

Worship and Action Update **11/13/02**

Dear Friends in New York Yearly Meeting:

The Friends Committee on National Legislation held its annual meeting last Thursday through Sunday, November 7-10, 2002, under the theme Speaking Truth to Power: Voices for Peace, Justice and Reconciliation, with over 170 Friends from 31 yearly meetings attending. Many Friends offered insightful thoughts on the challenges we face to our Peace Testimony. These included talks by Bruce Birchard (of Friends General Conference), Jack Patterson (Quaker United Nations Office), Retha McCutchen (Friends United Meeting), and Jim Matlack (American Friends Service Committee), and a "fireside chat" with Ed Snyder, former long-time executive secretary of FCNL. We hope to be able to obtain copies of some of these talks and to post them on the Peace Action page of New York Yearly Meeting's Web site (<http://www.nyym.org>).

The heart of the business at the Annual Meeting was to consider and approve a new Statement of Legislative Priorities to guide the focus of FCNL staff's work over the coming two-year (108th) congressional session. Friends recognized the regrettable need to focus FCNL's work fully in the coming days and months on preventing war and advocating peaceful alternatives to the use of lethal violence to settle conflicts. The introductory statement of the Legislative Priorities expressed our deep concern to make our faith in nonviolence heard loudly during these anxious times while preserving our dedication to eliminating the deprivations and discriminations that provoke resort to deadly violence:

Especially in times of warfare, Quakers are called to bear witness to God's love for every person by providing a clear voice for peace and by opposing violence and articulating its alternatives. We recognize that achieving lasting peace involves not just a cessation of war, but addressing the injustices and disparities that give rise to violent conflict among people.

The complete text of the new Statement of Legislative Priorities is included at the foot of this Update and will be posted on the NYYM Web site's Peace Action page. FCNL's General Committee also approved a minute, entitled "Building True Security by Meeting Human Needs," to stress this long-term commitment to issues of social justice, civil liberties, human rights, and the right sharing of the world's resources. The text of that minute will be offered with next week's Update and also will be added to NYYM's Web site.

Friends throughout New York Yearly Meeting are continuing to make their voices heard for peace in vigils, programs, gatherings, rallies, petition drives, shared worship, and myriad other ways. Upcoming events organized both by the Quaker community and others include:

- Collecting signatures on the Iraq Peace Pledge petitions at Union Square in

New York City on Tuesday, November 19, from 12:00 noon to 2:00 P.M.
(Contact Cheshire Frager at 212-598-0963 if you are interested in participating.)

- A Non-Violence Training Program will be offered by New York Non-Violence Network, which includes AFSC and 15th Street Meeting's Peace Committee, for those considering nonviolent civil disobedience, on Tuesday, December 3, from 6:00-10:00 P.M. at Judson Memorial Church in New York City. (Call 212-228-0450 before November 25 for further information and to register.)
- New York Yearly Meeting's Representative Meeting will be held on Saturday and Sunday, December 7 and 8, in Chatham, New Jersey, with substantial time devoted to our worship and action for peace. There will also be a special Friday-evening program December 6. (Further information is available on the NYYM Web site at <http://www.nyyym.org/events/rm0212.html>.)
- A weekend focused on worship and action - Living the Peace Testimony Now: What Shall Our Witness Be? - is being organized for Friday evening through Sunday, January 10-12, 2003, at Poughkeepsie Meetinghouse. (Information is available from Linda Griggs at 845-255-6051, and on the NYYM Web site at <http://www.nyyym.org/events/pough10jan03.html>.)
- An additional weekend on worship and action is being planned for the February 7 and 8, 2003 weekend at Perry City (near Ithaca). Further information on this gathering will be distributed soon.

We again invite Friends to advise the NYYM office of ongoing and planned activities in your meetings and communities so that we may include them on the Peace Action Web page and in future Updates.

In continuing care,

Linda Chidsey, Vicki Cooley, Fred Dettmer
NYYM Worship & Action working group

Friends Committee on National Legislation
Legislative Priorities for the 108th Congress
(Approved by General Committee, 11/10/02)

The Friends Committee on National Legislation seeks to bring spiritual values and Friends' testimonies to bear on public policy decisions. In the aftermath of the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, our nation's "war on terrorism" threatens to make permanent a war economy and national security state. We see rapid erosion of civil

liberties and disregard of basic human needs. Security is being used as a justification for furthering U.S. unilateralism, militarism, withdrawal from treaties, blocking or ignoring multilateral efforts for peace and justice, and disregard for international law. Especially in times of warfare, Quakers are called to bear witness to God's love for every person by providing a clear voice for peace and by opposing violence and articulating its alternatives. We recognize that achieving lasting peace involves not just a cessation of war, but addressing the injustices and disparities that give rise to violent conflict among people.

FCNL has selected the following priorities to address during the 108th Congress:

- Promote arms control and disarmament initiatives, especially the control and elimination under international auspices of all weapons of mass destruction through nonviolent means.
- Identify, articulate, and promote peaceful alternatives to the "war on terrorism," including United States adherence to international law and participation in multilateral efforts to prevent and resolve violent conflict through institutions such as the United Nations and international courts of law.
- Promote a more peaceful and equitable world by shifting federal budget priorities away from military spending and toward funding basic human needs at home and abroad.
- Preserve and advance full civil liberties for all persons in the United States, and promote human rights around the world through international institutions and treaties.
- Remove dependence on oil as a source of violent conflict, injustice, and environmental degradation by reducing United States' energy consumption and encouraging the development of renewable sources of energy and alternative modes of transportation.

FCNL will resume active advocacy on Native American issues. As way opens, FCNL will continue Friends' long-standing witness for the rights of conscience, ending institutional racism, criminal justice reform, and the abolition of the death penalty.

FCNL's work will be based on legislative opportunity, specific expertise and leadings, and time available. FCNL has the flexibility, within the Statement of Legislative Policy, to respond to crises and important legislative opportunities.

The General Committee calls upon its members, other Friends, and like-minded people to work on these issues. In addition to the issues which FCNL has the resources to address, many other deeply held concerns will continue to receive attention from individual Friends, Monthly Meetings and Churches, Yearly Meetings, and other Quaker organizations. Omitting an issue from these priorities does not imply a change in our policy.

As we work to find solutions to complex problems, Friends continue to seek divine guidance and ask for renewed strength and hope.