

UNITY WITH NATURE COMMITTEE, 2006-7

This year has been one of renewed energy and commitment for the Unity with Nature (UWN) Committee. All of us responded to the call voiced by many at the PYM gathering in 2006 for a more active and focused effort--- amidst the urgency of growing environmental crises and the need for a considered response by Friends.

After our initial Fall meeting, we reached unity and took action on four priorities for this year:

- 1) Regular communication and more frequent meetings of the UWN Committee. Since September 2006, we have held four meetings: two in-person convenings and two conference calls (with virtually 100% participation in each). These meetings have been richly productive in both elucidating our needed direction and strengthening our cooperative ties with each other. We plan future meetings to continue with similar frequency and have asked Finance Committee for an augmentation of our budget, mainly to pay for increased transportation and phone expenses.
- 2) Rebuilding a network of communication with monthly meetings. Regular channels of communication between UWN and meetings had become fairly inactive in the last several years, yet we believe that our fundamental reason for being lies in that connection. To re-establish a linkage, we made dozens of phone calls and emails to locate individuals in each monthly meeting and worship group in PYM to volunteer as "contacts," people who would transmit ideas and information both to and from the UWN Committee and monthly meetings. This task is virtually complete. We now have appointed contacts for 31 meetings and worship groups, about 90% of those in PYM. We also have set up an email list, and communication between the Committee and meetings occurs every few weeks.
- 3) Communication channels with other yearly meetings. In September, the UWN Acting Clerk traveled to Philadelphia to confer with members of the "Earthcare Working Group" of Philadelphia Yearly Meeting. Those several days generated richly productive ideas for our activism on the West Coast. Another meeting is planned in April with UWN Committee Reps from across the U.S.
- 4) A Quaker response in PYM to the growing problem of global climate change. In November, the UWN Acting Clerk brought such a minute, initially approved by Santa Monica Meeting, to the Fall meeting of Southern California Quarterly, which also approved it. The UWN Committee then sent copies of this minute and also one approved by Strawberry Creek Meeting to meetings throughout PYM, asking them to consider a minute on the same issue. The response has been very heartening, to say the least! At this time, we know of at least 13 meetings or worship groups in PYM which have either approved or are considering a minute responding to the issue of climate change.

Encouraged by this response, the UWN Committee hopes to bring such a minute to the 2007 Gathering of the Pacific Yearly Meeting for consideration. The minute below is the current draft, which is subject to further input and revision. It is primarily based on the minute approved by Southern California Quarterly Meeting, as well as the ones approved by Santa Monica and Strawberry Creek Meetings. We ask meeting reps at Rep Com to take this minute to their respective meetings for discussion.

Respectfully submitted, Joe Morris, UWN Acting Clerk

RESPONDING TO GLOBAL CLIMATE CHANGE: Draft of a Minute to be Presented to PYM Gathering, 2007

Friends have come to recognize that caring for the Earth is a true spiritual concern. In the most recent *Faith and Practice*, we are asked to "live according to principles of right relationship and right action within the larger whole. Be aware of the influence humans have on the health and viability of life on earth."

Throughout Pacific Yearly Meeting, a growing number of individuals and meetings have taken specific steps to raise awareness and alter behavior in these regards.

We now are facing global climate change, a phenomenon no longer seriously in doubt within the scientific community. As a result of choices we have made, the Earth is growing ever hotter, exacerbating weather extremes, habitat destruction, species extinction, and the dislocation of human lives. We recognize that resource scarcity brings greatest risk to the most vulnerable people. It can also aggravate the conditions for war.

These changes, we can no longer escape entirely. Yet some of the harm may be avoided if we act responsibly soon. In the face of these awesome challenges, we turn away from either apathy or despair toward way opening in the Light. We acknowledge the need to awaken to our sacred connection to life on this Earth.

We call for Friends to examine and decrease our individual impacts, where possible, so that Earth's resources are sustained or replenished. Such commitment will likely entail major adjustments in our purchases, diets, transportation, and livelihoods.

While many individual Friends have progressed toward a more sustainable lifestyle, we must now move toward a corporate witness in our meetings, joining with and helping each other and also like-minded groups, in our common concerns.

We ask all to stay continually informed about this evolving planetary crisis to discern future actions that will become needed. We appeal to all Friends to make this a standing priority in our families, meetings, and communities.

We ask monthly meetings in the coming year to discuss and discern this minute in terms of their appropriate witness and action and for input at the gathering of the Pacific Yearly Meeting in 2008.

We submit the actions below, ones implemented in various meetings within PYM, to exemplify some possible first steps in creating a sustainable way of life on a healthier planet:

***Reducing personal greenhouse gases at least 10% in the coming year through decreased driving, flying, and home energy use, and using efficient alternatives, for those able to do so.**

***Being a resource, encouraging, and learning from others to reduce fossil-fuel consumption.**

***Engaging in collective discernment in our meetings to understand and adjust to climate change, allowing spirit to work among us.**

***Networking among meetings and other like-minded groups, both religious and secular, to share resources and expertise.**

***Laboring with those shaping public opinion and policy to support Earthcare. From local to state, national, and international levels, advocating measures to protect Earth's resources and lessen the occasion for war.**

***Through personal participation and public policy, working to promote environmental justice and assist the most vulnerable.**