

NEW YORK YEARLY MEETING TASK GROUP
ON FRIENDS UNITED MEETING

NEW YORK YEARLY MEETING
RELIGIOUS SOCIETY OF FRIENDS

November 18, 2008

Dear Friends,

The FUM Task Group has labored in worship and prayer over its charge to find ways for all of us in the New York Yearly Meeting to walk with one another so that we might become open to what truths we have to teach one another. We have an opportunity, as a Yearly Meeting, to know ourselves better as individuals and in a loving community. There is tremendous diversity and we can learn about our own internal responses to perceived differences in this community.

We need to listen in order to gain clarity on how to live in the Light always, and what this means in our institutional and personal relationships. What we are about is love, peace, integrity and seeing the Divine in others. As monthly meetings center with these queries many will certainly seek God's calling and will strive to discern whether they have a leading on these matters.

In this spirit we need to become more conversant with different spiritual languages and worldviews, including the Biblical basis for points of disagreement. What are our understandings of where Authority resides (Biblical authority, institutional authority, the "Richmond Declaration," individual authority, etc.)?

We are asking each meeting to consider prayerfully these queries in an atmosphere of sensitivity to the Spirit while carefully and lovingly listening to one another. After considering these queries in your monthly meeting we encourage you to broaden the conversation by considering the queries together with members from other meetings in your quarter or region.

Our Task Group has been called to reach out and seek a way to unity for our Yearly Meeting. We believe that if there is enough love and compassion among Friends the way to unity will be illuminated. There are members of the Friends United Meeting Task Group who are available for support and information and will join with you in your meetings.

QUERIES FROM THE TASK GROUP

1. How can we as a yearly meeting fully embrace our diversity rather than seeing those with whom we disagree or have perceived differences as "other"?

2. How can we best have meaningful relationships with other Friends within the New York Yearly Meeting and Friends United Meeting?
3. How can we create safe environments for those who have kept silent out of fear or discomfort at being in the minority, that they may share their message and spiritual experience?
4. How can we respect LGBTQ people in the Religious Society of Friends, in America and elsewhere?
5. What do we have to learn or can we learn about peace-making through this process of discernment?

In Peace,

John P. Menzel, Clerk
FUM Task Group
(908) 239-7850
jpmenzel@optonline.net