because of lack of clean water, refrigeration and sterilization facilities.
- * CALC is a key sponsor and organizer of a broad-based coalition effort to increase public awareness of food and hunger problems and to build grass roots support for solutions to these problems.

You should be aware, too, of CALC's human rights program. Because protecting human rights is one of the main concerns of this organization. And once again, our concern involves this nation's support of repressive governments.

For too many years, the United States and multinational corporations have supported such governments in South America, Central America, South Africa and Asia, looking the other way when "opposition" leaders were jailed, deported or murdered.

CALC has been working to unite people in opposition to these governments. In so doing, by the way, we are getting to the heart of many of the problems the people of this nation face. When we oppose the exploitation of cheap labor in these countries, for example, we are getting to the heart of the problem of growing unemployment in the United States. When we oppose our government's pouring money into the nuclear arms race, we are endeavoring to re-direct those funds to much-needed social programs here.

As long as there are men, women and children going hungry in the world, CALC will go on fighting the forces that are responsible. As long as there

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are tyrants who deprive ordinary citizens of their basic rights, CALC will go on fighting for human rights. As long as there are misguided leaders in our country who would put bombs before human needs, CALC will go on fighting for those human needs.

"My brother's keeper," "faith," "prayer," "human life," "family" -- our definitions of these words are a far cry from those the Religious Right give them. But we feel, we hope ours are the definitions most Americans would agree with.

In just a few years, the Religious Right has gained dangerous power. They have succeeded in unseating senators and representatives who oppose their narrow views. They have succeeded in sparking legislation that deprives many women and men of their rights. They have succeeded in instilling in this nation an aura of fear.

The time is now for the rest of us to speak out. The time is now to fight the social repression and militarism that is behind their rhetoric.

The time is now. And the organization through which many Americans are doing it is CALC -- Clergy and Laity Concerned.

We need to continue and strengthen our fights. And we need you to help us. That's why we ask you to join the more-than-20,000 other Americans who lend their membership support to CALC. As a member, you'll receive the CALC Report eight times a year, keeping you in touch with our efforts, our successes and our challenges.

Enclosed with this letter you'll find a CALC Membership Form with your name and address already on it. You'll also find a postage-free return envelope with our name and address on it. Put the form in the envelope with your membership contribution and drop it in the mail.

When you do, you'll be saying, "Yes, I care and want to do something about putting a freeze on nuclear weapons. Yes, I care and want to help end the injustice in countries like El Salvador and South Africa. Yes, I care about people who are crying out for a morsel of food to keep them alive."

Please join CALC today.

Sincerely,


Barbara Lupo, m.m.
 John Collins and
 Barbara Lupo,
 Co-Directors