

Iowa Yearly Meeting Conservative Social Concerns Committee Report

We were blessed with the presence and passion of Friends representing most of our monthly meetings. We felt the absence of Sherry Hutchison, Ann Stromquist and Don Laughlin. Stephen Donahoe from Friends Committee on National Legislation (FCNL) and Greg Elliott from the American Friends Service Committee (AFSC) joined us for many of our meetings, often providing helpful information and insights for our work. We spent our first session sharing the breadth and depth of the work being done in our monthly meetings. Those reports which were received in electronic form are available for you to see online at <http://bit.ly/IYMCPeace>.

We spent a good deal of time talking about how we approach work for peace and social justice. Last year we were introduced to Quaker Social Change Ministry (QSCM), an AFSC model which provides a framework to help bring a more spiritual focus to our activism, and is designed to help Friends engage directly with communities impacted by injustice. We are thankful that AFSC made it possible for Greg Elliott, who is in charge of this model, to join us this week. During an evening collection, Greg explained the model, and Jeff Kisling described his experiences at North Meadow Friends in Indianapolis, which participated in the pilot year of this model. North Meadow Friends has developed relationships with the Kheprw Institute, a small community in inner city Indianapolis that is focused on mentoring young Black men. A number of meetings are interested in exploring the use of this idea.

AFSC has decided to lay down the Iowa Peacebuilding program upon the retirement of Kathleen McQuillen. Kathleen has worked closely with members of our Yearly Meeting for many years, and we would like to express our deep appreciation for her passionate work for peace. The clerk of this committee spoke with Midwest Regional Director, Brant Rosen, who explained the decision was forced by a significant shortfall in budgeted funds. Some Friends expressed concerns that Quaker process and local input were not used to inform this decision. Greg was able to share that it is a concern of Lucy Duncan at AFSC, who has strong ties with our Yearly Meeting, to address that.

AFSC will continue to focus on immigration issues, including providing legal services for immigrants. There will be a nationwide week of action on immigration August 22-26, 2016.

We had numerous occasions to discuss immigration. Sandra Sanchez, the AFSC regional staff person who has worked on this issue for over 20 years, spoke to us one afternoon and was joined by Jon Krieg from the AFSC Des Moines office. She asked for Friends' help and is already working with Des Moines Valley Friends regarding the possibility of offering sanctuary/hospitality, perhaps using the QSCM as the framework for doing that work.

We are very concerned by the increased militarization of police equipment, attitudes and tactics. Several meetings have expressed support of Black Lives Matter, decentralized organizations using nonviolence and civil disobedience, and submit a minute regarding racial justice. Some have created signs and decals and used them during peace vigils. We are submitting a minute we ask to be approved regarding to racial justice.

Related to this are the New Jim Crow laws which result in mass incarceration of a disproportionate number of Black men and women, and the increasing police involvement in our schools. Stephen Donahoe expressed FCNL's optimism that bills to address criminal justice reform have a good possibility of passing in Congress. He described the relationships FCNL helped create between young people and representatives that is furthering this work, including changing the attitude of Senate Judiciary Chairman, Iowa Senator Grassley. We ask the Yearly Meeting to approve and send the letters we wrote to senators and representatives about this issue.

We increasingly realize the interconnections between so many areas of concern today. The minute about the interconnections among dilemmas explains this.

For the committee,

Jeff Kisling, clerk

Peace and Social Concerns Committee
Budget 2016

Alternatives to Violence Project (split evenly between Iowa, Nebraska, and South Dakota)	\$150
AFSC Midwest Region (for immigration issues)	100
Frontera de Cristo (designated to Migrant Resource Center)	100
Friends Peace Teams (for Peacemaking en las Americas)	100
Nebraskans for Alternatives to the Death Penalty	50
Missourians for Alternatives to the Death Penalty	50
Friends for a Nonviolent World	100
Monteverde Friends School	100
Ramallah Friends School	50
Quaker House near Fort Bragg, NC	150
STAR PAK	50
Catholic Peace Ministry	50
Women's International League for Peace and Freedom	50
	\$1,100