

Worship and Action Update, September 19, 2003

Dear Friends in New York Yearly Meeting:

How do we ground ourselves in worship as we seek to act for peace?

This week the Worship and Action Update comes to you as an e-mail with attachments which are NOT the same as the e-mail letter. Explanations are included below.

This week's Worship & Action Update is dedicated to peace queries and retreat gatherings around the concern "Where is our peace testimony leading New York Yearly Meeting Friends now?" that will begin on Friday evening, October 31; and to the called gathering of Interim Meeting of Philadelphia Yearly Meeting to discern the way forward in responding to the federal government's lawsuit over PYM's decision not to comply with an Internal Revenue Service levy against the wages of a staff member, Priscilla Adams, engaged in peace tax witness.

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Today, New York Yearly Meeting Friends are offered six peace queries with a letter inviting monthly meetings to consider the queries in worship, perhaps providing paper copies for individual preparation. Also, each monthly meeting is asked to send at least two Friends to a retreat gathering to worship on the question, "Where is our peace testimony leading New York Yearly Meeting Friends now?" Retreat gatherings are to be held Friday evening, October 31, through Sunday midday, November 2, at Powell House; Friday evening, October 31, through Saturday afternoon, November 1, at the Rotary Sunshine Camp near Rochester, NY; and possibly in New Jersey (NJ contact person is Jeffrey Aaron, 732-247-9430 jephreyaaron@aol.com). The letter and queries are attached to this e-mail (but not pasted into the e-mail in order to preserve formatting), and are being mailed today to monthly and quarterly and regional meeting clerks, and the clerks of ministry and counsel and peace and social action committees. They also are available on the NYYM Web site, www.nyyym.org. (Anyone who cannot open the attachment to this e-mail or access the NYYM Web site and cannot get the letter and queries from monthly meeting contacts is welcome to contact the Yearly Meeting office at 212-673-5750 to have a copy sent by mail.)

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An earlier Update (8-1-03) reported how Friends in Philadelphia Yearly Meeting were acting "fearlessly and publicly" in support of the peace witness of Priscilla Adams by declining to comply with an Internal Revenue Service levy against her wages. In response, the government has sued to compel compliance by PYM and to exact stiff penalties. This week PYM Interim Meeting met for an attorney-client consultation under the care of the Spirit to discern how to proceed in the situation. We are learning that a strength of our communities in these times is our capacity to know one another's

important experiences and to reach out to one another, to connect "live." Linda Chidsey, clerk of New York Yearly Meeting, hearing of the impending meeting, sent the following e-mail letter to Chris Mahon, clerk of PYM Interim Meeting, on Wednesday, September 17, to convey that NYYM Friends are holding PYM in the Light as they wrestle with this concern:

Dear Chris Mahon,

I recently learned that Interim Meeting will be gathering tomorrow evening in a called session for the purpose of worship and discernment of how God is calling Philadelphia Yearly Meeting Friends to respond to the federal government's threat of fining the Yearly Meeting for failure to forward monies withheld from staff who witness as conscientious objectors to the payment of military taxes.

On behalf of New York Yearly Meeting, I write tonight to tell you that Friends in New York have been holding you in prayer these past several weeks and will continue to do so, especially tomorrow evening as you gather at Arch Street. May your meeting be deep, covered and imbued with the Presence of the Holy Spirit.

Chris, these words from Romans 12:12 came as I sat down to write you: "Let hope keep you joyful; in trouble stand firm; persist in prayer." (The New English Bible)

In Peace,
Linda B. Chidsey
Clerk, New York Yearly Meeting"

Linda's message has already received several replies from PYM Friends expressing gratitude for our support. We hope to share further information on PYM's discernment soon.

In care,

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

Let hope keep you joyful; in trouble stand firm; persist in prayer.

Romans 12:12, New English Bible

Above the vault over their heads was something that looked like a sapphire, it was shaped like a throne and high up on this throne was a being that looked like a man. I saw him shine like bronze, and close to and all around him from what seemed his loins upward was what looked like fire; and from what seemed his loins downward I saw what looked like fire, and a light all around like a bow in

the clouds on rainy days; that is how the surrounding light appeared. It was something that looked like the glory of Yahweh. I looked, and prostrated myself, and I heard a voice speaking.

It said, "Son of man, stand up; I am going to speak to you." As he said these words the spirit came into me and made me stand up, and I heard him speaking to me.

Ezekiel 1: 26 - 2:2, Jerusalem Bible