

thongs of the yoke, to let the oppressed go free...’ (Isaiah 58:6). We must reject the idea that we can fight our way to peace and security . . . we cannot!”

Right Reverend Munib Younan, Bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Jordan and the Holy Land, reflecting on the current crisis in the Middle East

Talking points for faxes to President George W. Bush from MCC workers and partners in the Middle East

Urge President Bush to:

- Press for an immediate cease fire. Until both parties stop fighting, there will not be “political space” to address the root causes of the conflict. Thousands of Lebanese and Israeli civilians have been injured or killed in the past month. Israel has destroyed much of Lebanon’s infrastructure, leading to a humanitarian crisis and a new generation of hatred and hopelessness that will only lead to further acts of violence. Hezbollah’s rocket attacks continue to wreak havoc on Israeli towns and cities. If the fighting continues, the situation could easily escalate into a broader regional conflict that will only further destabilize the situation in Iraq. This will not serve U.S. interests or those of Middle Eastern nations.
- Take an even-handed approach to the conflict. Although Israel has been a long-term U.S. ally, it is not helpful to place all the blame on Hezbollah and Hamas. Grievances on both sides span decades. Although the United States and Israel label Hezbollah and Hamas as terrorist groups, they are also political parties who are now beginning to take part in democratic processes. Many in the region receive social services from these organizations and see them as legitimate resistance movements to Israel’s occupation.
- Promote direct dialogue. Ask President Bush to return the U.S. ambassador to Syria and to work toward normalization of relationships with Iran. If the United States hopes to be a helpful player in the region, it must build mutually respectful face-to-face relationships with all participants. Also urge the President to promote direct talks between Israel and Hezbollah, and Israel and Hamas.

White House fax numbers:

(202) 456-2461 or (202) 456-6218

Register your faxes on the Peace and Justice Support Network website:

www.MennoniteUSA.org/peace

Further information:

- **stories:** www.mcc.org
- **background on advocacy:** www.mcc.org/us/washington
- **to donate to MCC humanitarian efforts:** <http://www.mcc.org/middleeastemergency/>
- **fasting, advocacy, links:** www.MennoniteUSA.org/peace

Peace Advocate Office, 330-683-6844, SusanML@MennoniteUSA.org. MCC Washington Office, J. Daryl Byler. Graphic Design, Cynthia Friesen Coyle, PJSN volunteer. August 8, 2006



Hear our VOICES!

Days of Prayer, Fasting and Fasting for Peace in the Middle East

August 13–16, 2006

In response to requests from our sisters and brothers in the Middle East, Mennonite Church USA and Mennonite Central Committee call you and your congregation to raise your voices. We invite you to pray to God and send a fax to President George W. Bush, pleading for an immediate end to the fighting in Lebanon. You might choose to **fast** for a day or a meal some time this week and use that time for **prayer** and/or **fasting**.

Faith reflection from a Christian Palestinian brother

“This is a moral, spiritual and political crisis of global proportions. As a Lutheran Bishop my plea is for all Christians to commit themselves to prayer and fasting to seek God’s empowerment in addressing the call to repent and seek justice. This includes urging Christians to go beyond their excellent relief and emergency work to secure the future for a just peace. As a Palestinian mindful of the value of all human life I call on all people of conscience and faith to join in this spiritual act of prayerful fasting so that we can change our hearts and minds and act for an enduring peace. The prophet Isaiah reminds us: ‘Is this not the fast that I choose: to loose the bonds of injustice, to undo the

