

A “Prayer” to Ms. Rice

Normally children pray brief and sweet prayers before they go to bed. This evening my seven year old daughter, a Lebanese, and her four year old cousin, an American, stood side by side, stretched up their hands, and prayed. It was neither a prayer to keep them safe during night nor it was a prayer for blessing dad and mom. It was not even a prayer that was addressed to God or Jesus, as they usually do. It was a spontaneous prayer coming out of pure hearts that mingled with the politics and the tragic events of nowadays. They said, “Condoleezza Rice. We are in trouble in Lebanon. Please save us!” They repeated this prayer several times. When my daughter was told that prayers should be directed and addressed to Jesus or God she answered: “But Condoleezza is able to stop the war on us, is she not?”

Ms. Rice, would you hear and answer these children’s prayer? It is not a prayer of just two children. It is a prayer of thousands of children who are displaced in Lebanon and thousands of children who are in shelters in Israel. It is a prayer of the physically and psychologically injured children. It is a prayer that comes out of the rubbles of southern Lebanon and Haifa.

I beg you not to respond to this prayer by saying that the timing for a cease fire is not politically appropriate or that circumstances are not ready for such a cease fire. For stopping a war, for holding a fight, for holding the destruction of homes and livelihoods, for peace and for negotiations, the time is always appropriate.

Ms. Rice, I heard recently that you are an ardent evangelical. I am an Arab evangelical as well. I have always believed that evangelicals are peacemakers. They are those who hold fast to the gospel of peace and reconciliation. Please answer the above children’s prayer; at least, I will continue not to lose faith in my being an evangelical.

Today I received an e-mail message from a friend who lives in Washington, D.C. informing me that he has just seen a sign displayed in front of one independent evangelical church there. The sign was neither a call for prayer nor a call for a vigil. The sign simply stated: “Go Israel!” It is also today that I knew that the father of one of our six year old boarding students was killed in an air strike while he was going to bring bread for his family. For the sake of the children’s tears, for the sake of the children’s blood in this terrible war, for the sake of the children’s smile, please say and write: “Go for peace!” “Go for reconciliation!” “Go for love”! Go for a cease fire!”

Until such prayer and requests are answered we continue at J. L. Schneller Institute, West Beqaa, Lebanon (www.jlss.org) praying and working for peace. We continue providing care for hundreds of displaced people who took shelter at our institution but also to others in neighboring areas. In addition to helping families with basic needs we decided to focus our help on the children aged 15 and under by providing them with healthy meals, suitable toys, and other needed medicines. Please keep us and whole Lebanon in your prayers. If you would like to help us in this mission please contact our partners in Germany (*EMS*- Maurer@ems-online.org) and United Kingdom (*BibleLands*- Nigel.Edward-Few@biblelands.org.uk).

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