

A Letter from our Region 5 Elder ... Rev. Elder Diane Fisher

WHAT CAN WE DO?

"What does God require of you, but to do justice, love kindness and walk humbly with your God." Micah 6:8

It is Sunday morning and as I get ready for my day, I go through my usual routine. I grab a cup of coffee, check my emails and turn on the news. My heart aches as I watch as the situation in Lebanon unfolding and I know that thousands will lose their lives. I read emails from *Florin Buhuceanu* (MCC staff in Eastern Europe), in Eastern Europe and hear about LGBTQ leaders having to "hole-up" in a safe room at a Riga hotel as mobs outside threaten their lives.

It causes me to take a moment, to stop and to reflect on what is happening to our world.

* I think about World Pride in Jerusalem and how the LGBTQ community there has tried to host this international event for the past two years, in the midst of war and I think about the *Reverend Pat Bumgardner* who will travel there in the near future.

* I think about the fear that must exist in the LGBTQ community in Jamaica, where gay men are being murdered every week and the work begun there with *Reverend Robert Griffin*.

* I think about the young Korean man I met at the clergy conference, a friend of *Reverend Jim Birkitt's*, who desperately wants MCC to come and help the LGBTQ community, "we need you", he said, "we need MCC".

* I think about Nigeria, the violence being experienced by our community and the response from *MCC in England*.

* I think about Moscow and the threats and violence experienced by the LGBTQ community and worry about its impact on *Reverend Steve Taylor and his partner, Arthur*.

* I think about the children and adults living with HIV/AIDS in Africa and around the world and *Reverend Elder Jim Mitulski and Joshua Love's* recent trip to the orphanage in Zimbabwe.

What can we do?

"...walk humbly with your God."

We can pray and pray unceasingly. The Reverend Elder Nancy Wilson recently sent out the following prayer:

God of Jesus, who visited Tyre and Sidon, God of the prophets and psalmists who so long ago prayed "for the Peace of Jerusalem," our whole world is in anguish today about the

chronic violence, injustice and threat to well-being that surround holy cities and a whole region of the world.

God, we know you are grieved today, and we ask you to protect all whose lives are touched by war, including the innocent, the poor and the vulnerable. Be with those who have no safe place to evacuate to, and no resources to leave dangerous areas.

Spirit of the Living God, we rebuke the selfish, deluded forces of greed for oil or power or land, and all misguided religious fanaticism and ethnic hatred, that impede your dream of peace.

We ask for a new vision, and for leaders to emerge who will propose a new paradigm of justice and hope. A miracle is needed today, O Holy One, and we are bold to ask for it, in your many names.

Amen.

What would happen if we all repeated this prayer when we wake up in the morning and before we go to sleep at night? God can do amazing things.

PRAY!

"...love kindness..."

I have been so touched by the out pouring of support for our work in Eastern Europe, Zimbabwe, hurricane Katrina survivors and so much more. We have dug deeply and shared what we could. We can continue this call by God:

- * we can feed the hungry,
- * we can provide safe places for people in need,
- * we can reach out to our community when it is in need,
- * we can send a card to someone who has been away for a while,
- * we can box up the LGBTQ books and Christian resources that we are done with and share them with emerging communities of faith around the world,
- * we can save our change from a cup of coffee and put it towards a ministry in our local church, or towards the ministry emerging in Latin America, where our coffee comes from
- * we can send words of encouragement to MCCers working in the world
- * we can ask: "What can I do to help?"

“...to do justice...”

Jesus never asked us to play it safe, but called us to *“go out into all the world”*. Our world is aching and as I look at all that is happening, I wonder about how can “I” respond to all that is going on. The truth is that “I” can not. It is not about “I”, but about “**WE**”.

The “WE” of MCC is powerful indeed. “WE” can make a difference. “WE” are already responding to situations all over the world, a few of them are mentioned above. But none of it can happen without the larger “WE” of MCC. What can you do?

- When you hear of an injustice, respond!
- Email politicians, the information is available on-line somewhere
- Write letters to the editor of your local paper
- Let others in your church know about the situation
- Do not tolerate discrimination
- Work to make your church accessible for all
- Write to LGBTQ organizations in other countries, letting them know how much you appreciate the work that they are doing
- Check with your pastor and see if there are ways that you can help out

Only by RESPONDING, raising our voices together can we make a difference.

FINAL THOUGHTS

MCC is *“Tearing down walls and building up hope”* and you, your church, your generosity, commitment and faith have made it possible.

My coffee is cold now, but my heart is full. By writing this I am aware of just how faith filled all of you are, the differences you have already made and are in the process of making, locally and globally. I am humbled. Thank you, thank you, thank you MCC. You give me hope!

With Humility and Respect,

Rev. Elder Diane Fisher