

Poplar Ridge Friends Meeting - Annual Report NYYM Reps - April 27, 2014

Rebecca Schillenback and Ruth Bradley continued as our representatives to the NYYM, attending spring, summer and fall sessions, as well as Meetings for Discernment as their schedules allowed.

It is hard to provide a short summary of all of the activities of the yearly meeting, and I encourage all who are interested in more than these highlights to visit the yearly meeting website at

<www.nyyym.org>.

Highlights of the yearly meeting activities and issues include:

1. The Priorities Working Group Report and Priorities Statement was received this April at Spring Sessions with much anticipation. The ad hoc working group was first established in Spring 2011 and met with 78 monthly meetings and worship groups as part of their discernment of priorities. Friends are asked to read the report and reflect on it to discern whether it presents a vision for our future that one can embrace. The statement of priorities and proposed actions will be considered for approval at summer sessions this July. Six clear priorities were listed in the Report:

- the development of programs to teach and share our spiritual skills with each other and to help meetings revitalize themselves
- the development programs to help sustain monthly meetings financially and increase membership
- promote activities to increase contact and spiritual relationship among Friends
- develop resources to assist meetings in teaching our children, youth and young adults the substance of our faith and practice, and promote actions that better integrate them into the fabric of our community.
- recognize the yearly meeting's responsibility to be an active voice for Friend's faith, values, ministry and witness in the world
- to have the yearly meeting be an accountable and transparent organization whose structure and operations are well understood by all Friends that make up the Yearly Meeting

2. Already the clerk of the yearly meeting has begun a "visitation initiative" to encourage Friends to visit other monthly meetings and worship groups in NYYM. A method of recording these visits is available on the ym web-site (39 visits for 2014 recorded as of this morning).

3. At Fall Sessions, November 2013, an apology to Afro-Descendants was approved. It begins: "We the New York Yearly Meeting (NYYM) of the Religious Society of Friends apologize to Afro-Descendants* everywhere for Quaker participation in the terrible acts of enslaving your ancestors and for the destructive effects that those acts have had on succeeding generations." This was followed-up over subsequent months with a series of statements and queries to help focus our attention on challenging racial assumptions and on steps to racial healing.

4. The Witness Section of the yearly meeting continues to inspire with its number of NYYM Friends in activities, such as Alternatives to Violence Project (AVP); Bolivian Quaker Education Fund (BQEF); Friends Peace Teams; Conscientious Objection to War actions; prison and parole reform efforts; Earthcare Witness, and so much more. It is always an inspiration to hear of Friends 'activities in the world, near and far.

5. The 2013 budget year showed a small surplus for the second year in a row.

Submitted by Ruth Ann Bradley