

Report of PYM-PSO committee
To Pacific Yearly Meeting July 29, 2009
at Walker Creek Ranch, Marin County

The Peace and Social Order committee of PYM major commitment has been to carry visits with the various Peace and Social Order, Concern, Action or Witness Justice (PSX for short) committees of Monthly Meetings.

The following Monthly Meetings have been visited:

Davis, Visalia, Chico, Grass Valley, San Jose, San Francisco, Berkeley, Palo Alto, Santa Monica, Strawberry Creek, Marin and Santa Cruz.

Reports of the visits were prepared and eventually all these reports will be compiled into a volume (understood in a modern way, i.e. probably on a web site or a blog) for the use of the PSX committees in order to facilitate communication between Meetings and cooperation on issues of common interest. These reports can be thought of as “state of the PSX”.

The format for reporting follows the recommended guidelines to the visiting members of PYM-PSO:

PYM-PSO VISITS TO MONTHLY MEETINGS

Our goal is to:

- **establish a personal connection between the PYM-PSO Committee, the monthly meeting (MM), and its Peace and Social (Action, or Order, or Concerns, or Witness) Committee (in short PSX)**
- **discover where there is interest and will for witness on MM-PSX concerns by the meeting community and its individuals, and actions initiated in this regard**
- **explore how PYM-PSO might support the witness of the Meeting**
- **remind the meeting of the PYM past minutes (2003-2008) on various concerns (such as universal health care) and offer materials and information to support the Meeting’s response**
- **consider how best the connection between the PYM-PSO Committee and the MM-PSX committee might best be sustained**

Following your visit

Prepare a joint report with the clerk of the visited MM-PSX committee under the above headings to ease our discussion and response to the findings, and the preparation of an overall report. Forward that report to me as promptly as possible.

At the Yearly Meeting, PSO sponsored two Interest Groups:

1. "Health Care for All"
2. "War Taxes"

During the Open Committee Meeting on Wednesday late afternoon July 29, the committee addressed the question: "How do our Testimonies manifest themselves in Peace and Social Action in PYM?"

The ensemble of all the "states of the PSX" is far too voluminous to be appended here. Let us simply list the activities or concerns favored by at least several of the Monthly Meetings, sponsored and carried out by the Meeting rather than by a single or several individuals without the explicit support of their Meeting. This list is based on only a few "statements of the PSX" among the twelve Monthly Meetings:

1. Witnessing for Peace, protesting against wars (e.g. vigils, death count in front of Meeting House, organizing the "Eyes Wide Open" display for California): (San Jose, Berkeley, Davis, Visalia, San Francisco, Grass Valley, Santa Monica, and Palo Alto)
2. Community meals: (Davis, San Francisco, Palo Alto, Berkeley, Grass Valley)
3. Letter writing to a government official on a regular basis (e.g. one Sunday a month): (Berkeley, Palo Alto, Santa Monica)
4. War Tax Resistance: (Davis, Palo Alto, San Francisco)
5. Marriage of individuals of same sex: (San Jose, Santa Monica, Palo Alto, Santa Cruz)
6. Objection to Torture: (Palo Alto, Santa Monica, Strawberry Creek)
7. Dime-a-Gallon: (Davis, Chico, Strawberry Creek)

Finally and probably most important are the Minutes recommended for approval during the Plenary session and one Minute of SCQM provided only for information and with some reservation.

This year Peace and Social Order Committee has made an extraordinary effort to reach out to monthly meetings and to hear and support their concerns. We visited over a dozen meetings and composed reports based on what Friends shared with us. In March of this year I went to Southern California where I went to Orange Grove Meeting in Pasadena and attended a special called meeting of the Southern California Quarterly Meeting Peace and Social Committee. This special session was attended by Friends from Santa Monica, Orange Grove, Orange County, Santa Barbara, and Inland Valley. I have been told that this was the largest and most vital peace committee meeting that has taken place in Southern California for quite some time. During this session concerns were raised about health care and also about the expanding war in Afghanistan. Santa Monica Meeting later considered and approved minutes addressing these concerns. These minutes were taken to Quarterly Meeting in May where they were revised and approved. Southern California Quarterly Meeting sent these minutes to the Yearly Meeting for our consideration. After reflecting on these minutes of concern from SCQM, we propose the following two minutes for consideration by PYM:

- In keeping with our Quaker Peace Testimony, Pacific Yearly Meeting opposes the expansion of the war in Afghanistan and elsewhere and urges the United States government to address the underlying causes of war and to increase and depend on diplomacy and other nonviolent means to resolve conflicts in the world.
- In keeping with our Testimony on Equality and Community, Friends believe that access to health care must be universal, available to every individual in this land, at minimal administrative cost. Friends support a single-payer health insurance plan, do not support a single government-run health delivery system, and support the right of states to adopt the single payer option, such as SB 810 in California.

The Peace and Social Order Committee of PYM also received a minute from Southern California Quarterly Meeting calling for the United States to do its fair share in promoting universal health care and providing aid in other parts of the world, such as developing nations. While we support the right of all people in the world to have access to needed health care, we feel that the SCQM minute needs seasoning. The final sentence of this minute suggests that the United States agreed to devote .7% of its GNP to *humanitarian* aid whereas in fact it made a commitment to give .7% of GNP to *development* aid. (In 1970 at the UN General Assembly, donor nations, including the United States, made a commitment to give .7% of GNP to official development aid; the US has fallen far short of this goal and in 2002 gave only .07% --far less than most wealthy nations. (See <http://www.globalissues.org/article/35/us-and-foreign-aid-assistance>). The PSO Committee also could not come to unity about what the United States should do to support global access to health care and recommends further study of this issue. We did feel we should share the SCQM minute for your consideration.

04.09.5 – As Quakers (Religious Society of Friends) living in one of the world’s richest nations, SCQM believes that we live in an interconnected world and have a responsibility to rightly share our resources with those in other countries who lack adequate health care. We therefore urge our government to fully support the Global Fund and other initiatives to fight malaria, TB, and other infectious diseases throughout the world. We also feel that our country should strive to meet the target of .7% of GDP (Gross Domestic Product) in humanitarian aid to countries in need.