

Worship & Action Working Group  
Report to New York Yearly Meeting, March 27, 2003  
for consideration at NYYM Representative Meeting, April 5 and 6, 2003

*Friends in New York Yearly Meeting have called one another to sustained practice of shared worship and action for peace (7/26/02, minute #61).*

The small Yearly Meeting working group formed in accordance with minute #61 reported to Representative Meeting (12/6/02) on communications; information on tax exempt status of meetings and questions such as conscientious objection to military service, to the payment of war taxes, and civil disobedience; finance arrangements; and special gatherings (report available on the Yearly Meeting Web site with the Worship and Action Updates or on request from the Yearly Meeting office).

Activities have continued since then:

- ❖ Worship and Action Updates have been sent each week, usually on Thursday or Friday. The Updates are generated by the Worship and Action working group and sent out by Paul Busby, on staff in the Yearly Meeting office. The Updates have included information about planned events and reflection and reports of Friends' experiences. Friends have expressed appreciation for the tone and content of these communications.
- ❖ Two more open gatherings for Friends to meet for worship and mutual support and discernment were held, one in January in Poughkeepsie and one in February in Perry City.
- ❖ Friends meetings, sometimes collaborating with others, have sponsored vigils, opened meeting houses for special times of worship, sponsored sessions on conscientious objection, civil disobedience, immigration issues, and more.
- ❖ The Quakerwanda email group has a score of active participants, with perhaps another 20 silent subscribers. Most postings concern events or forwards from other sources, with occasional commentary or reflection by a few contributors.
- ❖ New York Yearly Meeting Friends have participated in wider Quaker gatherings and efforts, including the FWCC conference on peace in Greensboro, NC, and FCNL and AFSC activities.
- ❖ Friends have participated with others in public vigils, rallies, and visits with elected officials, as well as joining in local peace coalitions. New York Yearly Meeting has been part of the ongoing peace efforts of the New York State Community of Churches.

A report of worship and action expenses and financial assistance by the Yearly Meeting to local actions for peace is in preparation; it should be available by the time of April Representative Meeting.

The Worship and Action working group members have experienced our work together as challenging. Our seeking has been rewarded with deepening trust in our capacity to do our work and to pay attention to inner and outer messages. We have felt blessed to

see a quickening of Friends' life in the Spirit in these difficult times. In addition, we hear Friends' deep need to give voice to feelings of anger, frustration, outrage, fear and profound sorrow. We have heard how Friends are providing loving and tender care to one another.

We have sought to name and share word of the quickening we have seen throughout New York Yearly Meeting. We reflect back to Friends that we see the Spirit moving in locally based activity, grounded in worship and care; in collaborative efforts and interfaith cooperation; and in the networking with a concern for peace of Friends and others around the world.

We rejoice with Friends in the experience of receiving guidance through deep listening and openness. We believe that we will be guided as we respond where the Life is.

The Worship and Action working group suggests that the Yearly Meeting should continue direct Yearly Meeting support of locally based activities and of Friends' communication. Specifically:

1. Continue the arrangement for Yearly Meeting assistance to local meetings undertaking actions for peace following current guidelines for assistance.
2. Continue publication of Worship and Action Updates, postings on the Yearly Meeting Web site, and sharing news of Friends' worship and actions for peace in other ways.
3. Support further Worship and Action gatherings as Friends are ready to convene them, including the possibility of gatherings with a focus in worship on specific concerns, such as civil disobedience and the rule of law, international institutions and a peaceable world, global and local householding (economics).
4. Authorize drawing on the Peace Initiatives line of the Yearly Meeting budget to meet Worship and Action expenses associated with recommendations 1, 2, and 3, according to arrangements already in place, or by decision of the working group, keeping the clerk of Witness Coordinating Committee informed.
5. Continue the Worship and Action working group through NYYM annual sessions in July 2003, expecting a report and recommendations at that time.

New York Yearly Meeting Worship and Action working group  
Linda Chidsey, Vicki Cooley, Fred Dettmer