

# Jewish-Muslim Interfaith Peace Walk

## Philadelphia – May 2004

### Minutes of Meeting No. 1

<b>Location</b>	Philadelphia, PA	<b>Issue Date</b>	November 16, 2003
<b>Type</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Meeting <input type="checkbox"/> Phone Call	<b>Date Held</b>	November 10, 2003
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Place Held</b>	Mishkan Shalom, Philadelphia, PA
<b>Subject</b>	Initial Jewish-Muslim Interfaith Peace Walk Planning Meeting	<b>Recorded By</b>	L. Laver

<p><b>Participants:</b> (*Denotes Part-Time)</p> <p>Mohammad Aziz, ISGUR          Vic Compher, Tabernacle United Church          Jim Feldman, Mishkan Shalom          Rabbi Lynn Gottlieb, Peace Walk / FOR          Ahmed Hefuna, Arab-Jewish Dialogue Group          Adab Ibrahim, Al-Aqsa Society          Lance Laver, Mishkan Shalom / Interfaith Community Building Group          George Mordecai, BZBI / Arab-Jewish Dialogue Group          Abdul Rauf Campos-Marquetti, Peace Walk / FOR          Jenny Sawyer, Tabernacle United Church / Ulster Project          Lil Sigal, Mishkan Shalom          Sharon Sigal, Mishkan Shalom          Rev. Susan Teegan-Case, Arts &amp; Spirituality Center          Ahlam Yassin, Americorps</p>	<p><b>Distribution:</b></p> <p>Attendees</p> <p>Irv Ackelsberg, Mishkan Shalom          Wilbur Bryant, Mishkan Shalom          Joe Clay, St. Vincent's          Jan Hamer, Mishkan Shalom          Mary Laver, St. Vincent's          Margaret Lenzi, Mishkan Shalom          Rabbi Yael Levy, Mishkan Shalom          Rabbi Linda Holtzman, Mishkan Shalom          Carol Towarnicky, Mishkan Shalom          Simone Zelitch, Mishkan Shalom</p>
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1.01	<b>Purpose:</b> To hear about previous Jewish-Muslim Peace Walks, discuss intentions for a Peace Walk in Philadelphia and begin planning for the event.		
1.02	<p><b>Introductions:</b> Rabbi L. Gottlieb asked each participant to provide an introduction with name, organization, tradition and (on one foot) a teaching from one's tradition that provides a base for this peace work. A summary of the "teachings" responses follow:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Seek peace and pursue it.</li> <li>• God bestowed different tribes into the world. We need to go beyond ignorance of the other.</li> <li>• Love your neighbor as yourself.</li> <li>• There is unity in the world in the oneness of God.</li> <li>• God wants us to bring about shalom to heal the brokenness of the world; and God knows that humans are needed for this task.</li> <li>• On a personal journey, I can learn new things from God through interaction with people of other faiths.</li> </ul>		

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Since 9/11, there is support for transformation percolating around the world. We need to continue the search for unity.</li> <li>• As Rabbi Hillel said: <i>If I am not for myself, who will be for me? If I am only for myself, what am I? If not now, when?</i></li> <li>• Worship, submit to God's will, love the Creator and care for one another.</li> <li>• Explore peace.</li> </ul>		
1.03	<p><b>History:</b> Rabbi L. Gottlieb and A. Rauf spoke about the origin of the first Peace Walk, subsequent walks and the intention and goals for future walks and group actions.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The first walk took place in Albuquerque when Rabbi Lynn decided to walk from her synagogue to a local mosque on her birthday (April 12, 2002) as a gesture of peace and reconciliation. She explained this idea to A. Rauf over the phone, and he supported the activity. In spite of very little planning, 300 people from multiple spiritual communities participated on the 6.6 mile trek. There has also been a second Jewish-Muslim Peace Walk in Albuquerque.</li> <li>• Fellowship of Reconciliation (FOR) organizers put together a third Peace Walk in 10 days spanning the length of Manhattan (10-12 miles) on 9/11, which included 200 people from different religious groups (walking in the rain).</li> <li>• FOR has made a \$10,000 grant for organizing additional peace walks in the U.S. and for creating a Jewish/Muslim Reconciliation Handbook to help build a national reconciliation movement.</li> <li>• The walks endeavor to help people provide witness to reaffirming the common roots of our different religious traditions (as we are all children of Abraham); to achieve peace with justice; to use the positive energy in this country among religious groups to transform our communities, based on the covenants we have with our Creator; to discuss our preconceptions and misconceptions and truths; and to be part of the solution, not the problem.</li> <li>• The Philadelphia Peace Walk group should write a statement of purpose for the walk, which should take place between a synagogue and mosque (maximum 6-7 miles distance and three hours duration).</li> <li>• The name for any walk intentionally shifts between "Jewish-Muslim" and "Muslim-Jewish" Peace Walk to avoid any appearance of hierarchy. Although the original intention was for Muslim/Jewish reconciliation, all religious groups are welcome and encouraged to participate (and the name, therefore, can also include "Interfaith").</li> </ul>		

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Walking from/to the other group's house of prayer and affirming spiritual values are the primary intentions. As such, the walks are intentionally non-political, and no signs or slogans are permitted; however, subsequently—by walking, praying and giving witness to suffering together, participants have decided to fast together (during Ramadan) and engage in political work together (e.g., in witness to the Wall in Israel).</li> </ul>		
1.04	<p><b>Participants comments on the Peace Walk proposal:</b> At Rabbi Lynn's request, participants offered the following comments on the proposed Peace Walk:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The organizers have placed the focus on Jewish and Muslim reconciliation. My participation as a Christian has the same roots in "accompaniment" as those from North America who work with the people in Central America (per the Interfaith Community Building Group's activities in El Salvador); that is, to be part of and present in a healing process. So the walk is an invitation to accompany others in their reconciliation process.</li> <li>• This week's Torah reading (<i>parsha</i>) is <i>Lech L'cha</i>, in which God tells Avram (later to be renamed Abraham) to leave his father's house and "go to a land that I will show you"—without telling Avram where that is. So Avram takes his family and starts walking, following God's direction on faith alone. This Peace Walk is also a walk into an unknown place, and I'm trying to proceed on faith—to follow what I think God wants me to do—and see where the walking takes us.</li> <li>• It's necessary to keep breaking down the fear between peoples. We should proceed and not be afraid of each other.</li> <li>• I think everyone here is in favor of moving ahead, so we should start the planning process now.</li> <li>• I support the Walk. I think it's OK to highlight Jewish-Muslim reconciliation, as there has been so much pain and fear among our groups. God willing, the Walk will help bring us together, to see where the traditions merge and where we're different. In some ways, Islamic mystical traditions have moved me in ways more than my own.</li> <li>• I fully endorse the Walk. I think it should be in the spring for weather and planning reasons.</li> <li>• Rabbi Lynn noted that materials are available to help the group write its statement of purpose. The Walk can include lamentations and mourning for the dead—or any other ritual(s) the group deems appropriate, and can be used as an organizing tool (e.g., with affinity groups, information tables, action guides, political and arts data). Previous walks have also included puppetry of hands with strings on sticks and other (non-political) visual aids.</li> </ul>		
1.05	<p><b>Walk and meeting dates:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Peace Walk date: The tentative date for the Peace Walk is <u>Sunday, May 2, 2004 at 1:00 PM.</u> Group representatives will</b></li> </ul>		

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	<p>check their community calendars for any conflicts and report back at the next planning meeting.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Next planning meeting date: The next planning meeting will take place on <u>Monday, December 8 at 7:00 PM</u> at Al Aqsa Society, 1501 Germantown Avenue (near 3<sup>rd</sup> and Girard Aves.), Philadelphia.</b></li></ul>		