

Worship and Action Update 11/22/02

Dear Friends in New York Yearly Meeting:

Representative Meeting in Chatham, New Jersey is two weeks away (Friday-Sunday, December 7th and 8th). A Friend recently reminded us of the special Spirit that pervaded our sessions at Silver Bay this past Summer and how this has energized many throughout New York Yearly Meeting in the months since to work tirelessly for peace. The upcoming gathering offers an opportunity to worship together, to listen and to discern what God is calling us to at this time. The expected agenda for Representative Meeting devotes substantial attention to peace concerns and actions, including:

- # Report on Peace Delegation to Middle East
- # Return of Carolyn Keys's Travel Minute (for her Friends Peace Teams work in Rwanda)
- # Peace Initiatives Working Group Report
- # AFSC/NYMRO Report
- # Monthly Meetings and Conscientious Objection
- # Proposed Minute on Registration for Selective Service (the text of the proposed minute will be included with next week's Worship & Action Update)
- # FWCC Peace Consultation

Friends continue to witness on behalf of peace. Future activities include:

- # A Women's Peace Vigil and rolling fast at the White House began on November 17th and is planned to continue through March 8, 2002 (International Women's Day). Information is available on the United for Peace Web site: www.unitedforpeace.org. (United for Peace is a new coalition of over 70 peace and justice organizations, including the American Friends Service Committee, formed to help coordinate antiwar actions.)
- # A Non-Violence Training program offered by New York Non-Violence Network, which includes AFSC and 15th Street Meeting's Peace Committee, for those considering non-violent civil disobedience, will be conducted on Tuesday, December 3rd, from 6:00-10:00 P.M. at Judson Memorial Church in New York City. (Call 212-228-0450 before November 25th for further information and to register.)
- # Retha McCutchen, General Secretary of Friends United Meeting, will be the guest of NYYM (at 15 Rutherford Place) on Wednesday, December 4th, for a potluck at 6:00 P.M. and a talk at 7:00 P.M. on current events in Ramallah. Persons interested in attending should contact Helen Garay Toppins at office@nyym.org.
- # The National Council of Churches is organizing an International Human Rights Day Action for Tuesday, December 10th, commencing at 10:00 AM, at Dag Hammarskjold Plaza in New York City (1st Avenue and 47th Street, near the United

Nations). Plans include musical, religious and political activities, to be followed by non-violent civil disobedience witness for those so led. A planning rally is scheduled for the evening before, December 9th, at 7:00 P.M. at the United Nations Church Center (777 UN Plaza).

- # The New Jersey branch of the Coalition for Peace Action is planning a Peace Train demonstration for Saturday, December 7th. Information is available at www.peacecoalition.org/action/event_021202_peace_train.html.
- # Purchase Quarter has organized a training program for counselors on conscience and war, featuring Bill Galvin (comparable to the program offered by Summit Meeting in October), to be held at Purchase Monthly Meeting on Saturday, January 4, 2003. Information will be available shortly on the Peace Action webpage of the Yearly Meeting's site (www.nyym.org).
- # 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, 2002, at Poughkeepsie Meetinghouse. (Information is available from Linda Griggs and on the NYYM Web site.)
- # An additional weekend on worship and action is being planned for the February 14 and 15, 2003 weekend at Perry City (near Ithaca).
- # Another mass demonstration in Washington, DC to stop war on Iraq, together with a Grassroots Peace Congress, is being organized for January 18-19, 2003, the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. anniversary weekend. Preliminary information is available on the United for Peace Web site (www.unitedforpeace.org), and at www.InternationalANSWER.org or www.VoteNoWar.org.
- # Friends' vigils for peace continue throughout New York Yearly Meeting. For example, there are now 27 ongoing peace vigils in the Hudson Valley, including weekly vigils in Albany, Hudson, Kingston, Saugerties and Woodstock. Further information is available from Bullshead-Oswego Monthly Meeting.

In continuing care,

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

Friends Committee on National Legislation
Building True Security by Meeting Human Needs

(Approved by General Committee, 11/10/02)

As members of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers), we are called to witness to God's love for every human being; to speak out against violence, war, and inequality; and to articulate their alternatives. We join with all those who seek to build a world that honors the potential of every individual, promotes freedom and democracy, and preserves the environment for future generations.

After the tragedy of September 11, 2001, there was a moment of unity that offered a chance to plant the seeds of such a world. We have watched in anguish as our government squandered this opportunity and chose instead to respond to the violence with more violence. We have seen the rhetoric of "security" used to justify the erosion of civil liberties, cuts in social programs, and an increase in military spending. If we continue on this path, we will undermine true security and increase the likelihood of future suffering and conflict.

Today, as the administration presses toward military action, we unite behind the priority of preventing this war. Further, we believe that the cause of true global security is better served by investing in meeting human needs rather than in military might. In the current climate, such needs are becoming a forgotten agenda, eclipsed by the threat of a permanent war economy.

We therefore call on the Bush Administration, members of Congress and the American people to commit to policies that lead to true security and away from fear, hate, and war. Such policies would include efforts to:

- # Ensure affordable housing, educational opportunity, universal health care, a living wage, and food for the hungry;
- # Support affirmative action, progressive taxation, social security, welfare, and other programs that empower all citizens, including the most vulnerable of society; and promote economic opportunity and social and racial equality;
- # Preserve the environment and natural resources for future generations;
- # Advance democracy, civil liberties, and human rights; and
- # Strengthen international institutions that promote cooperation, peaceful conflict resolution, and sustainable economic development.

True security arises not from the exertion of military power and control, but from love and the lifting up of our hopes, our aspirations, and our common humanity. We call on Friends and all people of good will to help build a world in which all people may enjoy such security.

This minute does not seek to replace the Statement of Legislative Priorities or the Statement of the Executive Committee dated 9/19/02, but rather augment them. This minute seeks to acknowledge the urgent demands on our attention made by the threat of war while asserting that the real roots of conflict and war must also be sought out and addressed.

This minute is intended to be an expression of the General Committee to share in the wider community, to add our voice to those who hope to redirect attention to urgent human needs and away from war.