

Westminster Presbyterian Church

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July 10, 2009

Rabbi Sheldon Lewis has written a brilliant and accessible volume, *The Torah of Reconciliation*, that will be a valued asset to rabbis, clergy, and imams worldwide who daily labor for justice, reconciliation, and peace between their faith communities, and nationally and internationally. In addition to serving as an individual study guide for religious professionals, this book will be a worthy addition to conversations between religious leaders and within intentional interreligious dialogue groups.

The exhaustive and carefully researched text, which is written in a classic rabbinic format, begins with Rebbe Nachman of Breslav's inclusive "prayer for peace." Rabbi Lewis began this volume shortly after the September 11, 2001 attacks on the United States of America and his labors are grounded in Lewis' life-long personal and professional commitment to reconciliation, justice, and peace. This volume earns its credibility from Rabbi Lewis' life and rabbinate modestly put forward in his own words, "My life's experiences have thus taught me both the incalculable toll of war and the hopefulness of other pathways to solving pressing issues." He studied with the esteemed Abraham Joshua Heschel whose life and values Lewis has taken one dimension more. Lewis volunteered and served as a U. S. Army chaplain in Viet Nam, engaged with the Civil Rights Movement led by Dr. King and Dr. Heschel, devoted his career to the security and well being of Soviet Jews and to their resettlement in the U. S. He is honored among his religious peers for his leadership in interfaith activities and a multifaceted search for a reasoned peace in the Middle East.

Whether he is citing the Talmud, the Christian apologist C. S. Lewis, a text from the Hebrew Canon, secular sources, or one of his beloved teachers, Rabbi Lewis delivers on his promise to provide great and studied mindfulness about the vital role of faith in preparing his

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readers and their communities to embrace the demanding implications of a life of reconciliation and peace. Lewis writes wisely and passionately of his hope, a hope that would not allow him to compose anything less than this remarkable volume, "To give up the collective dream of peace would be to compound the tragedy of today. In a time of intractable conflict, violence, and war, studying peace becomes more desperately needed so that children and their parents will not settle for a lesser world."

The rabbi who began his volume with the heartfelt prayer of Rebbe Nachman reveals his own heart, beyond his scholarly and artful communication, with his own moving prayer for peace in our times. The echo of Nachman and millions upon millions of faithful Jews, Christians, Moslems, and humanists who have devoted their words, lives, faith, and actions to reconciliation and peace are heard in this rabbi's fervent prayer and his elegant writing.

While I am a Christian minister and theologian, minimally versed in the rabbinic style of writing and teaching, I found "The Torah of Reconciliation" captivating, easy to read and absorb, inspirational, and complementary at all levels to progressive Christians who are devoted to reconciliation, peace, and the security of the world. I commend this text to my colleagues in the ministry and in the rabbinate.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Douglas K Huneke". The script is cursive and fluid, with the first name "Douglas" being larger and more prominent than the last name "Huneke".

Douglas Huneke is the author of "The Moses of Rovno," the biography of Nazi era rescuer Herman Graebe, "The Stones Will Cry Out: Pastoral and Liturgical Resources on the Shoah," and numerous chapters and journal articles. He is in his twenty-eighth year as the senior minister of Westminster Presbyterian Church in Tiburon, California