

Task Force on Israel and Palestine
CA-NV Conference
United Methodist Church

Minutes May 14, 2008

Present: Doug Smith (Chair), Dean Fearn, Peg Langer, Doug Sibley, Yvonne Turner, Kathy Smith,
Guest: Rabbi Dan Goldblatt

We welcomed guest Rabbi Dan Goldblatt and introduced Bishop Shamana.
Doug announced the addition of new Task Force members: Pastor Chamberlan of Alum Rock UMC, and a member from CUIC (to be designated).

REPORTS: Doug Smith reviewed the action agenda proposed by the 2008 GBGM Mission Team. Areas of success include:

- IP workshops are on-going by various members of the Task Force.
- CA/NV UMW web site includes stories from the mission trip and offers the DVD & Study Guide for sale.
- The Task Force now has its own WEB site set up by Dean Fearn.
(www.cnumc/ministries/bd of missions/Israel-Palestine)
- Three members attended Christians for Middle East Peace workshops in Wash. D.C. and lobbied legislators (Yvonne Turner reported)
- Rabbi Dan Goldblatt and Doug Smith are working jointly to promote interfaith dialogue.

Doug Sibley reported on General Conference focusing on issues of divestment and resolutions related to Middle East peace (refer to www.unitedmethodistdivestment.com and www.mfsaweb.org).

EDUCATION: Doug Smith circulated copies of an essay by Rabbi Michael Lerner (May 5, 2008) reflecting on the Jewish 60th Anniversary. He suggests that we ...”create dialogue to learn how to express oneself in ways that are supportive and not hostile,...learn how to respond to violence with non-violence and...teach it in our schools, churches, synagogues, mosques and religious schools.

Chairman Smith showed video clips on *Compassionate Listening* and on *One Voice*, a Jewish/Arab coalition working for peace.

Other advocacy group are **J Street**, a Jewish lobby group to counter the voice of APEC and **Americans for Middle East Peace & Security**.

ACTION: Discussion followed the *Compassionate Listening* video about how we can implement the idea to bring local Jewish/Christian/Muslim communities into respectful and

meaningful dialogue. Workshops could be in 3 parts, each part held in a different venue for the comfort of the participants (synagogue, church, and mosque). Other videos to consider for that goal are *Crossing the Line* and *Children of Abraham*. Rabbi Goldblatt also suggested an ecumenical Compassionate Listening trip to Israel/Palestine for August 2009 to coincide with Sulha (peace project).

- The Task Force will purchase/borrow the full-length videos for review
- Rabbi Goldblatt will help facilitate a Compassionate Listening program and offered his synagogue.

- Doug Sibley will contact the superintendant for Contra Costa and
Doug Smith will contact the superintendant for Delta District to explain the project.
- Doug Smith suggested Rabbi Goldblatt be a co-presenter at the School of Missions IP workshops and will explore the idea with the Dean of the School of Missions.
- Doug Smith suggested updating the DVD on IP to include messages of Compassionate Listening.
- Doug Sibley will arrange and provide details for a task force display table at Annual Conference. Volunteers are needed to staff the table.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- **May 14, Piedmont, May 18 S.F., May 25 Santa Clara Workshop Series**
Interfaith Witness for Peace in the Middle East: *Confronting Islamophobia & Anti-Semitism*
- **June 19**, Sacramento First UMC: Conference Commission on Christian Unity & Interreligious Concerns annual luncheon: A Joyful Judaism
- **June 25**, Presbytery of San Jose dinner
guest speaker Archbishop Elias Chacour: *An Israeli Palestinian Ambassador for Peace*
- Oct 26-Nov 7 Compassionate Listening trip to IP

Meeting Adjourned at 2:15
Respectfully submitted, Kathy Smith