

## **Peace and Social Order Committee Clerk's Report August, 2012**

### I. Committee members in service for peace and justice:

In 2011- 2012, several members of the committee engaged in Quaker action for justice and peace in their communities, Monthly Meetings, and Quarterly Meetings Lucia Van Diepen led the Soledad Worship Group at Soledad State Prison, and presented on prison ministry in several venues. Bill Spencer worked for affordable housing by leading efforts to convince the Humboldt County Board of Supervisors to follow their legal obligations to guarantee that a certain percentage of new housing units be dedicated to low- income tenants. Anthony Manousos worked on behalf of homeless persons in Los Angeles County and engaged in civil disobedience for the cause of social justice. He also worked with Communities United for Justice and Peace and in interfaith work, particularly between Friends and Muslims. Alvaro Alvarado worked in Sacramento with undocumented students to obtain college scholarships, and explained the new California Dream Act to Friends and the wider community. Jeff Kroeber guided the San Jose Monthly Meeting to membership in the Silicon Valley Interreligious Council.

### II. Interest and Affinity Groups Being Presented at the 2012 Annual Session:

Three interest groups are being presented at the Annual Session by this committee:

- (1) Undocumented students (co- sponsored with Latin American Concerns Committee);
- (2) Friends Peace Teams; and
- (3) Homelessness and affordable housing

Two affinity groups are being presented:

- (1) Friends and the Occupy Movement; and
- (2) Prison ministry

In 2011 the committee presented three interest groups at the Annual Session, which were well-attended.

### III. Presentation on Quaker Activism at Southern California Quarterly Meeting:

In November 2011 at the Fall Meeting of Southern California Quarterly Meeting, three members of the committee (Anthony Manousos, Lucia Van Diepen and Jeff Kroeber) participated in a panel discussion on Quaker Activism and Interfaith work.

### IV. Monthly Conference Calls:

Our committee has a monthly conference call, during which we network, brainstorm ideas and projects, seek the guidance of The Light in our work, and welcome involvement from all interested Friends, including the Youth Program Coordinator and young Friends. These calls have consistently assisted us in increasing our vision for peace and justice activities, and assisting each other in coordinating our work in the far- flung locales where we live.

V. Outreach to JYM and Young Friends:

The Clerk this year has made efforts to reach out to young Friends and JYM. This has included regular participation of Alyssa Nelson, Youth Program Coordinator, in our conference calls, and attending the Intergenerational Workshop at Quaker Center at Ben Lomond on August 10 and 11. The committee has requested Nominating Committee to bring forward the name or names of young Friends for membership on this committee.

VI. Concern About Possible War With Iran:

This committee has grave concerns about increased threats toward Iran, and the very real prospect of war between Iran and the United States. The members of our committee discussed a number of concerns and proposals during our April, May and June conference calls. We called upon all available spiritual guidance, but still no clear path to action was apparent.

We recommend that all Friends carefully review, engage in prayer upon, and consider acting upon the Minute on Iran approved at Orange Grove Monthly Meeting in April, 2012:

*As Friends, we urge our elected officials to engage in diplomatic efforts rather than military threats when dealing with Iran and other nations that some define as our enemies. We support taking steps to insure that the Middle East become a WMD- free zone, as recommended in a 1975 U.N. General Assembly resolution.*

*As Friends, we oppose taking pre- emptive punitive actions against Iran based on the assumptions it may be developing nuclear weapons. We also oppose covert actions such as the assassinations of Iran's nuclear scientists or funding violent opposition groups. We feel that such actions are tantamount to war and will destabilize the Middle East rather than promote an enduring and just peace.*

*We also call upon Friends to help dispel the poisonous stereotypes about Iran that are leading many people to believe that war is not only necessary, but inevitable. We recommend that Friends read books and films about Iran, reach out to their Iranian neighbors, and share truths about Iran as widely as possible:*

Also recommended:

Ask the Clerk of our Yearly Meeting to send a letter to elected officials based on the first two paragraphs of this minute.

Encourage monthly meetings to do likewise.

Organize book discussion groups and film showings about Iran and the Middle East.

Explore other creative ways to challenge the demonization of Iran and to emphasize the humanity of Iranians.

Respectfully submitted  
Jeffrey Kroeber,  
Clerk August 2012