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IN RESPONSE TO THE SEPTEMBER 11TH ATTACKS

We, the Trustees of the Vermont Ecumenical Council and Bible Society, share the feelings of outrage, anger, grief and sadness felt by Americans in light of the horrible, cruel events of September 11, 2001. We are appalled at the depth of hatred in the world that leads to acts of violence and destruction.

The God to whom we are committed and whom we worship calls us to forsake the principle of "an eye for an eye," and to replace it with a spirit of penitence, compassion and reconciliation. We seek to insure the security of all people threatened by violence, recognizing that all security must be based on the moral principles of love and justice.

While we believe that the terrorists should be brought to justice, we are concerned that as a nation we will react to violence with our own violence, and give way to a spirit of angry revenge. We know that, if we take actions which forsake our values, among which are compassion, understanding, and reconciliation, the terrorists will have succeeded in undermining the moral fabric which has made this nation great.

We understand that, as the divide between the world's rich and poor has persistently increased, feelings of hatred and alienation toward our country have increased. We, the United States, and all nations must listen more carefully to the cries of people in need. Understanding the cultural, ethnic, and linguistic differences between nations and acknowledging the interdependence between nations and peoples, let us pray for the seeds of peace to take root and blossom world-wide.

We call upon all people of the State of Vermont, but especially the Christian people, to be instruments of God's peace in the world. We ask all the people of Vermont, Christians and non-Christians, to pray for our national leaders, that they may accept the guidance of God's Spirit, be filled with wisdom, and act with justice, compassion and mercy.

This statement was sent by email on October 2, 2001 to: The Burlington Free Press, The Rutland Herald, The Times Argus, Senators Jeffords and Leahy, Congressman Sanders, President Bush and Vice President Cheney. It was mailed to Governor Dean on October 3, 2001.

We are a diverse network of Christians in Vermont working together to serve the common good through public worship and prayer; acts of mercy and care; and loving prophetic witness for peace, justice and the integrity of creation.