

## Worship and Action Update, 11/21/03

Dear Friends in New York Yearly Meeting,

How shall we give thanks this year, in New York Yearly Meeting?

In truth and love.

In truth, we will wrestle with God, claiming our humanness and asking for help in living through outrageous times. Our helplessness and complicity tempt us to despair. Torture, exploitation, deceit, and false prophecies are carried out in our name. Help us to live in unspeakable oneness that can have no name.

In love, we will weep with gratitude for blessings showered on us; we will weep for losses; and we will weep a third time for incomprehension: how is it that some of us celebrate together and have more than enough, while others of us are separated and lack clean water and a night's quiet rest? Help us to keep our hearts open to others and their conditions.

In truth and love, we rejoice in our food, and in being together. We hold in our hearts those who miss loved ones at their family meals. We accept the blessings of connection with those from among us who are choosing arrest and jail at the "School of the Americas" protest, who witness with Christian Peacemaker Teams in Israel/Palestine, and who pursue truth and love through many, many other acts of committed living. Help us to live our connections fully.

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More than 40 Friends from 12 monthly meetings participated Friday evening and Saturday morning and afternoon, November 14 and 15, in the third of three Worship and Action for Peace retreat gatherings, this one at Rahway & Plainfield Meetinghouse in New Jersey. In extended worship Friday evening and Saturday morning we listened deeply and heard strong expressions of search, concern, and faith, which ranged from questions about despair and separation from others to profound conviction: "God will not fail." After sharing in small groups and joining in a peace vigil in front of the meetinghouse, Saturday afternoon we were drawn in different directions and worked to find a common way forward. Hearing one another's compelling concerns brought us together. Among issues named by Friends present were peace and nonviolence as human success; despair and working with it; ignorance and evil; separation from "others"; hardening of political divisions; claims made in the name of God; preparing ourselves, especially to listen to those in deep distress; ending war; concern for immigrants, and for people in jails and prisons; poverty and public affairs in New Jersey; news media; making ourselves heard; collaboration and participation with ongoing peace work; conscientious objection; war taxes; economic choices; "investment" in children, families and meetings as schools of the spirit and for peace; racism; a new kind of peace movement. Many resonated with the "strangely compatible double

message: Be patient. Do something."

More complete reports from each of the three Worship and Action for Peace retreat gatherings will be available soon.

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"Alternative sources for news" and eschewing exposure to daily news are both commonly mentioned among Friends. What news do Friends seek? Avoid? Why? Please share your thoughts on this complex topic (send to the New York Yearly Meeting Office, 15 Rutherford Place, NYC, NY 10003, or by email to [office@nyym.org](mailto:office@nyym.org)) for Worship and Action publication or toward consideration at a Friends gathering.

- Many Friends value Democracy Now, a one-hour radio and TV news program, among all other sources of daily news (broadcast on many public radio stations--check local listings--or on the Web at [www.democracynow.org](http://www.democracynow.org)).

- The Buffalo Report is an impressive "local" resource at [www.buffaloreport.com](http://www.buffaloreport.com). Newton Garver of Buffalo Meeting calls Friends' attention to a recent first-person account from ongoing legal proceedings in Israel, "noteworthy for the respectfulness and lack of hostility in the official response to the pacifists." The judge's statement begins, "We have become convinced of the sincerity of Yoni Ben Artzi's pacifist convictions, and we are far from feeling that the Conscience Committee acted at its best when it rejected his request for exemption" (<http://buffaloreport.com/articles/031115.keller.refusenik.html>).

- In last week's Update, we invited Friends to communicate directly with other Friends through the NYYM Worship and Action Listserv, known as "Quaker Wanda", and then provided a faulty link for subscribing. The correct link is: [quakerwanda-subscribe@yahogroups.com](mailto:quakerwanda-subscribe@yahogroups.com). You can subscribe by sending a blank message from your email address (or another email address at which you want to receive Quakerwanda messages) to this address. You don't have to do anything else.

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Members of New York Yearly Meeting are joining many thousands gathering at Fort Benning in Columbus, Georgia, to vigil and to act to close the School of the Americas/Western Hemisphere Institute for Security Cooperation. Shirley Way of Central Finger Lakes Monthly Meeting plans to cross the line and be arrested as an act of civil disobedience. A front page story appeared in The Finger Lakes Times, 11/20/03: [www.fltimes.com/main.asp?FromHome=1&TypeID=1&ArticleID=3027&SectionID=38&SubSectionID=121](http://www.fltimes.com/main.asp?FromHome=1&TypeID=1&ArticleID=3027&SectionID=38&SubSectionID=121).

Joint Solidarity Statement of The Stop the War Coalition (UK), The Mobilization to Stop the FTAA (US), and The School of the Americas Watch Movement (US), 11/20/03:

"We, The Stop the War Coalition in London, England, The Mobilization to Stop the FTAA in Miami, Florida (U.S.) and the School of the Americas Watch Movement in Columbus, Georgia (U.S.), are mobilizing tens of thousands of people this week in the United Kingdom and the United States to hold our governments accountable. Our struggles are interconnected and we organize in solidarity with each other.

"We recognize our governments' foreign policies are not bringing security to the world any more than their economic policies are bringing prosperity.

"The invasion and occupation of Iraq, the training of soldiers in counterinsurgency at the School of the Americas, and the expansion of so-called 'free-trade' agreements like the Free Trade Area of the Americas, are strategies in the building of an empire based on greed, violence and power. These policies breed resentment.

"Democracy will never come about through military invasion. 'Free trade' does not equal democracy; in fact the two are usually at odds. And our governments' claims of 'spreading democracy' throughout the world rings especially hollow when they have failed to even listen to the democratic input of their own citizenry.

"We do not want war for empire. We do not want training camps where soldiers are taught to torture and assassinate their own people. We do not want economic globalization that serves elite interests to the detriment of the rest of the world.

"We are united in building a world in which the values of justice, cooperation, respect for the earth, and genuine democracy are upheld. We believe this is the surest way to bring about lasting peace and security. To this end we will struggle together on both sides of the Atlantic and around the world." [[www.soaw.org/new/article.php?id=689](http://www.soaw.org/new/article.php?id=689)]

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No Worship and Action Update is planned for next week.

Peaceable greetings,

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

*My abundant source is unlimited.*

- Iyanla Vanzant, *Acts of Faith*, reading for November 21

*Now thank we all our God  
With heart and hands and voices,  
Who wondrous things hath done,  
In whom the world rejoices;  
Who, from our mother's arms,  
Hath blessed us on our way  
With countless gifts of love,  
And still is ours today.*

*O may this bounteous God  
Through all our life be near us,  
With ever joyful hearts  
And blessed peace to cheer us;  
And keep us in God's grace,  
And guide us when perplexed,  
And free us from all ills  
In this world and the next.*

*- Worship in Song, #51*