

Report to RepCom
March 1, 2014
Peace and Social Order Committee

The Peace and Social Order Committee has two items to report. We came to unity on recommending a procedure for presenting a minute of concern at the Pacific Yearly Meeting Annual Session. The recommended procedure is in the attachment below.

We also came to unity on recommending four interest groups for the Annual Session. The Peace and Social Order Committee received more interest group requests than time slots available. The committee came to unity on combining some of the interest groups in order to make room for everyone. The four interest groups that PSO is recommending are:

1. Ending All War: An Idea Whose Time Has Come
Presenter: David Hartsough
2.
 - a. Dreamers: An Update on Immigration Laws and Policies Affecting Undocumented Youth
Presenters: Patricia Portillo and Álvaro Alvarado
 - b. DouglaPrieta Works
Presenter: Marybeth Webster
3.
 - a. Mass Incarceration and Solitary Confinement
Presenters: Laura Magnani and Ruth Flower
 - b. Native American Rights Legislation
Presenter: Ruth Flower
4.
 - a. Soul Repair: Recovering from Moral Injury after War
Presenters: Lynn and Steve Newsom
 - b. Friends Peace Teams
Presenter: Gay Howard

Procedures for Presenting a Minute of Concern at Pacific Yearly Meeting Annual Session

Purposes of minutes of concern:

1. To draw upon the collective wisdom and spiritual power of Friends present at the Pacific Yearly Meeting (PYM) Annual Session in order to insure that the minute is accurate, faithful to our Quaker testimonies and truly reflects a leading of the Spirit among Friends as we understand it.
2. To lend the authority of the PYM Annual Session to concerns brought by a local or quarterly meeting, an individual with a leading, or a Quaker organization, thus increasing the effectiveness of those under the weight of this concern. Others, including elected officials, pay more attention when a statement comes from a large representative body rather than from a local one or an individual.
3. To insure that the minute circulates as widely as possible.

Wording of a minute of concern:

A minute of concern is a simple and clear expression of our faith. It consists of a short background statement regarding the concern followed by a brief minute that takes a position and recommends an action. The background statement and minute will be considered separately. The background statement may be used when the clerk is authorized to send a letter to elected officials, organizations and "Friends everywhere."

Seasoning Minutes of Concern Prior to the Annual Session;

1. Friends gathered at the Annual Session have authority to speak on behalf of themselves, but do not speak for all constituent members of Pacific Yearly Meeting. Thus minutes of concern approved at the Annual Session are spirit led statements by those gathered at the Annual Session, and are not binding on constituent monthly meetings, their members and attenders. This understanding is analogous to the practices of Friends Committee on National Legislation, which gathers input from a broad spectrum of Friends but does not claim to speak on behalf of all Friends. Although the Annual Session has representatives from constituent Meetings in Pacific Yearly Meeting, Friends at the Annual Session seek to be led by the promptings of the Spirit present amongst them at the time they gather, and not by their notions of what their local Meetings might want. Thus minutes approved by those at the Annual Session should begin with an explicit qualification: *'Friends gathered at the ___th Annual Session of Pacific Yearly Meeting, held in ___(LOCATION)___ on ___(DATE)___, after careful discernment, approved the following minute. Etc.'*
2. Minutes of concern presented to PYM Annual Session by Peace and Social Order Committee (PSO) reflect spirit led matters that Meetings, individual

Friends, and Quaker organizations have considered and acted upon. In all cases, PSO must come to unity about presenting such a request before it is brought to the Annual Session for consideration. Before they are sent to PYM PSO,

- a. Minutes of concern arising in Southern California must be approved by a monthly meeting and by a quarterly gathering of Southern California Quarterly Meeting.
 - b. Since College Park Quarterly does not consider minutes of concern, at least two monthly meetings in College Park Quarterly Meeting must approve minutes addressing the same concern before the concern is brought to PYM PSO.
 - c. Meetings not belonging to a quarterly meeting that are under the care of Pacific Yearly Meeting (such as monthly meetings and worship groups in Hawai'i) may, upon approving a minute of concern, present the minute directly to PYM PSO for consideration.
 - d. A concern may also be sent directly to PYM PSO by representatives of organizations such as Friends Committee on National Legislation and American Friends Service Committee.
3. If a pressing emergency (such as the imminent threat of a war) occurs just prior to Yearly Meeting's Annual Session and Friends are led to respond, Friends gathered at the PYM Annual Session may speak out as Spirit leads them. In such cases, the procedure is for Friends to bring this concern to PSO, Ministry and Oversight Committee (M&O), and the Presiding Clerk for their consideration. If PSO, M&O and the Presiding Clerk are in unity about doing so, PYM PSO will present a minute of concern to the Annual Session for possible approval.

Recommendations for seasoning the above proposed procedures prior to PYM Annual Session 2014:

1. We recommend that M&O and PSO season these recommendations and come to unity with a statement to be considered by the 2014 Rep Com.
2. If Rep Com approves a version of these recommendations, their draft will be circulated in various ways, including the PYM website, the Southern California Quarterly Meeting listserv, and in documents sent out to registrants, to insure that Friends are familiar with the proposals prior to the Annual Session.
3. The procedures to be considered will be published in the Daily Miracle and briefly presented on the first full day of Annual Session. An interest group will give Friends an opportunity to provide input.
4. The clerk is encouraged to present these proposed procedures for approval no later than the third day of Annual Session.
5. If necessary, the clerk may ask for a threshing session similar to the one that was called in 2013 to insure that Friends have sufficient time to express their feelings and concerns.