



SUMMARY OF PEACE AND SOCIAL WITNESS ACTIVITIES

by

NYYM MEETINGS FOR WORSHIP 2011-12

This brief summary is based on reports submitted in response to a questionnaire on peace and social concerns activities. It is not a statistical report, but a general summary of activities to give WCC an idea of what monthly meetings are doing in the area of peace and social concerns.

Many responses stressed that peace and social witness were encouraged by the meeting, but activities were carried out by one or a few individuals.

Meeting activities include **participating in peace vigils**, **counter-recruitment** in local schools, **conscientious objection to military taxation**, organized **letter writing** to local officials and newspapers, **financial support** to Quaker organizations such as AFSC and FCNL, **hosting** outside groups such as Alcoholics Anonymous, **support of local non-Quaker groups** such as Interfaith Refugee Action Team – Elizabeth”, who work with detainees at the Elizabeth Immigration Detention Center, participating in local **food banks and homeless shelter meal programs**, one meeting gives financial support to **community gardens and food co-ops** in underserved areas and **environmental activism** -- especially in regard to **opposing fracking**. Many “**Occupy**” movements have been actively supported by local meetings. Adirondack’s Pastor started *Mothers Standing For Peace on Mother’s Day* “that has grown each year” and Binghamton joined with others in awarding a peace scholarship.

Communication is important. During peace vigils, Friends try to engage passers-by in conversations and many meetings have outreach regarding peace. Old Chatham, for example, hosts “a monthly video/DVD night showing movies exemplifying Quaker values -- war/peace, gay/straight, political, social, and international. On the first Monday evening of each month, about 15-25 people gather for the film, refreshments, and a serious discussion of the presentation. . . .”

Many meetings have an active spiritual **prison** ministry and also ongoing concerns for helping incarcerated people, as well as those who have been released and are trying to re-enter the mainstream of the community.

Justice issues for minorities is a major concern, especially in regard to issues concerning racism. Rights of indigenous peoples is also an ongoing concern. A few meetings have concerns for immigrant rights. Albany Meeting sponsors the New Sanctuary for Immigrants group. Gay/lesbian/transgender rights are also primary concerns in some meetings

Many issues overlap in regard to categories. Albany Meeting, for example, is “working to make racism a credible ingredient of the legal proceedings, along with educating the public on the importance of serving on juries and jury nullification. We have taken on the name: Friends for Racial Justice.”

Several meetings have special sponsorships of programs mainly outside the US. These include Bolivian Quaker Education Fund; Transitions Foundation of Guatemala, run mostly by folks in wheel chairs; famine relief in Zimbabwe; Crossroads Springs, a school and residence in Hamisi, Kenya for students orphaned by aids; an organization helping combat the mistreatment of livestock and poultry, and the overuse of antibiotics on livestock and poultry; community education to help understand and deal effectively with mental-health issues; and writing a minute regarding child slavery and unfair labor practices in industry, for example harvesting in Africa in the chocolate industry.

a detailed report will be forthcoming in the next few months

- submitted 11/9/2012 - Susan Weisfeld

sweisfeld@juno.com