



Middle East Peace Initiative 2004

In the course of 2003-2004, over 7500 "Ambassadors for Peace" and religious leaders from 151 nations traveled to Israel and Palestine to introduce and engage others in consideration of unifying framework that is universal in nature and therefore trans-national and trans-religious. In addition there were 3 international conferences convened involving 459 religious, political, academic, civil society and media leaders, from 53 nations urging discussion of this innovative framework at the highest levels.

Introducing an innovative initiative that seeks broad-based change is no simple task plus it is rather audacious. Efforts must withstand the various and natural tests of reasonability, timing, logic, capacity and commitment. Such an endeavor put into motion a challenging series of events during 2003 and 2004 as the IIFWP's Middle East Peace initiative (MEPI) gradually took shape through the committed efforts of many from around the world.

So IIFWP stretched itself and its global network of Ambassadors for Peace who ventured to the place that until today, stands as an historic center of intense human wrestling with love and hate, hope and resentment, sacred vision and terrible atrocities.

DEVELOPING THE HUMAN CAPACITY FOR PEACE

Peace is not a commodity nor a destination. It is a way of life. Peace is constructed from specific kinds of human interactions and peace is compromised by others. The IIFWP continues to focus on key characteristics and capacities required both by leadership and citizens at large to realize peace. Furthermore, history provides humanity with

For peace to emerge in the Holy Land as a durable replacement of violence, hope first needs to become a viable alternative to hopelessness and inevitable violence. This hope must then differentiate into trusting, productive relationships. These "internal" dynamics of peace must be nurtured and strengthened, ultimately to compete for the hearts and souls of those steeped in centuries of hatred and distrust.

In the end, the effectiveness of the MEPI will rely largely upon the resonance of its principles with the conscience of men and women and their relevance and usefulness in guiding preventive actions.... *continued.*



optimal moments for significant change. This "millennial spring" in these early years of the twenty-first century, are hopeful and pivotal. IIFWP therefore urges its Ambassadors for Peace and affiliated organizations to lead the way in implementing the kind of changes needed to realize peace so as to leverage the opportunities provided by this time.

2003-2004

Mobilizations

5 Pilgrimages (May 2003 - March 2004) involving more than 3,575 clergy, political leaders and peace activists from key WWII "enemy nations" of USA, UK, Italy, France, Germany, Japan and Korea.

"Women of Peace" Mobilization involving over 520 women from 41 nations, May 2004.

7 Ambassadors for Peace Tours bringing over 2500 people from 151 nations, June 2004 - November 2004

- Unlocking the potential for peace by putting in place a unifying framework, without which the resources available through religions, NGOs and nations remain inaccessible and underutilized.



The key capacity that needs to be developed is the ability to “live for the sake of others.” This capacity draws upon all dimensions of a person’s life, and can perhaps be best understood as the ideal alignment of all basic human competencies—of the mind, the body and the heart. “Living for the sake of others” is the essential standard that provides the clarity needed to align our personal, familial,

community and national competencies. As a core global ethic, it makes a peaceful world possible.

Many of today’s rules of thumb, such as the problematic “take care of number one” naturally pit one’s interests against another’s. Whereas “living for the sake of others” allows a natural, if challenging, alignment of priorities that creates the possibility of order and harmony, and so, the possibility of peace.



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To plant the roots of peace deep in a society requires substantial investment. The investment needed is economic and political investment and most importantly, it is an investment “of the heart.” To establish a genuine, durable peace, this dimension cannot be sidestepped.

In some communities, trust is built over long periods of time. In others, it is expanded through the medium of trade, sometimes

through peace negotiations. But the quickest way to disarm a volatile community’s tendency toward violence is to introduce “third parties” whose agenda is clearly non-partisan and undermines both parties’ previous surety of the inevitability of clash. This sows the seeds of peace, countering the violence and especially the belief that there is no other way.

To this end, over 7500 people from 151 nations traveled to the Israel and Palestine with this “soft” yet very substantial contribution.

Could these seeds, planted in strategic places, really make a difference to the peace process in the Middle East? The Ambassadors for Peace who came with the interreligious and international MEPI were willing to risk their lives on it.



MAIN MOBILIZATIONS TO THE MIDDLE EAST IN 2003 AND 2004

Pilgrimage 1

132 Clergy from the U.S.A., May 12-20, 2003

Pilgrimage 2

122 US Clergy and Political Leaders, September 5-13, 2003

Pilgrimage 3

1200 religiously motivated people from 7 former “enemy nations” including: Korea, Japan, America, England, France, Germany, Italy

Pilgrimage 4

3,200 from 7 former enemy nations. Events dovetailed with an international IIFWP Conference, December 15-23, 2003

Pilgrimage 5

120 clergy from U.S.A., March 7-15, 2004

6th Mobilization: Women of Peace

526 women from 41 nations, May 21-28, 2004



7th Mobilization

307 Ambassadors for Peace from 33 Latin American and Caribbean countries, July 26-29, 2004

8th & 9th Mobilization

300 Participants from 34 nations in an overlapping African and Oceania mobilization of Ambassadors for Peace. August 7-20, 2004.

10th Mobilization

583 Ambassadors for Peace from 45 European and Eurasian nations, September 2-16.

11th Mobilization

551 North American Ambassadors for Peace from 2 nations, September 10-24, 2004.

12th Mobilization

409 Ambassadors for Peace from 21 Asian nations, October 15-28, 2004.

13th Mobilization

138 Ambassadors for Peace from 38 nations, primarily from Africa and Oceania, and including Turkey and USA, November

KEY PEACE BUILDING DEVELOPMENTS OF THE AMBASSADORS FOR PEACE



MEPI Conference, Washington, DC, February, 2003

The scope of the impact made by the Ambassadors for Peace cannot be easily measured nor assessed. But as former head of state, current legislators, religious leaders and civil society activists made their way from Latin America, China, Russia, Lithuania, Samoa, Ghana, Japan, Philippines and more to embrace the Jewish Rabbi, the Palestinian Imam, families who had lost children to suicide bombers, Palestinian youth who only knew hopelessness, change was afoot. There was a softening of many views and a renewal of perspectives and hope.



IIFWP Meeting in Ramallah with President Abdurrahman Wabid

While distrust was still the first reaction, hope was the next. And hope kindled hope. What does this opening up of minds and hearts to new possibilities mean for peace at-large?

Leaders in the **Al Aqsa Mosque** gradually opened up the doors of the Mosque, then the Dome of the Rock, and their rolodex to the returning waves of international visitors. They experienced a commitment to peace in a way vastly different to paper agreements. They counted it in numbers, in time, in nationalities, by religions, by race, and in the obvious self-giving of those who came. And they counted it in the constant message of hope, determination and faith of the people returning—faith in the possibility, indeed the imperative of peace.

When a group of **Native Americans** visited Jerusalem's Mayor Lupolianski in September 2004, he could listen anew to the message of peace, because it was coming from the Elders of a people who themselves became displaced from their own land.



Ambassadors for Peace facilitate youth projects such as "Service for Peace": Jerusalem, Bethlehem, Beit Shemesh, Haifa 2004

Cultural Centers were established in Gaza and Beit Shemesh. Through a donation of computers, youth are given the opportunities for online education and training

in web-site development and music composition. And many other service projects involving youth have flourished around the Ambassadors of Peace activities.

Relationships with leaders of both the **Palestinian and Jewish** communities have developed and expanded. Even in the midst of the challenges proffered by the sensitive ME environment, progress continues. Common ground is being found in the midst of worlds divided by violence and resentment.

Even though distrust is the default, establishing trust in the common need for a shared tomorrow is the real work at hand.



All the IIFWP *Ambassadors for Peace* who traveled to the Middle East to see the situation for themselves and to make their contribution were challenged to put into practice their singular commission: to live for the sake of others. In this case, the real war being waged is to regain the dignity of those lost to anger and resentment that they may not perpetuate and multiply this crime.

The regional IIFWP is also forming its **Peace Council** to provide guidance and support for the MEPI and other initiatives for peace in the region. ◆

MEPI FOUNDATIONS LIE IN INTER-RELIGIOUS DIALOGUE AND ACTION



The Middle East Peace Initiative is rooted in the world-view and lived commitments of Rev. Sun Myung Moon and his associates.

The MEPI is grounded in substantial interreligious efforts that go back to 1982. IIFWP predecessors and affiliated organizations began in earnest to promote dialogue among the religions of the region at that time, beginning with the Youth Seminar on the World Religions. At this time, students of all faiths, journeyed to major religious centers in a continuous dialogue and experience beyond faith and nationality. They began in Jerusalem. In 1985 this work evolved into the Religious Youth Service that has since conducted over 100 projects in more than 40 countries.

Also in 1985 the first Assembly of World Religions brought religious leaders and academics to dialogue, exchange ideas and to forge new alliances for peace.

In addition to religious dialogue, extensive long-term investment in several other areas also informed the basis for the MEPI as it functions today. These include family education, projects for racial integration, economic

and political foundations, media and media organizations, and initiatives for service and social welfare, and many others.

The pursuit of lasting peace in the Middle East requires an integrated, coordinated effort engaging these major areas and more. MEPI of the IIFWP is an implemented and lived ideology.

These are IIFWP's principles for peace:

1. God exists, and has an original ideal for enduring peace in human affairs which can be learned and realized.
2. The spiritual world exists and has an impact on contemporary affairs.
3. Peace activists can be effective only to the degree they embody the ideals of peace in character and lifestyle.
4. Stable, God-centered families are the wellspring of peace and all good things in human society. Conversely, social ills originate from family disorder. Family also embodies the metaphor for successfully attaining peace.



5. Religious leaders should lead by example resolving all conflicts emerging from boundaries and differences, and especially from religious differences. Religious leaders are responsible more than any for helping set world affairs aright by successfully modeling

Calendar

March/April

14th Mobilization to the Middle East

May/June

Regional Preparatory Meeting for the Formation of the Middle East Regional Interreligious and International Peace Council.

July/August

Interreligious Youth Sports Festival, Asan, Republic of Korea Celebrating the International Year of Sports for Peace

Annual Assembly and convention of all regional IIPC preparatory commissions.

September

60th Session of the General Assembly of the United Nations

October 3rd

3rd Anniversary of the founding of the Interreligious and International Peace Council initiative.



the highest standards in all relations.

6. Secular powers benefit greatly from consultation with religious leaders who demonstrate equal concern for all people and who cooperate across religious and denominational lines.
7. Peace building and conflict prevention requires collaborative participation from all sectors of civil society, including education, business, the arts, sports, as well as social service and community welfare initiatives.
8. Peace in the Middle East requires investment and cooperation from third parties beyond the region, not just from players immediately or obviously affected by developments in the region. 