

Saturday February 19, 2011

Report to PYM from the PYM representatives to the 2010 annual meeting of FCNL

As usual the annual meeting was inspiring. The dedication of the staff of FCNL and of the participants was tangible. The General Committee dealt with the difficult task of selecting the priorities for the work of FCNL over the forthcoming years and did it without requiring extra time. (The full text should be available on FCNL's website. It is also available in the FCNL Newsletter of January-February 2011, NO 746).

The financial situation of FCNL appears to have stabilized though the size of the staff has been significantly cut from what it was a couple of years ago. Nevertheless FCNL has been able to reinstate the salaries of the staff that had been cut, depending on position, by some 5 to 15 %.

The workshops were worthwhile. Just to mention one: the preparation for the lobby day for the New START treaty, which was passed finally and for which FCNL had worked really hard.

The Worship Sharing sessions were meaningful.

The presentations by the interns were well thought out, couched with a wonderful sense of humor and a great deal of modesty about their achievements. They were well received.

We had a geographic meeting, in particular with members of WARSF (Western Alliance of the Religious Society of Friends) at breakfast and lunch one day. We hope to organize an event together or at least participate jointly in an event sponsored by one or the other association.

For the young adults, there was a strong focus on how to lobby effectively (particularly regarding your local representatives). Lobbyists who had been working with congress for years came and spoke about what they regarded to be the most effective strategies in making an impact on legislation. The most important one mentioned was sending a personal written/typed letter/email to your representative delivered briefly and from one's own experience. The least effective were petitions, which representatives did not regard as coming from the personal will of a constituent but rather a simple signature. In between the two came such actions as giving phone calls. What was emphasized most of all, however, was the need to take action and form a personal relationship with your representative around creating social change.

Finally, I believe, all representatives took with them one or two packets with lists of donors to contact and thank them for their past financial support. This is a very concrete way of supporting FCNL and this is the least we can do given the cost incurred and the inspiration we get from attending the annual meeting. It is part of our responsibility as described in our time line.

For the first time, in my experience as part of this group, all six representatives have been attending. As a result our budget was inadequate. A supplement to the budget for this year has been submitted to RepCom as well as a more realistic budget for next year. These had to be submitted to the Finance committee before RepCom, to be approved at RepCom.

Hubert Morel-Seytoux, Convener
PYM reps to FCNL annual meeting