

like again to quote the report of the Catholic bishops: "We have had an experience of the frustration and humiliation undergone everyday by Palestinians at checkpoints, which impede them from providing for their families, reaching hospital, getting to work, attending their studies and visiting their relatives."

I am here carrying in my body the pains and suffering of my Palestinian people. But I am here with an olive branch in my hand, saying, "Enough for hatred, enough for occupation, enough for spiral violence, enough for revenge and counter-revenge; enough for stigmatization, demonization and dehumanization of the other. I say, enough for war! It is time for truth, justice and peace for all the people of our land."

Our prophetic task is to address the root cause of the Middle East problem: The occupation has to end. It is a sin against God and against humanity because it is depriving people of their rights and their dignity. Occupation is as destructive to the occupier, as it is to the occupied. As the Heads of Churches in Jerusalem stated in March 2002: "We believe that the Israeli security is dependent on the Palestinian freedom and justice. For this reason, we join our voices with every Israeli and Palestinian seeking for a just peace. We ask everyone to take the appropriate measures to stop further massacres or tragedies for our two peoples."

We want security for the Israelis, and freedom and justice for the Palestinians. But the security of Israel is dependent on the freedom of the Palestinians, and the justice of the Palestinians is dependent on the security of Israel. Once we recognize the symbiotic relationship between the two peoples, a just peace and reconciliation will become reality.

The prophetic voice of the Palestinian Church that seeks a just peace is a voice that believes in the future. We support a two state solution which means having the state of Israel and the Palestinian state within the 67 borders living side by side in peace, justice, equality and reconciliation with a shared Jerusalem. Here I would like to affirm the statement made by President George W. Bush on June 24, 2002, calling for a two-state solution with people living side by side. I also admire the president's call for a viable, contiguous Palestinian state. It is also our call that a just solution will be found to the problems of the Israeli settlements in the West Bank and Gaza, and the right of return for Palestinian refugees in accordance with the rule of law and international legitimacy.

No forms of peaceful settlement of the conflict will ever be realized unless the grass-roots will be reconciled with one another. In this task the three monotheistic religions are called to be the forerunners—preparing the way for reconciliation. At the moment both nations are polarized with both political and religious extremists from the three religions forcing the two peoples apart from each other. But those extremists must never kidnap the Middle East nor kidnap justice, peace and reconciliation. I believe that religion should be an instrument of peace and broker for justice. Religion is to call Palestinians and Israelis—Jews, Christians and Muslims—not to see God only in ourselves and our own religion, but also in the other's, in the people who are different from us. When we learn to see God in the other, then we can accept the humanity of the other. Once we accept the humanity of the other, then we accept the otherness of the other, and then mutually recognize each other's human, civil, religious, national and political rights. Only then the Holy Land will become the promised land of milk and honey for both Palestinians and Israelis.

The Palestinian Church also has a vision for the Palestinian society. The church lead-

ers are also calling for justice within our society based on respect of human and religious rights. We envision a modern democratic just civil society. This is the reason that we have been vocal in our joint ecumenical work to call for equality, freedom of religion, opinion and expression for every human being. But the Palestinian Church does not only talk, but walks the talk and reflects that either in the immersing basic constitution, or practices it in our educational, health and social institutions. If we take the Evangelical Lutheran Church as an example, we serve the needy regardless of gender, religion, confessional or political affiliation. Our schools raise up a new generation that is capable of building a Palestinian democratic modern civil society. We are teaching 3000 children in 5 schools. 37 percent of our students are Muslims. It is our aim to teach coexistence among Jews, Christians and Muslims, and we offer peace education and non-violent ways of dealing with the conflict. As it is written in our school in Bethlehem, "Violence is the tool of the incompetent." We also serve in hospitals. Our Augusta Victoria Hospital has been serving the Palestinian refugees for the last 55 years. Statistics show that 22,000 patients were treated in the last year. However, we are facing a problem of the employer's tax with the ministry of finance of the state of Israel. The Lutheran World Federation hopes that a solution will be found and that the agreement of tax exemption will continue for the sake of the services we render. Although we Christians are less than 2 percent of the total population, we serve 20 to 25 percent of the Palestinian people. And we urge you to see the significant role that the Christian Church is playing to create hope in a situation that often seems hopeless and to build a future with justice, peace and reconciliation in our country.

When God gave freedom and power to the United States of America through the struggles of many women and men such as Washington, Lincoln, Martin Luther King Jr. and others, He did not give you liberation to keep it in the United States, but to help smaller nations, who are living in fear and injustice, to enjoy what God allowed you to enjoy. Our concern is the future of the Palestinian and Israeli children; they are entitled to live their lives in security, justice, freedom, respect for human rights and in peace as American children do.

As Representative Lois Capps made plans to visit us, I told her, "Come and see for yourself—see the whole story on the ground. Then judge for yourself." This is what I want to tell each of you today: "Come and see! You are very welcome. See and hear the whole story—the fears and hopes of both sides—and then make up your mind for yourself."

As I come to address you, I am not asking you to be pro-Palestinian nor to be pro-Israeli. I am asking you to be pro-humanity, pro-truth, pro-peace and pro-reconciliation. Because it is only then you help both peoples to find a dignified solution.

It is time to commit ourselves to move from statements to action and to change our warrior swords into peaceful ploughshares. We all can say, as a graffiti said in Ramallah: "Better the pains of peace, than the agonies of war and occupation."

Let us sing with King David: "Justice and peace must kiss each other" (Psalm 85: 10).

May the peace of the Lord fill our hearts and direct our ways.

TRIBUTE TO LEE MARSHALL

HON. ROBERT E. (BUD) CRAMER, JR.

OF ALABAMA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 2, 2004

Mr. CRAMER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Lee Marshall on the release of her debut album, "Anchored." The National Children's Advocacy Center, located in Huntsville, hosted Lee's CD release party on Friday, February 27, 2004.

Mr. Speaker, Lee Marshall is a celebrated news anchor for WAFF NBC 48 in Huntsville. In addition to her role as the lead morning and noon news anchor, Lee is the host of a weekly segment on WAFF called "Kids to Love." On every episode of "Kids to Love," she highlights one of the five thousand kids that are in foster care and the five hundred that are waiting to be adopted in the State of Alabama. Every show is close to her heart because Lee herself was adopted. Lee is a shining example of what the love of a permanent family can do for a child's future success.

Lee also volunteers countless hours working with the American Cancer Society and the National Children's Advocacy Center. She is a strong supporter of the NCAC model and has lent her name to help educate others and raise awareness of the severity of child abuse.

Mr. Speaker, all of us in North Alabama are proud of Lee and the work that she has done for our area. I have admired her energy, compassion, and commitment to the community and on behalf of every one in North Alabama, I wish her the best of luck with her debut album.

TRIBUTE TO SYLVIA CLARK

HON. DIANA DeGETTE

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 2, 2004

Ms. DeGETTE. Mr. Speaker, I would like to recognize the extraordinary life and accomplishments of a remarkable woman in Colorado. It is both fitting and proper that we recognize Sylvia Clark for her impressive record of civic leadership and invaluable service.

Sylvia was a dear friend and a stalwart leader who will be greatly missed. She lived her life on the front lines of progress and proved to be a powerful force in transforming the landscape of our State. Her indomitable spirit sustained her through many challenges and molded a life of genuine accomplishment.

Sylvia was born in St. Anthony, Idaho, and spent a good portion of her youth in Honduras where she saw first hand the impact of poverty on women and children. She studied nursing at Johns Hopkins University and went on to become a registered nurse, a certified nurse midwife, a certified obstetrics and gynecology nurse, and earned a master's degree in public administration. Sylvia came of age professionally at the time women were gaining their rights to forms of birth control previously considered illegal. She began an eminent career at Planned Parenthood of the Rocky Mountains in 1967 and went on to become executive director where she guided the organization through turbulent political times and succeeded in building a preeminent reproductive health care agency, providing services to