



November 4, 2009

Dear Mayor Johnson and Members of the City Council,

During our meetings with you, we have both introduced you to the Sacramento to Bethlehem Sister City Initiative and provided you with information about our 2+ years of work, doing projects and establishing friendships with partners in Bethlehem. As we have shared with you, over many, many months, we have built a solid foundation for a vibrant and successful Sister City relationship and thereby have joined our two communities in the true spirit of Sister City: non-political, non-religious, people-to-people interaction and friendship.

Thank you for receiving us warmly and for your encouraging and favorable reactions to what we are doing and the support each of you expressed for Bethlehem and Sacramento now becoming Sister Cities.

Although we are poised to formalize this Sister City relationship, we very recently learned that the Jewish Community Relations Council (JCRC) requested that you defer formalizing the Sister City relationship with Bethlehem. The JCRC proposes that at some future time -- after a group can be formed, and after the group selects a city in Israel, and after that group then bonds with partners in that city -- there should be a kind of three-way Sister City arrangement among Sacramento and Bethlehem and a to-be-determined city in Israel.

We are pleased that our accomplishments may be inspiring others to embark on a journey of friendship. And we would be delighted if this inspiration might one day result in the same good bond between folks in Sacramento and a city in Israel like the bond we already have established with folks in Bethlehem. Should a group in fact embark on establishing such ties, they will appreciate that to succeed, each Sister City relationship must be permitted to have its own personality, interests, priorities, emphases and evolution.

The formalization of the Sacramento-Bethlehem relationship is a separate and distinct opportunity and should not be made conditional on others' nascent efforts. It would be most unfair to postpone moving forward with a formal Sister City agreement with Bethlehem. Quite frankly, why should the Sacramento-Bethlehem Sister City agreement need to wait for another Sister City relationship to develop? To do so unnecessarily adds political overtones to what is intended to be non-political and people-to-people.

***Sacramento to Bethlehem Sister City Initiative***  
*SacramentoBethlehem@yahoo.com*

Postponement would negatively impact our relationship and be an embarrassment for Sacramento. Please recognize the bond of friendship forged by members of the Sacramento community with our wonderful partners in Bethlehem by moving forward according to plan and formalize the Sacramento-Bethlehem Sister City relationship while Bethlehem's Mayor, Dr. Victor Batarseh, is in Sacramento during the month of November. The opportunity to formalize the relationship while the Mayor of Bethlehem is in town should not be missed.

Sincerely yours,



Brigitte Jaensch  
for the Sacramento to Bethlehem Sister City Initiative

cc. Vice Mayor Hammond  
Councilmember Ray Thretheway  
Councilmember Steve Cohn,  
Councilmember Robert King Fong  
Councilmember Sandy Sheedy  
Councilmember Bonnie Pannell  
Councilmember Robbie Waters  
Councilmember Kevin McCarty  
Sacramento to Bethlehem Sister City Initiative Advisory Committee

***Sacramento to Bethlehem Sister City Initiative***  
*SacramentoBethlehem@yahoo.com*