

Worship and Action Update, September 25, 2003

Dear Friends in New York Yearly Meeting:

How do we uphold one another in shared worship and action for peace?

Here is an answer from Red Cedar Monthly Meeting (East Lansing, Michigan, Lake Erie Yearly Meeting).

Red Cedar Friends have had a monthly meeting for healing for a number of years. Recently their Peace and Social Justice Committee decided to transform their monthly committee meetings into meetings for peace, following the process they knew from the meetings for healing: gather by naming concerns, which are listed on paper; a Friend offers to clerk for this time, then orders the different items, and frames each as "a crack in the fabric of the universe where transformation can happen" (Friends in Red Cedar Meeting have studied Walter Wink), inviting Friends to attend together, and then to move to the next.

The Red Cedar Friends meetings for peace have also recognized a concern for ourselves as peacemakers. Out of that concern, they have headed the last two monthly action announcement sheets with the following notes of care and advice to meeting members:

CHECK FOR PERSONAL LEADINGS AMONG THESE ACTIVE CONCERNS IN THE COMMUNITY. Do only what YOU are called to do. Do it joyfully and powerfully. Don't do one thing more! It's enough!

(August 2003)

Remember to stay close to the Light you are given. Don't get caught up expecting more of yourself. When you're being led to a concern, it will be something you can do – not a burden you think you "should" be able to do. Your leading may take courage, but trust that "way will open" if it's right. That's one hallmark of being led . . . See if any of these meet that test.

(September 2003)

How do New York Yearly Meeting Friends "remember to stay close to the Light you are given" and not "get caught up expecting more of yourself"?

+++++

Albany (NY) Monthly Meeting Friends are studying Walter Wink's book *Engaging the Powers - Discernment and Resistance in a World of Domination* on Monday evenings this fall.

Summit (NJ) Monthly Meeting's Ministry and Counsel subcommittee on conscience and war is having a training workshop on issues of spiritual discernment as it relates to

conscientious objector counseling (or other counseling or clearness practice), Saturday afternoon, October 18. Meeting contact: Bob Pavlosky, 973-267-8006.

Westbury Monthly Meeting has approved sending a letter to young people in the meeting, brought forward by their Ministry and Oversight Committee, regarding Selective Service draft registration options.

Montclair Monthly Meeting also plans to draft a flyer for young people on conscientious objection.

Bulls Head-Oswego Monthly Meeting invites conscientious objectors to war to become part of a formal registry being maintained by the meeting. The meeting also offers counseling. Contact person is Greta Mickey, gem50@ulsfedcu.net , 845-246-8327. And a silent vigil for world peace under the care of Bulls Head-Oswego Monthly Meeting will take place at the four corners in Rhinebeck, NY each Sunday beginning October 5th, from 7:00 to 8:00 P.M.

Saratoga Friends Meeting participates in monthly multidenominational Prayers for Peace services.

Rochester Monthly Meeting's retreat this Saturday, September 27, focuses on right sharing of individual and meeting resources. The Fellowship of Reconciliation training in nonviolence at Rochester Meeting, October 25, is fully subscribed! Will there be another?

Flushing Meeting Friends plan to participate in the rally and festival at Flushing Meadows Park in Queens, on Saturday, October 4th, from 11:00 A.M. to 3:00 P.M. to celebrate the culmination of the current Immigrant Workers Freedom Ride. 18 buses carrying hundreds of immigrants and supporters have left 10 cities around the nation and are making stops at over 100 cities on the way to converging in Washington, D.C., on October 1st to lobby and rally for amnesty for undocumented ("illegal") immigrants, and rights and protections for immigrant workers. The Freedom Riders will then proceeding to Flushing Meadows Park for the closing gathering. (An article on the Immigrant Workers Freedom Ride - "Immigrants' Rights Drive Starts" by Steven Greenhouse - appears in today's *New York Times*, at page A16, and can be found on the *NY Times* Web site at <http://www.nytimes.com/2003/09/25/national/25FREE.html>.) Flushing Meeting Friends will gather in front of the meetinghouse at 137-16 Northern Boulevard, Flushing, New York, at 10:00 A.M. on October 4th and leave to proceed to the rally and festival at 10:30 A.M., and invite other interested Friends to join them.

The Immigrant Workers Freedom Ride will also be stopping at Liberty State Park in New Jersey on Friday, October 3rd. Free buses will go from the NYMRO office of the American Friends Service Committee at 972 Broad Street, Newark, New Jersey, and will travel through Elizabeth and Plainfield before arriving at Liberty State Park. Friends interested in participating should call or e-mail Esther Chavez for information is at 973-643-1924, or ECChavez@afsc.org.

New York City Friends have been responding to the call from Chuck Fager, director of Quaker House in Fayetteville, North Carolina, to communicate with, and shine light on, a soldier serving time in the brig at Camp Lejeune in North Carolina. The soldier, Stephen Funk, is a conscientious objector and war resister, and also is openly gay and at risk of harm while behind bars. Chuck Fager reports that "The way such at-risk inmates make it through is relatively straightforward: lots of mail and visitors, to shine light on his circumstances, and let the Marine jailers know people are watching." Letters to Stephen Funk should be sent to him at Building 1041, PSC 20140, Camp Lejeune, North Carolina 28542.

Worship and Action for Peace retreat gatherings to worship on the question, "Where is our peace testimony leading New York Yearly Meeting Friends now?":

- NYYM Friends are actively considering possibilities for a retreat gathering in New Jersey. Shrewsbury and Plainfield Half Yearly Meeting is to consider the matter at its meeting September 27th. Contact person for current information is Jeffrey Aaron, 732 247-9430, jephreyaaron@aol.com.

- Gatherings are to be held October 31 - November 2 at Powell House, and October 31 - November 1 at the Rotary Sunshine Camp near Rochester, NY. Registration materials are being sent to monthly meetings (e-mail contact persons are asked to be sure paper copies are available Sunday morning!). Materials and details are also being posted at www.nyyym.org.

Peaceable greetings,

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

The time may be "full" in some places to get things done but not in others or differently in others. Now we have a big global kairos but tons of local ones. I still think the best way to be global is to really be where you are.

Rick Wilson, AFSC West Virginia Economic Justice Project Director

[T]here is virtuous, contented rest in having accomplished the purpose for which we begin a good work, and we should not linger in the task but take heart in the promise of satisfaction and joy in the happy conclusion that we trust our [God] will give to the good work begun.

Francisco de Osuna, The Third Spiritual Alphabet, p. 35

Can we see forward to a time when the American government represents, all over the world, the best and happiest instincts of the American people?

Can we see a time when we, each of us, can live in responsible balance with nature and all other people? Can we evolve to our better selves as a nation, whose people are at the reins of our own government and whose harsh past, harsh from its very beginning, can move into the light? What better thing have we got to do?

*From recent speech ("Worthy Dreams") by Doris "Granny D" Haddock,
available at www.alternet.org/story.html?StoryID=16826*