



International Day of Prayer for Peace: **Pacific Islands**

September 21, 2008



**WITNESSING to the PEACE
of GOD in OCEANIA**

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*Let them give glory to the Lord, and declare
his praise in the islands.*

—Isaiah 42:12

“The sacrifice of Islanders and military personnel during nuclear testing in the Pacific cannot be represented without threatening the legitimacy of colonial power; so nuclear technology becomes gendered and domesticated. In the end the female body is appropriated by a colonial discourse to successfully disguise the horror of the bomb.”

—Teresia Teaiwa,
from *The Militarization of the Pacific Islands*

Introduction

The International Day of Prayer for Peace is part of the World Council of Church's Decade to Overcome Violence, which concludes in 2010. Each year there is a regional focus for the International Day of Prayer for Peace. The theme and regional focus for 2008 is Oceania or the Pacific Islands, which includes Polynesia, Melanesia, and Micronesia.

These prayer resources were compiled by Leo Hartshorn, Minister of Peace and Justice, Mennonite Mission Network, as a supplement to materials available at the International Day of Prayer for Peace web site.

Prayers

Prayer

by Leo Hartshorn

Militarization and colonization of the Pacific Islands, especially by the United States, has been a long time assumed reality

that has rarely been questioned. And yet, the presence of the military has provoked violence upon those islands by our presence. Think Pearl Harbor. Military bases have negatively impacted the indigenous people and taken away huge chunks of their land for military purposes. This prayer is offered with this reality in mind:

God of land and sea, you are sovereign over the islands, the water, the vegetation, sand, and mountains. You have created the islands as signs of peace and pockets of paradise on earth. And yet, as an imperial power we have colonized your islands and turned them into bases for our own military exploitation and occupation.

Free us, Liberating God, from chains that come with living as an empire and our need to control the earth and its resources. We pray for the welfare and peace of the indigenous peoples of the Pacific Islands. We pray for paradise regained, the Pacific realm free of military occupation and the islands will declare your praise. Amen.

Prayer Litany

by Leo Hartshorn

Leader: On this International Day of Prayer for Peace, God of earth and heaven, we join in prayer with brothers and sisters, neighbors and strangers and across the globe in hope of a world at peace.

People: **We pray that our collective prayers will ascend to you, O God, that we all might be given the spiritual energy to work for just peace.**

Leader: Remember especially, gracious God, the peoples of the Pacific Islands. We lift up the churches and cultures of these indigenous peoples and their struggles for peace in their homes, communities, and lands.

People: **May the peace of God that passes all understanding keep our Hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. Amen.**

An Evening Prayer in Somoa

by Robert Louis Stevenson, from *Prayers at Vailima*, 1904

Lord, receive our supplications for this house, family, and country. Protect the innocent, restrain the greedy and the treacherous, lead us out of our tribulation into a quiet land.

Look down upon ourselves and upon our absent dear ones. Help us and them; prolong our days in peace and honour. Give us health, food, bright weather, and light hearts. In what we meditate of evil, frustrate our will; in what of good, further our endeavours. Cause injuries to be forgot and benefits to be remembered.

Let us lie down without fear and awake and arise with exultation. For his sake, in whose words we now conclude.

The Lord's Prayer in Hawaiian: Ka Pule a ka Haku

E ko makou makua i loko o ka lani,
E ho'ano 'ia kou inoa
E hiki mai kou aupuni;
E malama 'ia kou makemake ma ke honua nei
E like me ia i malama 'ia ma ka lani la.
E ha'awi mai ia makou i keia la, i 'ai na makou no neia la.
E kala mai ho'I ia makou i ka makou lawehala 'ana,
Me makou e kala nei i ka po'e i lawehala i ka makou.
Mai ho'oku'u 'oe ia makou I ka ho'owalewale 'ia mai,

(aka)

E ho'opakele no na'e ia makou i ka 'ino;
No ka mea, nou ke aupuni,
A me ka mana, a me ka ho'onani 'ia a mau loa aku.
'Amene.

Lord's Prayer in Maori

E to Matua I te rangi,
Kia whakatapua tou ingoa,
Kia tae mai tou rangatiratanga,
Kia whakaritea tou hiahia
I te wheua
Kia pera ano I to te rangi.
Homai ki a matou aiane he taro
ma matou mo tenei ra.
Whakakahoretia o matou hara,
me matou e whakakore nei I
nga hara o te hunga e hara ana
ki a matou.
Kaua mato e tukua kia
whakawaia,
Engari whakaorangia matou
Nou hoki te rangatiratanga,
te kaha me te kororia
ake ake. Amene

A litany of repentance using words from Isaiah 1 and 58

from the Presbyterian Church of Aotearoa New Zealand

Leader 1: How do we respond to the hard words of the prophets? The Lord says, "Announce to my people their rebellion... and their sins. Day after day they seek me and delight to know my ways, as if they were a people that practiced righteousness... They delight to draw near to God." "When you stretch out your hands, I will hide my eyes from you; even though you make many prayers, I will not listen; for your hands are full of blood."

Leader 2: *Forgive us God, for our empty mouthing; our pious utterances. You have looked behind them and to our shame have found a lack of love and compassion and an unwillingness to work for justice.*

People: **We find it hard to express our sorrow. Forgive us.**

Leader 1: The Lord says "I don't want your fasting. Your fasting makes you violent and you quarrel and fight. When you fast you make yourselves suffer. Is that what you call fasting? Do you think I will be pleased with that?"

Leader 2: *God, you see our narrowness, our lack of enjoyment of life, and our intolerance. Our self-inflicted "though shalt not" have made us irritable with each other and often unappealing to those outside the church.*

People: **We find it hard to express our sorrow. Forgive us.**

Leader 1: The Lord says: "The kind of fasting I want is this: Remove the chains of oppression and the yoke of injustice and let the oppressed go free. Share your food with the hungry and open your home to the homeless poor. Give clothes to those who have nothing to wear, and do not refuse to help your own relatives."

People: **Forgive us, O God, we were blind. Now we begin to see what you want of us. Help us to go out from here, to go beyond words and to start living your good news.**

Leader 2: *"Then my favour" says God, "will shine upon you like the morning sun and your wounds will be quickly healed. Your people will rebuild what has long been in ruins, building again on the old foundations. You will be known as the people who rebuilt the walls, who restored the ruined houses."*

All: ***We will work together with God to restore creation. Amen.***

New Zealand Prayer

from A New Zealand Book of Prayer

Eternal Spirit, Earth-maker, pain-bearer, Life-giver,
Source of all that is and shall be.
Father and mother of us all, Loving God, in whom is heaven:
The hallowing of your name shall echo through the universe!
The way of justice be followed
by peoples of the world!
Your heavenly will be done by all created beings!
Your commonwealth of peace and freedom
sustain our hope and come on earth.
With the bread we need for today, feed us.
In the hurts we absorb from one another, forgive us.
In times of temptation and test, strengthen us.
From the grip of all that is evil, free us.
For you reign in the glory of the power that is love,
now and forever. Amen.

Resources

A New Zealand Prayer Book, Harper San Francisco, 1989.
Decade to Overcome Violence—<http://overcomingviolence.org/en.html>
International Day of Prayer for Peace 2008—<http://overcomingviolence.org/about-dov/annual-focus/2008-pacific/resources-for-the-pacific.html>
Peace and Justice Support Network resources—<http://peacemenlink.org/idop.html>
Presbyterian Church of Aotearoa New Zealand: www.presbyterian.org.nz/2055.0.html
Robert Louis Stevenson, *Prayers at Vailima*—http://ebooks.adelaide.edu.au/s/stevenson/robert_louis/s848vp/
United Nations International Day of Peace Vigil—<http://www.idpvigil.com/>



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