



Prayers for the Middle East

A Message From The Moderator



The Rev. Nancy Wilson

July 20, 2006

Dear MCC Members and Friends:

We live in such perilous and promising times. And both realities -- *peril* and *promise* -- call us to prayer.

Sometimes events of such magnitude happen, that we just have to stop, as a global church, and pray. In the face of war and violence in the Middle East, I am asking you to do that today, and this coming Sunday, in our churches.

Rev. Elder Cecilia Eggleston, whose Region 4 includes the Middle East, today wrote, "The cities and countries we read about in scripture are those we now recognise each day in the news. For people of all faiths living in this region, these are frightening times. Homes, lives and communities are being torn apart by violence. Spiritual faith can bring people together -- regrettably, it can also be misused to keep them apart. Now is the time for all people of faith to seek peace and to unite in prayers for an end to the violence."

And this week, we heard from **Rev. Isabel Pires de Amorim** and **Cristina Linguel**, two former members of MCC Glendale (California) and longtime friends of MCC, who live and work in Beirut, Lebanon.

Isabel, who works for the Brazilian government, reports that Chris left by bus this week for the "frontier," and that the bombings in Beirut continue day and night. They are blessed by good friends

and neighbors, who are doing all they can to support one another, but they deeply appreciate the prayers of MCC members and friends in facing this new war on a daily basis.

I encourage you to pray today:

- For world leaders to work around the clock on a cease-fire that will stop the violence and begin working anew on the roots of the systemic problems for the Middle East as a whole;
- For the safety of civilians, in Lebanon and Israel, especially children;
- For safe evacuation of non-combatants;
- For the friends and families of MCCers who are at risk;

Members of the LGBT community are mindful that all of this occurs in the context of World Pride, scheduled to take place in Jerusalem in two weeks. **Rev. Pat Bumgardner**, Chair of MCC's Global Justice Team, who is among those scheduled to represent MCC at World Pride, notes, "It is so important for all people of faith pray for peace and join with those who will bring God's vision of peace and harmony to one Holy City."

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.

Grace and Peace,

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