

Nuclear weaponry addressed

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them, providing a biblical understanding of peace and a serious reflection of the times in which we live," Ritter said.

Although entitled "In Defense of Creation," the letter addresses not only technology and weaponry, but also the earth's very survival, Ritter said.

Ritter, board chairman James Hildbrand and Christian education director Mary Tame each delivered sermonettes relating to the letter at Nardin Park worship services Sept. 13. A videotape of the reading of the letter by Michigan Bishop Judith Craig was shown continuously during the morning coffee hour.

ALTHOUGH COPIES of the letter were made available, only about 150 of the 650 worshippers picked up a copy.

"People listened attentively and politely. There was no disagreement with the decision to read the letter or with the idea of the letter being a fit subject for the church to address," Ritter said.

"Certainly, we had people who would not go as far as the bishops would in their position. People came up afterward and thanked us for reading the letter and the careful

way in which it was presented and commented upon. They said they weren't in a position to embrace what was said, but appreciated the way in which it was handled," he added.

Ritter received only one telephone call or written response that could be considered negative. "I've got to believe there are more of those responses out there. But they've not surfaced," he said.

Last week, a Nardin Park dialogue group held the first of six consecutive Wednesday morning study sessions dealing with the pastoral

letter and the Foundation Document.

Ritter and Tame lead the sessions. Ritter points out that the Foundation Document softens the pastoral letter in acknowledging that "it's strategically unwise to dismantle nuclear weaponry until other bridges have been built — arms reduction negotiations, test ban treaties, a verifiable nuclear weapons freeze."

"But the document certainly has called for some positive steps toward peacekeeping which, if implemented, would create a climate in which de-escalation of nuclear weapons could begin to occur."

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