

Interfaith Peace Walk for Jewish-Muslim Reconciliation

Minutes of Meeting No. 7

Location	Philadelphia, PA	Issue Date	June 22, 2004
Type	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Meeting <input type="checkbox"/> Phone Call	Date Held	June 9, 2004
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Place Held	Mishkan Shalom, Philadelphia, PA
Subject	Interfaith Peace Walk for Jewish-Muslim Reconciliation Post-Walk Planning Meeting	Recorded By	L. Laver

Participants:	Distribution:	Distribution:	Distribution:
Ronald Abrams	Dana Axelrod	Ron Goldwyn	Dr. Nancy Lydick
Mohammad Aziz	Dr. M. Almashhadani	Evelyn Haas	Rabbi Jill Maderer
Bobbie Breitman	Judith Axler	Rabbi Lynn Gottlieb	Richard Maglenier
Alison Carter	Sharon Barr	Jeanne-Marie Hagan	Mary Martin
Vic Compher	Kathy Bergen	Zahida Halani	Steve Masters
Jim Feldman	Al Bingham	Jan Hamer	Sue Miesnik
David Goldstein	Rabbi Aaron Bisno	Monica Hannon	Mizba Mirza
Peter Handler	Barbara Bloomfield	Eman Hasan	My Mohammad
Marwan Kreidie	Aimee Brackbill	Ahmed Hefuna	Shahid Mohiuddin
Lance Laver	Joe Brenman	Rabbi Linda Holtzman	Ron Morgan
Herb Levine	Joanie Brooks	Ophelia Hurst	Fr. Joe Mostardi
Rabbi Yael Levy	Kareem Brown	Katherine Huseman	Malik Mubashshir
Jim McGovern	Wilbur Bryant	Moeiz Husini	Aziz Nathoo
George Mordecai	Bonnie Buller	Ambreen/Ajaz Hussain	Emily Nepon
Steve Newman	Dyhan Cassie	Iftekhhar Hussain	Jennifer North
Victoria Pearson	Mitchell Chanin	A.S. Mahdi Ibn-Ziyad	Tim O'Connell
Carol Rick	Andy Chary	Adab Ibrahim	Rev. Rene Olivera
Jerry Schenkman	Joe Clay	Riham Ibrahim	Hoon Park
Tariq Scherfen	Abigail Cohen	Jaeson	Patricia Pearce
Lil Sigal	Emily Cohen	Ken Johnson	Alex Pearl
Sharon Sigal	Rory Cohen	Rachael Kamel	Abby Perkiss
Rabbi George Stern	Edd Conboy	Jonathan Kammer	Steve Perkiss
Rubina Tareen	Patricia Coyne	Josef Kardos	Susan Quant
Martin Wiley	Brian Daniels	Nehad Khader	Imam Farid W. Rasool
Renate Woessner	Katie Day	Bilal Khan	Abdul Rauf Campos-Marquetti
	Stan Diamond	Haajerah Khan	Waqar Rehman
Distribution:	Sean Dolan	Robert Koh	John Rice
Attendees	Willy Dounes	Marlis Kraft-Zemel	Janis Risch
Imam Jamil Abdullah	Roy Feinberg	Rabbi Nancy Kreimer	April Rosenblum
Sabriyah Abdullah	Catherine Fisha	Jeanne Ayesha Lauernborg	Judy Rosenblum
Zakiyyah Abdullah	Temma Fishman	Claire Laver	Anna Rosenfield
Thea Abu El-Haj	Rita Fitzgerald	Mary Laver	Sara Rosenson
Osama Abu Shariefah	Sr. Sheila Flynn	Nathan Laver	Josh Rothstein
Irv Ackelsberg	Rafiq Friend	Leslie Leff	Susan Rouda
Hassan Ahmad	Fara Gaye	Margaret Lenzi	Abby Ruder
Imam Shamsud Din Ali	M.J. Gentile	Pat Leopold	Schirlyn K. Abolus Sabur
Stephanie/Charles Andrews	Hope Gerban	Kip Letiner	Nick Sandees
Elayne Ashbey	Phyllis Gilbert	Rob Rafi Levin	Marilyn Santoyo

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Distribution:	Distribution:	Distribution:	Distribution:
Jenny Sawyer Jerry Schenkman Jon Scherer Tariq Scherfen Joseph Shamis Larry Snider Grace Song Yaffa-Shira Sultan	Cy Swartz Lois Swartz Rabia Syed Yolanda Taurozzi Vesere Taussig Susan Teegen-Case Elizabeth Terry Marghie Thompson	Ellen Tichenor Barbara Tilley Rhoda Toperzer Carol Towarnicky Wendy Univer Antonio Valle Rabbi Arthur Waskow Ezra Weinberg	Dan Wolk Billy Yalowitz Abdul Yassin Ahlam Yassin Dena Zakaria Simone Zelitch

No.	Item	Action By	Due Date
7.01	Purpose: Interfaith Peace Walk for Jewish-Muslim Reconciliation Post-Walk Planning Meeting		
7.02	Opening prayer: Rabbi Yael Levy opened the meeting by offering part of the <i>Sim Shalom</i> prayer in Hebrew and English (<i>Grant peace, goodness and blessing in the world, grace, love and mercy over us....</i>) from the Sabbath <i>Amidah</i> .		
7.03	Introductions: All participants introduced themselves and the groups with which they are affiliated.		
7.04	<p>Peace Walk Reflections: The group then offered reactions to and reflections on the Peace Walk of May 2 that included over 400 people walking from Al-Aqsa Mosque to St. Augustine Church to the Liberty Bell to Congregation Rodeph Shalom—with prayers and singing at each stop:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It was like a taste of redemption. I felt really moved. • We didn't get rained out...it was a momentous time...I'm hoping this isn't the final activity of this group. • Marches communicate messages, but here the large part was talking to each other during the walk. • I'm in recovery, and I told a couple of guys [in that group] to go...one was sober for four days—and still is after the walk, now for 30-40 days...when the Imam chanted, I felt these vibrations, which I later learned is supposed to happen, getting a rush...it was more than I expected. • The walk exceeded my expectations. The number was 400-600! Everything was good, peaceful. • I felt lucky to have been there. The walk had a sacred feel to it—emotionally and spiritually. It was an incredible experience. We need to build that into something. • Even the police were so nicely arranged. 		

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It was moving to be in each sacred space, to celebrate each other's faith. • I was raised Catholic, and I really lost it in the church—to see everyone praying together. I was in the rear during the walk, and it was beautiful to see all the people from there. • I had some negative conversations. One was with an Islamic woman who had a hard time with the Imam chanting in the church; and a Catholic man made a disparaging remark about the Islamic faith. We need to have hard conversations. It was sobering, opening some negative edges. • There were many blessings. Everything in the planning went right, including the timing of all the events. One thing that wasn't planned was the Imam chanting at each stop. That was like a refrain, a coda that held it all together. It felt like the cloud or pillar of God was above us throughout the walk. • Everyone wearing white shirts made a difference. • The walk wasn't just the walk. In all our planning meetings, we built momentum. In a layered way, all the pieces came together and exceeded expectations. There was some anxiety in the planning about having enough peacekeepers, but at the end 10 more people came along. Reb Lynn and Abdul Rauf were delighted and pleased. • Let us pray that the spirit of love and justice in the walk guides our way. 		
7.05	<p>Brainstorming for future plans: In introducing the brainstorming session for future group activities, Rabbi Yael encouraged the group to "think big" about all possibilities; and the group came up with the following items:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Re-start Maimonah—the historical Moroccan feast celebration that occurs after Passover, when Muslim neighbors invite their Jewish friends over for bread and food (the day after Pesach ends). People/communities in the group have held the event twice. Muslims and Jews would need to educate each other about the tradition. • Support of human rights in the city for Muslims and others. The group will support the Muslim community, as appropriate, if the community requests assistance. At this time, there is not consensus in this community about general group actions. • Engage in text study together. Group study of the three faiths' sacred texts would help "remedy profound ignorance of the two other faiths." Consider dovetailing this activity with a "Truth-Out," a public event expounding on the Hebrew Bible, Koran and Christian Bible. (Note: See list of forthcoming activities at the end of these Minutes for a Truth-Out on the Iraq War and <i>Genesis: In Interfaith Dialogue</i> program organized by the Glenside Ministerium.) 		

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	<p>One study session suggestion: <i>The Unity of God</i>, where folks from each faith bring readings on this topic to discuss.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Celebrate civil liberties. Education about the various religions is critical, as is celebrating civil liberties and the Bill of Rights (at the Constitution Center?), as we did on the Walk at the Liberty Bell, encouraging Americans to live up to the country's ideals and be inclusive. • Celebrate an occasion together. Bring people on the Peace Walk e-mail list (now over 170) together for a meal and facilitated discussion—or discussions in small groups. • Hold a Peacemaking conference. V. Compher noted that this would be a one-day gathering to discuss what Muslim, Christian and Jewish traditions teach us about peacemaking. Such a conference might include other groups, such as the Arts & Spirituality Center, the Interfaith Center and the Inter-religious Committee for Peace in the Middle East. • Have a camp experience for children of different faiths. This would be similar to the <i>Seeds of Peace</i> program that brings 9-13 year-old Jewish and Muslim children together in a camp setting in Maine and has been operating successfully for a number of years. H. Levine offered use of Fellowship Farm (a 120-acre retreat center) and assistance with fund raising for such a camp gathering that would also involve counselors and junior counselors of different faiths. Such programs work because they involve younger people who are open to listening and shifting their perspectives. • Create an event on 9/11/04. This could be an alternative gathering, offering a different perspective on 9/11, which otherwise is likely to be appropriated for political means and used to appeal to people in the wrong ways. The group agreed, however, that it is premature to take a strong position on the Middle East. <p>As 9/11 occurs on a Saturday (Jewish Sabbath) this year, we could create a pamphlet for synagogues to use as texts during the morning service. (This day is also <i>Selichot</i>, the beginning of the Days of Awe/Rosh Hashanah/Yom Kippur period.)</p> <p>M. Wiley spoke of his work with former inmates, many HIV-positive, Christians and Muslims, and how—although they would be open to such an activity—have little experience outside their own community. They would need to be shown, for example, that the "war on terror" is really "the war on crime"—internationalized. They would also need transportation to any event.</p> <p>G. Stern asked: How to bring in others and minister to groups needing care without being patronizing? One way may be to pair a mosque with a church and synagogue to program things together. Any such event must be comfortable for all sides.</p>		

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	<p>9/11 has been a frightening time for Muslims—do they want to be out there or hide? R. Tureen noted that what Muslims think about 9/11 never came out in the mainstream media. What did the Iraqis think of the war? Filmmaker Adam Shapiro talked to the common people in Iraq about their views, a film [title?] worth viewing. Muslims felt judged right away, even though the first who died in 9/11 was a Muslim. See the PBS documentary: <i>Legacy of the Prophet Mohammad</i>.</p> <p>Suggestion: Do the 9/11 program on Sunday, 9/12. Last year, a similar 9/11 event did not get good press coverage. Ask, "Now what?" How can we be an inclusive society in the wake of this tragedy? Note that peacemaking is our theme. A 9/12 event could build toward the proposed Peacemaking conference. The Arts & Spirituality Center is planning a memorial event on Sunday, 9/12 and we could connect with that group.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have a social/spiritual event that helps build trust. To get to know each better, we should have a big barbeque/picnic before 9/12 that would also include spiritual teachings from the three faith traditions. Food and learning. This would not necessarily be a public event, but something for the group to do first. The public statement (on 9/12) would follow. Eating is like communion, and as V. Pearson pointed out, "Communion can be really radical!" 		
7.06	<p>Decisions: After the brainstorming session, the group made the following decisions:</p>		
7.06.1	<p>Hold a "Peace Walk picnic" on Sunday, 7/25/04 from 4-6 PM in a public place (like Fairmount Park or a city block).</p> <p>The meal will provide an opportunity to "break bread" as a pluralistic effort at Peacemaking. The picnic will respect the Jewish and Muslim meat laws, which are similar.</p> <p>To be determined: Location, rain date (?), transportation (for those without cars).</p> <p><u>Picnic committee:</u> R. Abrams, A. Carter, M. Kreidie, H. Levine, G. Mordecai (June only).</p>		
7.06.2	<p>Study sacred texts.</p> <p>There are two initiatives here:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) A small, ongoing text study group for regular attendees; and 2) A one-day conference/seminar including academics, possibly on Peacemaking (6-8 months from now). <p><u>Study committee:</u> B. Breitman, V. Compheer, R. Tureen.</p>		
7.06.3	<p>Hold a program on 9/12/04.</p> <p>Work with other groups, such as the Arts & Spirituality Center for this Sunday program (see discussion above).</p>		

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	<p><u>9/12 program committee</u>: M. Aziz, V. Compher, A. Carter, M. Kreidie, Y. Levy, G. Mordecai, S. Newman, G. Stern.</p>		
7.07	<p>Identity discussion: T. Scherfen asked: Do we want the group to take on a political, secular or religious direction? This question led to the following comments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I'm already in two groups doing interfaith text/religious study. We need to do actions, commit to social change. • Do we want to be an institution or align ourselves with another institution? • All these parts play with each other. Don't rigidify the group. Have a broad definition. • By walking together with a common statement, we have established a direction and values. We're a spiritually-based group, as the mission statement says: <p><i>We invite people of all faiths to join us on a spiritual journey. As we walk from Al-Aqsa Mosque to Congregation Rodeph Shalom, we will lament war and the loss of life. We will pray for the safety and freedom of all people. We will embrace hope, not fear. The true pathway of peace is God's desire for love and justice, not military might. Join with us to show that peace between people of all faiths is possible.</i></p> <p><i>Let us call out Salaam. Let us call out Shalom. Let us call out Peace in the language of Love.</i></p> <p>This is a <i>mission</i> statement. We can talk about the full implications later.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I'm nervous about defining ourselves too much. We need to give ourselves a lot of permission about <i>becoming</i>...see what rises. Let's be careful about being too defined. • The desire to be public has risen. The energy seems to be toward public, not just private, events. This is where my investments lie. • The picnic should be made public, even if not advertised as a "public" event. <p>Group consensus: Follow the initiatives identified above and see where these activities lead (without further definition at this time).</p>		
7.08	<p>Peace Walk e-mail list:</p> <p>L. Laver explained that the Peace Walk e-mail list has been used to date to communicate about Peace Walk events only. Some folks have used the list's names/addresses (or part thereof) to send other notices, messages and political pieces. With those signing up at the Peace Walk, the list now numbers over 170 (and is actually three lists to facilitate transmission). List notices are now sent without names identified. L. Laver (as list supervisor) requested guidelines from the group on appropriate uses of the post-Walk list.</p>		

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	<p>Comments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The post with the "inflammatory" pictures was OK. I was glad to get it. • That post included a quote at the end that was very offensive to me. We need to be compassionate with each other. • Consider two lists—one for event activities and one for activists/organizers. • Consider setting up the list with Yahoo under its groups option, which would allow all members to write to each other. • Keep the focus on our group's activities and purposes. • Names should not be used for other purposes without the individual's consent. <p>Consensus:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain the list for group activities and purposes only. If someone has an event or item to publicize, contact L. Laver, who will act as "moderator" to determine appropriateness for the entire group. The key consideration should be if the information is related to the work or mission of the Peace Walk group. 		
7.09	<p>Fund raising: The group currently has \$791.42 to use for future activities after the Peace Walk expenses (\$360 for buses and \$50 for art supplies...all refreshments and other items donated). These funds were raised exclusively from "passing the hat" at earlier planning meetings and at the end of the Peace Walk and from an appeal in the Minutes (no separate, targeted fund raising).</p>		
7.10	<p>Other activities discussed at this meeting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • R. Tureen has helped organize a <i>Muslim Youth Day</i> celebration at Six Flags in New Jersey on 9/17/04. All are welcome. The cost is \$20/person and there is a dress code. • D. Goldstein spoke about a program he is organizing (with B. Landau and T. Bissinger) for youth at Mishkan Shalom and Al-Aqsa, patterned after "sweat lodges" experiences. Youth 13-15 years old will gather at a location in Pottstown for joint activities on either 9/12 or 9/17/04. Additional resources are needed to finalize the program and for follow-up. 		
7.11	<p>Closing prayer: Cantor G. Mordecai ended the meeting by reprising his Hebrew chanting of the ancient Priestly Benediction prayer (while Rabbi Yael read the prayer in English): <i>May God bless you and safeguard you.</i> <i>May God illuminate His countenance for you and be gracious to you.</i> <i>May God turn His countenance to you and establish peace for you.</i> (Numbers 6:24-26)</p>		

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7.12	Next meeting: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The next planning meeting will be at Al-Aqsa on Wednesday, August 4, 2004, at 7:00 PM.		
7.13	Additional announcements received from others: Following are other forthcoming programs/notices of significance to the Peace Walk group:		

LET'S GET THE TRUTH-OUT

**SUNDAY, JUNE 27, 2004 – 4:00 – 6:00 PM –
CHURCH OF THE ADVOCATE, 18TH & DIAMOND STREET, PHILADELPHIA**

THE TRUTH about the Iraq War. Talks by **Celeste Zappala**, the peace committed mother of a Philadelphia soldier recently killed in Iraq, and **Henry Nicholas**, President of 1199/AC/AFSCME and parent of a Philadelphia soldier in Iraq.

THE TRUTH about deadly and distorted priorities – the impact of making war our priority instead of health, education and the needs of the poor, and the deaths that result from this choice: A talk by **Shelly Yanoff** of Philadelphia Citizens for Children and Youth.

We will share in self-education, voted mobilization and registration, and an interfaith litany of grief, national repentance and transformation. Musical performances by Tribe 1 and Cookman Methodist High School students will lift our hearts.

We will leave with tools to go out to our houses of worship and our community centers and organize meetings with members of clergy and civic leaders to encourage spreading these truths.

This June 27th event is part of national Win Without War weekend of action demanding: **End the U.S. Military Occupation of Iraq: Set a Date for the Withdrawal of Our Soldiers!** For more information: http://www.winwithoutwarus.org/html/new_setdate.html

Co-sponsored by an interfaith peace network including The Church of the Advocate, First United Methodist Church of Germantown, The Shalom Center, Metropolitan Christian Council of Philadelphia, Catholic Peace Fellowship, Philadelphia Physicians for Social Responsibility and Brandywine Peace Community, Peace Action.

For more information, call The Shalom Center at 215/844-8494 or write shalomctr@aol.com or Brandywine Peace Community at 610/544-1818, brandywine@juno.com.

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**EYES WIDE OPEN: THE HUMAN COST of WAR in IRAQ:
A TRAVELING EXHIBIT BY THE AMERICAN FRIENDS SERVICE COMMITTEE**

JULY 2-4, INDEPENDENCE PARK VISITOR'S CENTER, 6TH & MARKET STREET, PHILADELPHIA

This exhibit features:

- More than 800 pairs of combat boots, each bearing the name of a U.S. soldier who has died in the Iraq war.
- A 24-foot-long wall of names and incidents of Iraqi civilian deaths.
- A multimedia exhibit inside the Visitor Center, featuring videos, art and panels on the human cost of the war and ongoing occupation.

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The exhibit puts a human face on the casualties in the Iraq war, spotlights the deaths of U.S. soldiers and Iraqi civilians and urges U.S. government accountability. In the months ahead, it will visit more than 10 cities, including Boston and New York City during the Democratic and Republican National Conventions. A Philadelphia press conference on Friday, July 2, will feature veterans, military family members, an Iraqi speaking on the June 30 transition, and voices from the U.S. peace movement.

We need your help to...

- Promote the event, including leafleting before and during the exhibit;
- Set up and break down the displays each day; and
- Pass out educational information.

Volunteers will work two-hour shifts throughout Friday, Saturday and Sunday, starting at 7 AM. We especially need help in the mornings and evenings with set-up and breakdown.

To volunteer, call Katrina Weber at 215/241-7199 or e-mail kweber@afsc.org

Visit the exhibit online: <http://eyes.peacechicago.org/> and <http://www.afsc.org/human-face/default.htm>

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GENESIS: AN INTERFAITH DIALOGUE
GLENSIDE MINISTERIUM SUMMER BIBLE SERIES

Come hear a panel of Christians, Muslims and Jews discuss the sacred stories

- **Creation/Temptation** **Wednesday, July 7**
- **Noah, Before and After** **Wednesday, July 14**
- **Abraham and His Family** **Wednesday, July 21**
- **Joseph** **Wednesday, July 28**

St. Paul's Evangelical Lutheran Church
Easton Road and Mt. Carmel Avenue
Glenside, PA 19038

All programs start at 7:30 PM.

Information: 215/884-3005
Refreshments to follow
All are Welcome!

Note: Panel members include Rabbi George Stern, Rabbi Dov Lerner and Iftekhar Hussain.