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Greetings from the mission field of Washington DC! I am very pleased to join Pacific Yearly Meeting in your 67th annual sessions, and I bring you greetings on behalf of the Friends Committee on National Legislation. In my 2.5 years serving as FCNL's executive secretary, it has been a joy to come to know Friends from this yearly meeting and from around the world, and I look forward to meeting many more of you during these sessions.

You may be wondering, did I hear Diane correctly when she said "the mission field of Washington DC?" Washington DC is a nice place to visit as a tourist, but hardly a mission field--at least not as we traditionally think of them. Yes, you heard correctly: I said mission field--our nation's Capitol where FCNL endeavors to bring Light to the decision-making of our elected officials. Now FCNL doesn't describe itself as being missionaries in Washington DC--our tag line is that we are a "Quaker lobby in the public interest." The notion of being a missionary is an inspiration I had shortly after arriving in Washington, and I'm looking forward to "testing" it with you.

Indeed, we are a quaker lobby in the public interest, bringing concerns of Friends that are shared by millions of people throughout the world to our lawmakers. Concerns such as preventing and ending war, or creating a fairer system of immigration, or mitigating global warming, or passing a federal budget based on investments in people, not the Pentagon.

I will share some stories today about how we lobby for peace and justice and I will talk more about FCNL in this evening's interest group. But I want to begin with another story of my past.

I grew up in Omaha, NE, attending a Lutheran church with my family. We participated actively in the life of our church, just as many of you participate in the life of your Meetings--church was both a spiritual home and social gathering. I remember clearly as a young child when missionaries who were serving in Africa came to speak at a potluck. The artifacts they carried with them, along with their stories of a life in a "third world country" were exotic and intriguing to me as an 8 year old. I was captivated by the foreignness of their experiences, but more significantly I was touched by the clear sense of mission and passion for their work--of providing medical care, of teaching and of preaching. I have faint recollection of the details--what country they were in or any political or cultural questions. But I knew these were people who felt called by God to their ministry and their mission field.

Missionaries often don't have a great reputation historically; nowadays we look back at intrepid pioneers and see how their insistence of the one true way of life, whether spreading the Gospel or bringing our western ways to indigenous life as both somewhat naive and colonialist.

Of course, missionaries aren't only a relic of the past. Today's missionaries may be motivated by their own callings, by the structures/expectations of their faith communities, and even by the desire for adventure. They may travel to foreign lands to share their testimonies and convert others to their religion, but they may also travel to neighborhoods in their own cities and towns to witness to injustice or to provide material assistance following disasters or establish ongoing projects of healthcare, violence prevention, youth empowerment and education. You may recognize the work that you do in my description of today's mission fields.

Missionary work juxtaposes uncommon encounters. This was as true for those Lutheran missionaries of my childhood who went to Africa as it was for the early Quaker missionaries to Kenya or even for those who journeyed to California. Our Quaker practice calls on us to "be patterns, be examples and walk cheerfully over the earth coming to know that of God in each person we meet." Quakers don't talk much about missionary work these days but we do talk about "ministry"--when the internal nudges of the Spirit manifest in our lives in such a way that we live into a concern and that we are guided by the faith, practice and grounding of our Quaker meetings and churches.

Living into a ministry implies risk because often our ministry takes us to places that are foreign and for work that we aren't necessarily trained to do. Living into ministry often requires us to stand up, speak up and encounter resistance. And how we encounter resistance is a measure of our spiritual practice, a measure of our ability to "let love be the first motion."

So how can Washington DC--the seat of the most powerful nation in the world, swamped in money, power and self-importance be a mission field?

One of the roles of missionaries is to bring something to the field that it lacks. What can Friends or any people of faith bring to Washington that is lacking?

Approaching public policy--those ideas that are shaped into laws and regulations and that form our government--approaching this work as a people who quest for the Kingdom of God, as people who have been "reached by the Life" is not common. If we have been reached by the Life, when we are living in the virtue of that Life that takes away the occasion for war, our approach is not about partisan politics or superior knowledge--both of which you can find in abundance in Washington DC. Our approach, our attitude is about seeking the Kingdom of God--in public policy, just as we seek the kingdom of God in every aspect of our lives.

FCNL's vision does just this: We seek a world free of war and the threat of war; we seek a society with equity and justice for all, we seek a community where every person's potential may be fulfilled and we seek an earth restored.

You all have an image of our Capitol: if you have traveled to Washington, you may envision our beautiful Capitol building, the mall, the well-groomed parklike landscapes that surround the Capitol, the Supreme Court, the Library of Congress. This is FCNL's neighborhood--not just the general environment of Washington, but the actual neighborhood where our office is located. It doesn't really have a "hardship" aspect that typifies most mission work. Every day I go to work in FCNL's lovely office building, a building which itself is one way we "witness" on Capitol Hill to the vision of "an earth restored."

When the FCNL office building renovation was completed in 2007--thanks to the support of many of you here and scores of Friends around the country, we were the first LEED certified building on Capitol Hill. We have much more bike parking than we have car parking; we have geothermal heating/cooling; we have a roof garden; we have furniture made from recycled materials, floors of bamboo and energy saving lighting. Now there are scores of green buildings throughout the city and the nation and this year we are lobbying for the passage of S. 761, an Energy Efficiency bill with bi-partisan sponsorship of Senator Shaheen of New Hampshire and Senator Portman of Ohio. This bill has provisions to promote energy reductions and savings at a scale that will make an impact across the country.

In addition to our witness with a Green Building and our lobby on behalf of energy efficiency, what else does FCNL bring to Capitol Hill that has a missionary appeal to it?

Let me talk more about climate change and our approach over the past few months. We are one of scores of organizations that have an abiding concern about climate change, many of the large environmental groups are devoted entirely to this issue--we have two full time staff--Jose Aguto--our lobbyist and a program assistant--from our 11 month intern program. What you may be hearing about Congress' approach to climate change is that they have buried their heads in the sand on this, and some members have, denying that any human activities are causing the dramatic warming of our earth that fuels the devastating destruction we have seen in hurricanes, droughts, wildfires, flooding. Enough of the majority of the House have this position that the calculation for action is small.

I hope you didn't take from my earlier comments that we lack respect for the influence of politics or knowledge to advance FCNL priorities in Congress. In fact, FCNL calculates our advocacy strategically, weighing the positions of lawmakers, analyzing the power structures, the Congressional calendar, the media influence and we ask: what difference will our voice make and with whom?

This year our lobbying on climate change has taken an interfaith approach with Republicans who we believe will be open to the ethical and moral dilemma posed by climate disruption; many of these are members who represent constituents dramatically affected by droughts or hurricanes in Iowa, Nebraska, New York, New Jersey and Pennsylvania.

There is a moral imperative to care for God's creation; and many, many others agree. There is a compelling concern by many non-environmental groups, like the NAACP or the National Congress of American Indians, to look at the environmental injustice perpetrated on poor and disinvested communities. FCNL works with these and interfaith groups, including evangelicals lobbying for creation care.

How does our passion and our vision for a world free of war and the threat of war have a missionary quality in Washington DC? Again, let me put some context on the current conversation in Congress. What value-add does FCNL bring to debates about national security in Washington and what role might Friends play in local communities across our country?

This year the Appropriation Committee of the House of Representatives put forward a budget that included \$512.5 Billion dedicated to the Pentagon and assorted other agencies under the term we know as the "defense budget." The entire budget approved was \$971 Billion. The quick math calculation tells you that this proposed budget has more than 50% of our tax dollars going to the Pentagon. What is included in the Pentagon budget: all expenditures for the military--current troops salaries, training, benefits: pension and healthcare for retirees; weapons procurement; maintenance and operation of the 800 military bases around the world in xx countries;

What's not included: care for veterans--healthcare, housing, job training and placement--all fall outside the Pentagon's budget. Spending on the National Security Administration and the CIA, the FBI, the National Security Council--all outside. The US State Department which includes funding for US AID--our foreign assistance that supports education of women, healthcare, child development, youth empowerment, human rights--all falls outside of the Pentagon. In fact, expenditures for foreign assistance represent less than 2% of the federal budget in the USA annually. And there are robust efforts by some members in leadership of the House of Representatives to LOWER that amount.

All of the discretionary spending that provides block grants to state, counties and municipalities that fund everything from transportation projects to mental health and substance abuse treatment to housing for poor families and elders to Pell grants supporting low income students to attend college.

So what is the role of FCNL as missionary?

Earlier this month, FCNL worked with other organizations that are promoting diplomacy and an alternate voice to the escalated rhetoric that could lead to military conflict with

Iran to secure a large number of signatures from the House of Representatives on a letter to President Obama. This bi-partisan letter, led by Rep Price, a Democrat of North Carolina and Rep Dent, a Republican of Pennsylvania, opened like this: "As members of Congress who share your unequivocal commitment to preventing a nuclear-armed Iran, we urge you to pursue the potential opportunity presented by Iran's recent presidential election by reinvigorating U.S. efforts to secure a negotiated nuclear agreement." The June election of Hassan Rouhani as president of Iran has opened a new window to vigorously pursue peace. Your senator, Senator Feinstein, is circulating a letter on the Senate side this week that would be similar.

FCNL sent out action alerts on this and over 2000 people across the country responded. Members of Congress need to know where their constituents stand. This was a good response, and this letter is an incredibly important step to move Congress toward pressing for peace. But what if all 25,000 people who FCNL sent that action alert to had responded? What if every member of Congress got over 50 constituents asking them to sign this letter rather than 5 constituents asking them. And what if every member who signed it got a thank you from the people who can vote for them. They would notice this.

Which brings me to my final point, and it may well be FCNL's biggest challenge: the frustration over Congress, both the very slow pace of change and the acrimony that is reported in the news.

Friends, I ask you to consider how you act on your convictions and whether part of that action includes speaking up for what you believe to the people who work for you in Washington. Whether it is responding to an action alert that FCNL sends out, writing a letter to the editor, tweeting a message or setting up a meeting in your Member's local office or traveling to Washington and joining a lobby day. Any and all of these are important steps. We need a little missionary zeal to advance our social witness-- and we can do this in a way that Friends for nearly 400 years have done: with integrity and conviction. We can ask those who disagree with us to listen to our perspective and we can listen to theirs; we can tell our truth; we can support one another in community. But we need to get out of our areas of comfort, be willing to travel in a terrain that may feel foreign, in a space that we may not like to be part of, and speak and listen in ways that we may not feel equipped for.

But the good news is that we are not alone. The Divine is with us: Like Barclay, may we say: Not by strength of arguments and conviction of my understanding came I to bear witness to the Truth. May our hearts be touched and may we be reached by the Life in such a way that we recognize our mission and we grow in ministry.

Maybe you will disagree with me that what we are doing at FCNL is akin to missionary work, or it may be difficult to associate the activity of lobbying with ministry, but I hope you agree that FCNL is bringing to Congress something they need--a perspective of policies for peace and justice that create a better world. Thank you for working with us; thank you for your faithfulness to the Life.