

RELIGION AND DOMESTIC VIOLENCE COMMITTEE  
Minutes of January 26, 2021

Meeting was called to order at approximately 1:06 pm by co-chair Bernita Walker. Introduction found present co-chair Varsha N., co-chair Cecelia Walker, Rabbi Steven Carr Reuben, Symone Fairchild, Kitty Glass, Kelie Sturgis, Nafisa Ahmed, Mary Jane Felix, Alejandra Gomez, Jerilyn Stapleton, Sheetal Ayyathan, Carol Tantau, Guillermo Rivas, and Jolene Cooper. Each attendee gives their organization, what brought them to the meeting, their faith or culture practice, an interesting personal fact and a Favorite Musical Artist.

Our Guest speaker, Rabbi Steven Reuben, Founder of “Home Shalom” was introduced by co-chair Cecelia Walker. He began by sharing a book title that he and his wife wrote entitled “How to marry your second husband first” and then providing the definition of a Rabbi given to him by one of his 3<sup>rd</sup> grade students in his religious school, “A Rabbi is someone who talks to God through a microphone”, now it’s like ‘talks to God through Zoom or Webex!’”

Rabbi Reuben shared with us a project that he started when he stepped down as the Senior Rabbi of his Synagogue, Home Shalom, a four-year Program. He began by sharing comments on Amanda Gorman, the young poet who spoke at the inauguration. He focused on her last two lines of the poem “In every corner called our country, our people diverse and beautiful will emerge battered and beautiful. When day comes, we step out of the shade a flamed and unafraid the new dawn blooms as we free it for there is always light if only, we are brave enough to see it, if only we’re brave enough to be it”. He compared our desire to move forward and be the light in the atmosphere of today’s issues regarding DV/IPV. He referred to Proverbs 20:27 The light of God is the soul of the human being.

He shared with us why he decided to do what is foundational for Jewish philosophy and the Jewish approach to life itself. The single most important thing is the first thing it says about human being. God created human beings in His image. The first look at the earth from space there were no dotted lines, no separatism. All of our different racial traditions, religious, traditions on this one little planet and we’re fighting with each other. That we created that has flawed our existence. No exceptions noted. Fundamental to life. Noting that there are more things that unite us than divide us.

For instance, DV takes place in all communities, it is not exclusive to one regardless of dividing lines. The program *Home Shalom* started locally, to his local Palisades’ ministerial association, he broached the concept and went about sharing with them the knowledge he had experienced in addressing the issue. Kitty Glass shared with us the concept of the reference guide that they created with what to do when faced with DV in congregation. (copy attached) The reference card was an action to encourage Rabbis’ to not be afraid to address the issue. Giving Clergy the opportunity to learn what they missed in seminary or their place of formal training. The need of sharing the fact that DV is #1 cause of injury to women in the world.

He encouraged us to reach out to our different seminaries of the different faith’s practical ideologies. Pastoral counseling classes on drug and alcohol program, grief counseling, should automatically to a part of the curriculum.

Question to Rabbi Rueben: Points and tips you would want advocates to take forward when working with victims in the Jewish faith: remember that they, more often than not, think that they are the only victims, yet as in the Jewish community denial is very pervasive. Assure them they are not. Point out the same reality in the faith communities are the same for everyone. Put Stickers in bathrooms with emergency numbers. Teen Talk, teens helping other teens. Jewish tradition: one who can protest and doesn't, is an accomplice to the crime.

Men are more willing to share when women are not present. Support groups are needed for men and male teens. Men don't usually come to Faith leaders; they prefer to go to less commonly known individuals.

There being no more questions for our guest the meeting returned to our agenda items with a discussion on 'mandatory reporting for faith leaders'. Laws only applied to Child abuse and neglect. (Nafisha will type for distribution.) Even through Faith Trust Institute no information has been formally created. Rabbi felt that mandated reporting would not be accepted. However, it was agreed upon that training in the 40 hrs curriculum should be a part of curriculum of seminary.

(The Ten Commandment of a Healthy Relationship will also be sent from Kitty Glass)

Zionist information to be shared at next meeting.

Meeting adjourned at 2:31 pm

Next meeting: February 23, 2021, 1pm

Respectfully transcribed, Bernita Walker, co-chair