

"We utterly deny all outward wars and strife, and fightings with outward weapons, for any end, or under any pretence whatever: this is our testimony to the whole world."

1660, part of the Declaration to Charles II

"...no plea of necessity or of policy, however urgent or peculiar, can avail to release either individuals or nations from the paramount allegiance which they owe unto Him who hath said, 'Love your enemies'..."

1804 and 1854, New York Yearly Meeting Epistle

During the Friends World Committee for Consultation conference on peace in Guilford, NC, in January 2003, a Friend said in worship, "We need to work publicly to change structures in ground-shaking ways."

Where does our peace testimony lead New York Yearly Meeting Friends now?

1) Are there crises in our world, in our nation, in our communities, that compel our attention? our concern? our action? **In these times, how are we responding to God?** Are there crises of peace within ourselves? Are we listening for God's direction?

2) What are our responsibilities in these times?

at home?

toward our country?

toward global equity and justice?

toward democracy?

toward people victimized by our country's wars?

toward our environment?

in addressing war and militarism?

3) What awareness and learning are we called to? What changes?

4) Are we committed to love, even if it doesn't lead to the results we want?

If love does not succeed in overcoming violence and hate, are we connected with whatever it is that inspires and sustains us so that we do not despair? Are we willing to continue and continue and continue, constantly renewing our source of strength and love, regardless of apparent results? What is our response to experiences of "failure"? Of "success"?

5) What sustains us in faithfulness?

Do we accept our blessings? Do we acknowledge them?

Where do we find strength?

Do we know how to ask for help? Are we willing to ask?

How do we encourage one another, and ourselves?

How are we supported in testing leadings? In living in response to them?

6) What role(s) can/should the Religious Society of Friends play in the world? Is it called to a particular witness in these times?