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A Call to Prayer for Burnt Church

From: Esther Epp-Tiessen, Peace Ministries, MCC Canada
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The following "Call to Prayer for Burnt Church" was distributed to Mennonite Central Committee officies across Canada today in the hope that many congregations could join in prayer this Sunday for peace and justice for the situation in New Brunswick.

Esther Epp-Tiessen
MCC Canada Peace Ministries

A Call to Prayer for Burnt Church

A crisis appears to be escalating in the lobster dispute in Burnt Church, New Brunswick. With the breakdown in mediation earlier this week and with the government's ultimatum to the Mikmaq fishers, the potential for violence has increased. The conflict is not only about lobster. It is also about the deep divisions in Canada about how land and resources are shared with First Nations people. It is about the myth of scarcity which guides our public policy and which suggests that there is not enough lobster for all. Finally, it is about whether the use of force can solve the problem at hand.

Some of the concerns Christians ought to ponder in this situation are:
- the need for a livelihood for all people in the region;
- the pattern throughout history of economic marginalization of Aboriginal peoples;
- the questionable legal and moral basis for the government's harsh actions.

We ask the churches to pray for an immediate reduction of the threat of violence in Burnt Church. At the same time, let us pray that calm waters will not cause us, and those in leadership, to imagine that the root conflict can once again be ignored. Let us pray for, and act to bring about, public policy guided by the Jubilee principle that all should have enough. Let us pray for leaders who will not rely on patterns of the past but rather present a constructive vision for the future relationship

between Aboriginal peoples and the rest of Canada.

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