

Friends World Committee for Consultation - Global Change Initiative and Local FWCC Gatherings

Quaker Responses to Global Change is an initiative that grew out of the 2007 FWCC Triennial. The topic is not specifically about climate change, but also related changes such as natural resource depletion, human migration, economics and lifestyle. FWCC wants to hear Quaker voices globally, not just from the global North and developed areas. What are Quaker experiences with these aspects of global change? What is the faith basis of our response to global change? Is there a Quaker-distinctive response? We are open to the possibility that there is none, but either answer affects how we move forward.

FWCC has set up an international steering committee for this initiative. It meets using tools other than physical travel. They have sent information to yearly meetings about holding local "clusters" of respondents. The thought is to have 10-15 clusters worldwide, as a sample of local voices. Many Friends want to share their experience, so smaller local clusters are welcome.

Guidelines will be provided for organizing local clusters, the size of a monthly meeting or larger. There will be six queries for each cluster. The queries are meant to be addressed by a group, with deeper faith based discernment.

Responses will be channeled to the FWCC World office, in writing OR using videos on the Initiative web site.

A Listening committee will gather responses together. This will be input into a consultation in late 2011, by invitation. The consultation will encourage deep discernment, with a mix of Friends skilled in Global Change issues, from various clusters, and from a range of theological points of view. The consultation will generate a report for the 2012 World Conference of Friends in Nakuru, Kenya.

The initiative will involve new Friends in FWCC, and tap into an excitement that already exists about the topic. The outcomes are unclear!

Yearly meetings should watch for mailings of documents, and are invited to coordinate with the International Steering Committee to plan local clusters. See <http://www.fwccglobalchange.org>.

Implications for Illinois Yearly Meeting

Several exciting changes are coalescing in the next two years. The August 2012 World Conference of Friends will be held in Nakuru, Kenya. A World Conference is about three times the size of a Triennial, and only occurs once in a generation. The theme is *Being salt and Light: Friends living the Kingdom of God in a broken world*. See the separate report for additional information.

The theme of the World Conference, in turn, will be the subject of a new mode of operating in 2010-2012 by FWCC Section of the Americas. Instead of a traditional annual meeting in March, FWCC is coming to where Friends are, in a series of local gatherings on the Salt and Light theme. In our area, we are likely to see gatherings in St. Louis and Chicago. These gatherings are intended to bring together Friends from other Quaker branches in the region. So in our case, we hope ILYM Friends can gather with Western YM Friends to bring the Salt and Light theme into our hearts.

You may notice that the full *Salt and Light* theme has an intersection with the *Global Change Initiative*: living the Kingdom of God in a broken world. It is not yet clear how these two themes might be addressed in local gatherings. Can they overlap, or are they distinct? How does this inform the planning of local clusters and gatherings?

I learned one more interesting tidbit when all this was being discussed at the March 2010 FWCC Section of the Americas annual meeting. In some parts of the Midwest, the "global change" concept is identified restrictively with "climate change," which in turn is perceived as a politicized and polarized issue. I was told that some Midwestern Quaker groups would not be interested in the Global Change theme. This surprised me, because it seemed very clear to me that ILYM Quakers would be quite interested in it. So what does this mean for planning both the local Salt and Light gatherings and the local Global Change Initiative clusters? Coordination and cooperation among ILYM parties, such as the FWCC representatives and the Environmental Concerns committee, along with outside planners from other yearly meetings and the FWCC office, will be needed to consider how best to engage regional Friends in these exciting opportunities.