



Building PEACE through Personal Experience

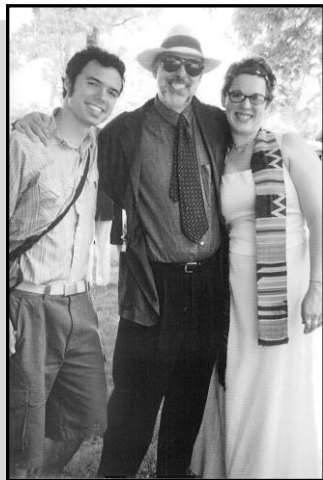
Ten Years of Joy: Transformation, Commitment, and New Generations A special message from Joe Groves

Dear Friends and Colleagues,

When I left the faculty of Guilford College ten years ago, I had no idea what was in store for me — except that it would be surprising! As I prepare to step back from everyday involvement with Interfaith Peace-Builders (aka “retirement”) this summer, **I want to share with you a few of the joys of this work.** And I want to ask for your support as I pass the realities and potentials of IFPB on to a new generation.

I am writing today to ask you to join me in making the work of the next generation of activists possible. You can help strengthen their hands and bolster their hearts as they work for peace.

Your special donation to the *New Generation Fund* will ensure that Interfaith Peace-Builders continues to build a future based on values of peace and justice.



Joe Groves with Guilford students (and IFPB donors) at graduation in 2001.

The Joy of Transformation

I was surprised and honored when, soon after my wife Ellen and I moved to Washington DC, I was asked to take leadership of the *Fellowship of Reconciliation's* new Israel/Palestine program, Interfaith Peace-Builders.

What a privilege to have the chance to build a delegation program on the foundation of *FOR's* 25-year work with Israelis and Palestinians, work that I had already participated in for 15 years!

And what a greater surprise to see that 10 years later IFPB is thriving in its own right as an independent nonprofit, running one of the best (perhaps *the* best) delegation programs to Israel/Palestine.

Among the concrete, realized joys of the work, I count the following:

- Sending 36 delegations and over 600 hundred people to Israel/Palestine;
- Meeting around 250 different organizations over 10 years and forming long-term, supportive relations with many of them;

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- Creating an education and advocacy network that has reached millions of people. **That's right, millions** (check out our *Case Study* of one delegation at www.ifpb.org, for an example);
- Building leadership in the US grassroots movement for a just peace in Israel/Palestine; and
- Supporting Israeli and Palestinian nonviolent activists and community leaders.



Joe Groves with IFPB delegates, nonviolence trainers, and Palestinian activists at a nonviolence training in the West Bank in 2005.

But perhaps the biggest surprise is the number of people from all walks of life who say that going on an IFPB delegation is a *transformative* experience.

If we are going to create an arc of justice in the world, transformation is crucial, and Israel/Palestine is a key. IFPB (and FOR) have given me the opportunity to help build that arc in ways that I never imagined. *That is joyful!*

The Joy of Commitment

People ask me often about Israel/Palestine, “*Is there hope?*” I am ambivalent about how to respond. Yes, of course there is hope — and there is despair, and things get better, and things get worse.

Struggling for justice in a deep-seated, long-lasting conflict requires something deeper. Hope varies, commitment is constant.

So if people ask me, “*Is there commitment?*” my answer is an enthusiastic “*Yes!*”



A decidedly younger Joe Groves as a teacher at the School of High Hope in Basra Iraq in 1967. As every IFPB delegate knows, it was here that he received his most enduring lesson of nonviolence from the Palestinian refugees with whom he worked.

And IFPB, from the beginning, has built on and tries to build commitment.

We have built on the deep, life-long commitment of our Israeli and Palestinian partners and friends. We build commitment by connecting delegates to the work of these Israelis and Palestinians and by supporting them when they return by linking them to our growing network of IFPB “family” and partner organizations.

Commitment is a key. And IFPB has been a key not only for many of our delegates, but for me. **Building this organization for 10 years has broadened and deepened my commitment to a struggle for justice that has been part of my life for 45 years. What a gift and what a joy!**

The Joy of New Generations

I grew up in the segregated South and participated (marginally) in Civil Rights struggles before I left high school.

By the time I was 25, I had lived in Iraq for 3 years, worked with Palestinian refugees, joined the anti-war movement, begun to discern the dimensions of structural anti-racism work, and learned that struggles for justice were hard, complex, intertwined, and long. I grew old young.

All of this “early education” meant several things to me in particular:

- 1) I had to **commit** to life-long struggle;
- 2) I had to **teach** younger generations what struggle and commitment meant; *and*
- 3) I had to **develop immense faith** that new generations are able to meet the challenge.

That has been my focus ever since, whether teaching at Guilford College or American University, organizing for racial and economic justice in Greensboro, or helping build the movement for a just peace in Israel/Palestine.

That has also been a chief focus at Interfaith Peace-Builders. ***We will not resolve this conflict in my generation; we need to pass the work on to future generations.***

What does that mean? The answers are not simple. We produce a “new generation” every 10 years at this point, so the teaching, the learning, the change-over takes place faster than ever.

It means **training and empowering** new, young staff — and creating sustainable jobs with adequate pay. It means **creating possibilities** for young people to go on our delegations at reduced cost — and have ways to involve them in the movement when they come back. It means **building a Board** that includes and listens to young voices. It means **connecting our delegations** with young Palestinian and Israeli activists.



Joe Groves at 2007 demonstration at US Capitol marking 40 years of Israeli Occupation. Joining him are past colleagues from Guilford College Mohammed Abu-Nimer, Vernie Davis and Beth Keiser

What is the New Generation Fund?

IFPB's **New Generation Fund** aims to raise \$20,000 in the next six months to support the next generation of leaders and young delegates at Interfaith Peace-Builders.

Your donation will:

- **Support a phenomenal 3-person staff.** Capable, committed, experienced, and all under 35 years old. In an era of cutbacks we need to commit to a level of financial support that lets young leaders stay in the work of social justice!
- **Increase Outreach Efforts to Young People.** Emily Siegel, our newest staff member, has begun intensified recruiting for delegations and is finding innovative ways to reach young people. As a result of her efforts, we expect our spring and summer delegations to include about **50% people under 35** (already a 25% increase from last year)!
- **Provide Scholarships.** This summer IFPB was inundated with scholarship requests from amazing young activists. We are proud to have provided financial aid to twelve deserving applicants, but more need exists and we hope to increase our ability to help next year!

It has been a joy to build “new generations” with IFPB — it will be a greater joy if we can continue the legacy! From today until December, Interfaith Peace-Builders is collecting donations for the ***New Generation Fund***. We aim to raise \$20,000 to support the transition to a full-time (and fully paid) staff of three dynamic young organizers.

I am asking each of you to make a special contribution to this fund, in addition to any planned or regular gifts to IFPB.

I am excited to be passing on the work of IFPB. Excited because we — staff, board, delegates, Israeli and Palestinian friends, and *all of you* — have built a strong, vibrant, important organization. Excited because IFPB is poised to move to a new generation of leadership. Excited that the staff and board have decided to start a ***New Generation Fund*** that will carry the work of IFPB forward.

One thing I have learned from all of my years of organizing is this: **if your work is going to be successful, you build it, you pass it on, but you also have to pay for it!**

Support the New Generation Fund Today

Your special contribution will provide what the organization needs to succeed. The remaining staff – Mike Daly, Jacob Pace, and Emily Siegel – have all the tools to take Interfaith Peace-Builders further than ever before. As I step back however, they need each of your support!

Please help me mark my retirement by making a generous contribution to the *New Generation Fund* today.

Make this donation as a *special contribution to a special cause*. It is all of our responsibility to provide a sturdy footing for exceptional young activists and their incredible work for peace and justice in Israel/Palestine.



Joe Groves and Delegations Coordinator Emily Siegel, the newest member of our staff.

With your steady support, they will succeed in creating a more peaceful and just world for all of us. Thank you for your contribution.

Sincerely,

PS: Your contribution to IFPB’s ***New Generation Fund*** means a great deal to me personally and, as always, it is 100% tax-deductible. As I retire, I know the current staff, board, and family of Interfaith Peace-Builders delegates have the commitment to meet future challenges. **Your generous donation will help us do just that!**