STEERING COMMITTEE SETS MAJOR CHANGES-- In April ACAT's Steering Committee charted major changes designed to expand ACAT's activities, provide more help to members, increase effectiveness in working with other Christian organizations, and achieve greater intentionality in working both for the release of specific prisoners and the abolition of torture.

Starting September ACAT will send out its own monthly urgent action appeals taken from names provided by Amnesty, just as the French ACAT does, rather than simply enroll you in the AI Urgent Action Network. This will allow us to: (a) follow up on the cases we choose, (b) give our membership a greater sense of unity, and (c) include a sample letter and background materials we believe will help you. Because of the increased frequency of first class mailings, membership will go up to $25.

The Steering Committee has divided into four working groups: Outreach and Communications, Advocacy and Liturgical Resources, Staff Oversight and Finance, and a group to concentrate on local Philadelphia organizing, which has just helped set up an independent Philadelphia chapter. (Up until now, the Steering Committee has had to spend more time on Philadelphia action than we felt can be justified for the steering committee of a national organization.)

We will also be working to set up a national board with experience and passion, including official representatives from churches and organizations that support ACAT and leading human rights activists.

Janice Hill will be the coordinating link between the working groups. Our office will continue to respond to urgent appeals regarding prisoners of conscience that come from groups other than Amnesty.

To make the new structure work will require many more volunteers. Though much of the volunteer work will have to be done in Philadelphia, research, writing, artwork, and liturgies and prayers can be done from elsewhere. Let us know of your time and skills.

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ACAT RECEIVES GRANTS--Hearty thanks to the following for recent grants: Lutheran Church in America (Division of World Mission and Ecumenism), Mennonite Board of Missions, the Peace and Justice Fund of the Sisters of St. Francis, United Methodist Board for Global Ministries (Womens's Division), United Church Board for World Ministries, plus an anonymous Catholic order.

As you rejoice with us, don't imagine we're talking about a hefty sum. The $4,750 total is less than ACAT membership donations, which continue to be our chief source of support. If you'd like to see our 1984 financial summary, send us a SASE.

ACAT WISH LIST

We operate our national activities out of an office with no adding machine and no copier. If you have old equipment you'd be willing to donate or loan, we would be glad to make good use of it.