

**Open Letter to Mennonite and Brethren in Christ
church members in Canada and the U.S.**

***A call to work for sustainable peace in
North Africa and the Middle East***

*They have treated the wound of my people carelessly, saying,
'Peace, peace', when there is no peace. (Jeremiah 6:14, 8:11)*

At this time of great change in North Africa and the Middle East, Mennonite Central Committee applauds the courage of those who are speaking out for basic rights and working for more just societies in Egypt, Tunisia and elsewhere.

We lament the suffering of all people and are dismayed by the actions of governments that disregard the rights of their own people. We share the concern, stated by numerous governments, the Arab League and the United Nations, of protecting civilians at risk of harm.

However, the history of military interventions, even those carried out for humanitarian purposes or because of a responsibility to protect, has shown that there are very often unintended consequences. Thus we have serious concerns about the current U.N. mission in Libya, and we cannot support the use of our countries' militaries to purportedly bring peace.

In our experience as Christian peacebuilders, it is only nonviolent actions that provide the critical impetus for long-term, sustainable peace. Peace that endures also requires a just society in which basic rights are respected and human needs are met.

Jesus said that those who work for peace will be blessed and will be considered children of God (Matthew 5:9). The Scriptures are clear about God's displeasure with those who claim to have achieved peace in the midst of unjust circumstances (Jeremiah 6:13-15).

Therefore we call on all church members to pray for peace and encourage them to engage and discuss these important issues in their congregations and communities and with their government. Our hope is that these conversations will promote peace and understanding with one another, as well as around the world.

Additional resources are available at peace.mcc.org.

Don Peters
Executive Director
Mennonite Central Committee Canada

J. Ron Byler
Executive Director
Mennonite Central Committee U.S.