

Peace and Social Order report for Annual Session 2015

Report of the PYM PSO

I want to begin by expressing my gratitude to the Miwok people, the original inhabitants of this beautiful place where we are meeting. I want to thank their ancestors and their elders. May we learn from their wisdom!

I love being part of this yearly meeting and I love being part of the Quaker peace community, and I thank God that I can be here with you as clerk of the Peace and Social Order Committee. I want to thank all of you who have made this Yearly Meeting possible through your committee work, through your participation, and through your donations. I want to give special thanks to our clerk, Steve Smith, for his leadership, his vision, his wisdom and his incredibly loving heart. I also want to thank Amy Cooke, the organizer of interest groups, for her hard work and her patience.

I'd like to begin this report by thanking all of you in this session who have done anything this year for peace and justice. Please stand, if you are able, if you are a member of a Peace Committee or a peace group in your Meeting or community. Keep standing and we will hold you in the Light. Please stand if you have been arrested or visited someone in prison. Please stand if you have fed or done anything to help a homeless person. Please stand if you have visited someone in the hospital or contributed clothing or food to a shelter. Please stand if you have signed a petition, written or visited an elected official, or attended a peace vigil. Please stand if you have taken part in a business meeting that approved a minute of concern from your Peace Committee. Friends, you are all peacemakers and you are all blessed. I thank you from the bottom of my heart.

The purpose of the Peace and Social Order Committee is to support your concerns for justice and peace. Each month the Peace Committee has a phone conference call, to which all are invited. Contact me at interfaithquaker@aol.com if you'd like to be included. You can also learn more about peace concerns at my blog: laquaker.blogspot.com

I am always inspired and encouraged when I hear of the wonderful work being done by Friends around issues of peace and justice and Quaker service. This year I especially want to lift up Lynnette Arnold for her remarkable work on behalf of refugee children crossing the border from Latin America. This spring she traveled to Karnes, Texas, to take part in an action supporting mothers who are being held in detention and have gone on a hunger strike. She has a loving heart and a deep concern for the most vulnerable, at-risk children and families who are seeking a safe haven in our privileged land.

The Peace and Social Order Committee is sponsoring four interest groups dealing with the following concerns.

1. **Mass Incarceration and Restorative Justice:** This is an AFSC interest group convened by Laura Magnani and her colleague, Jerry Elster, a former incarcerated man who has become our healing justice coordinator.
2. **A Quaker response to the increased migration of Latin American children and families,** an interest group led by The Child Refugee and Migration Subcommittee of the Latin American Concerns Committee.
3. **Stopping Lethal Drone Warfare:** Two years ago PYM approved a minute calling for Friends to oppose militarized drone warfare. This workshop will provide an update and action suggestions for implementing that minute based on the Princeton Theological

Seminary lethal drone warfare conference held at the end of January with 150 interfaith participants, including around 10 Friends. Presented by AFSC's Stephen McNeil.

4. **Friends Peace Teams.** This is a Spirit-led organization working around the world to develop long-term relationships with communities in conflict to create programs for peacebuilding, healing and reconciliation.

There are many other interest groups devoted to peace and justice not sponsored by PSO, but worth mentioning and attending. I especially want to lift up the presentation by **Jose Aguto** of FCNL on the challenge of worldwide environmental decay, and from **Paula Palmer** of Intermountain Yearly Meeting, who will present her powerful workshop, *"Roots of Injustice, Seeds of Change: Toward Right Relationship with America's Native Peoples."*

The main concern to surface this year in both SCQM and College Park Quarterly Meeting has been immigration, and the plight of refugee children crossing the border from Latin America. The Latin American Concerns Committee of PYM has appointed a special subcommittee devoted to this concern; and the Casa de los Amigos in Mexico City is deeply involved in immigration and migrant issues. Six Meetings—Santa Barbara, Inland Valley, Humboldt Redwood Forest, Sacramento, Orange Grove Meeting— have approved minutes of concern regarding the plight of refugee children crossing the border; and La Jolla Meeting is currently considering one.

I encourage you to support the efforts of the AFSC and FCNL to promote humane and fair immigration reform. See AFSC: <http://www.afsc.org/resource/just-and-humane-comprehensive-immigration-reform> and

also http://fcnl.org/issues/immigration/advocate_for_refugees_at_border/

The six minutes approved so far can be found online at:

<http://www.pacificyearlymeeting.org/committee-newsletters-and-reports/latin-american-concerns/>

Finally, here is action recommended by AFSC – click on the link to send a letter to your Congressperson asking them to vote in favor of a budget amendment that would get rid of the “bed mandate” that requires 34,000 immigrant detention beds to be filled every day:

http://salsa3.salsalabs.com/o/50601/p/dia/action3/common/public/?action_KEY=16493&tag=bedquotafb

As Paul says in his letter to the Corinthians, each of us has different gifts. Some are called to vocal ministry, some to committee work, some to prayer, and some to prophetic witness. If we are going to be a healthy, Spirit-led community, we need to support each other in our gifts and callings. I don't expect each of you to get arrested, or to visit your elected officials, or to write articles, as I and others in our Quaker peace movement have done. Some of you are called to sign a petition or to say, “Approved,” when a minute of concern is presented. Some of you feel led to raise questions and challenge us to be more authentic in seeking to follow the leadings of the Spirit. This is also good and necessary work. Whatever you are led to do, do it with love and respect, and we will be the beloved community that God intends us to be. Thank you, Friends. for being Friends....

Yours in friendship and peace,

Anthony Manousos

1628 N Garfield Ave

Pasadena CA 91104

626-375-1423

interfaithquaker@aol.com

Blog: <http://laquaker.blogspot.com/>