

# InfoShare

New York Yearly Meeting  
Religious Society of Friends

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Editor: [Steven Davison](#)

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## Fall Sessions—November 14–16, 2014

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## Notes & Announcements

### **Statement of conscience regarding justice in Ferguson, MO, and New York City.**

The clerk of the Yearly Meeting, Jeffrey L. Hitchcock, and general secretary Christopher Sammond have written a statement of conscience regarding the failure of grand juries to bring criminal charges against the police officers involved in the violent deaths of unarmed African American men in Ferguson, Missouri, and New York City. The text of the statement appears below. You can also download a pdf file of this statement [here](#).

We write on behalf of New York Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) to declare our grave religious and ethical concerns regarding the recent decisions by grand juries in Ferguson, Missouri, and New York City not to bring criminal charges against the police officers involved in the violent deaths of unarmed African American men in those cities.

The grand jury system was originally intended to protect individuals from zealous prosecution by the state by insuring that the evidence was sufficient for a trial. In these two cities, the system has been turned on its head: the state is protecting its own in the face of evidence ample enough to at least justify a trial.

These failures to indict have led to a groundswell of protests across the country. We stand in unity with those who refuse to be silent and accept the status quo, who through non-violent protest attempt to speak out against injustice and to bring change to a broken system.

God leads us to believe that violence will never take us to a path of justice and healing. Furthermore, we believe that those who do violence to others also do violence to themselves. We decry both the state-sponsored violence of excessive use of lethal force by police and the individual acts of destruction during civil unrest. But we understand righteous anger and the need to challenge injustice, and we recognize that civil authority does not always align with how God would have us live in this world. In the face of this misalignment, we choose to work for a civil society that affirms the presence of God within each and all of us without exception.

Black lives matter. We know this truth through the practice of our faith, in which we experience the spark of the Divine present in each of us. We know all persons to be equally worthy of love, respect, and justice. Tragically, fifty years after they were spoken, the words of famed civil rights organizer Ella Baker still apply: "Until the killing of black men, black mothers' sons, becomes as important to the rest of the country as the killing of a white mother's sons, we who believe in freedom cannot rest until this happens." When we do not live out this truth, all of us are harmed, all of us are damaged.

All lives matter. But our civil society is constructed in a way that black and brown lives matter less than white lives. This condition extends beyond the matters of policing into education, the media, the system of mass incarceration, housing patterns, employment, and virtually every aspect of life in the United States, including its faith communities.

Therefore, we call for both recognition and remedy of this condition. We call upon civil authorities to take leadership in bringing about this recognition and remedy. We call upon all people of faith, ourselves included, to understand how we may be complicit in a system that extends privileges to people racialized as white while denying the same to those racialized as people of color.

It is clearly in the interest of our shared humanity and our common spiritual condition to change these circumstances. It is in our material, economic, and social interests to do so as well. This is not easy work. But we pray the burden of this work may be easier to bear than the moral burden of settling back, once the furor subsides, into complacent acceptance of a system and a society that fail to affirm our most fundamental relationship to God and to one another.

## **Can you help? We need volunteers for the website.**

Interested in helping with our website? We have content that's waiting to be published and don't have enough time or people to do the work. You would have to know at least a little html and be comfortable with a code writing tool; knowing a little CSS would be a plus. These are not time-sensitive projects, so you could work at your own pace. If you're interested, contact [steven@nyym.org](mailto:steven@nyym.org).

## **Send us your news!**

For January *Spark* and the next *InfoShare* (published in mid-February). The deadline for *Spark* is December 22; for February *InfoShare*, February 2.

## **Write for *Spark***

***NYYM Priorities . . . Next Steps***—January 2015

How do you envision implementing the Priorities that the gathered body of the Yearly Meeting approved at Summer Sessions 2014? You can refresh your memory about the Priorities by clicking the following link: [Statement of Leadings and Priorities](#). Also visit our [Priorities Action Hub](#), where you can track what others are doing already to implement the Priorities.

***Friends and Other Faiths***—March 2015

How should Friends work with other religious communities? What do we have to share? Send your submissions to [steven@nyym.org](mailto:steven@nyym.org).

## **State of Society query for 2014**

Dear Friends

It is time to begin preparing our state of the meeting reports for 2014. This is our annual practice of reflecting on how Spirit has been leading us and how we have followed that leading. It is the time to share where we have prospered and where we have struggled. It is our opportunity to look at our strengths and challenges and how Truth prospered among us even in difficult times. Ministry Coordinating Committee encourages Friends to reflect on these ideas as you prepare the specifics of your reports.

This year Ministry Coordinating Committee invites Friends to use the guidelines in *Faith and Practice* on page 125 for your State of the Meeting reports rather than our usual practice of sending out specific custom queries for reflection. Here is that section of *Faith and Practice*:

STATE OF THE MEETING REPORTS. Once each year, at a time sufficient to meet the request of the yearly meeting, the monthly meeting on ministry and counsel should appoint one or more of its members to prepare and present a report on the spiritual condition of the meeting. This should be reviewed in turn by ministry and counsel and by the meeting for business of the monthly meeting. When the monthly meeting approves it, with or without revision, the clerk should forward the report to a designated person or committee of the yearly meeting's Coordinating Committee for Ministry and Counsel and also, usually, to the clerk of ministry and counsel of the quarterly or equivalent meeting of which the meeting is a part.

The State of the Meeting report should be a searching self-examination by the meeting and its members of their spiritual strengths and weaknesses and of the efforts made to foster growth in the spiritual life. Reports may cover the full range of interests and concerns but should emphasize those indicative of the spiritual health of the meeting. A suggested list of topics for consideration follows:

- quality of worship and spiritual ministry
- efforts to foster spiritual growth
- stands taken on Friends' principles
- personal and family relations
- relations with community and other religious groups
- participation in general activities of Friends
- significant activities or concerns of the local meeting

Those preparing the report may be guided by consideration of the general queries and advices or by any special queries that may be directed to the local meeting from time to time by the quarterly or yearly meeting on ministry and counsel.

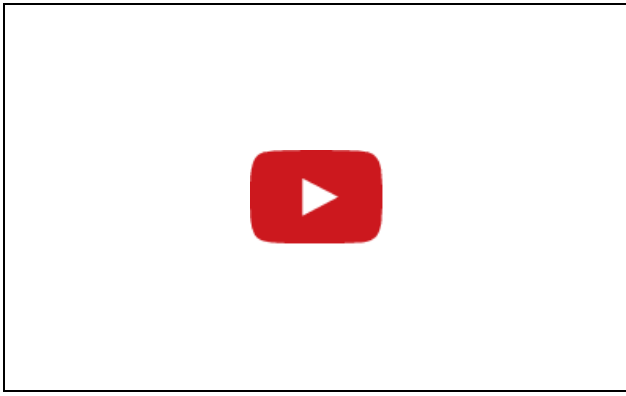
Please respond to the sections in *Faith and Practice* that speak to your condition and experience, following the process and suggestions given there.

Please submit your report by March 1st, to [office@nym.org](mailto:office@nym.org) or mail it to New York Yearly Meeting, 15 Rutherford Place, New York, NY 10003, so that the State of Society Committee will have time to include it in the draft of their report to MCC at Spring Sessions.

Thank you!  
Irma Guthrie  
Clerk, Ministry Coordinating Committee

## **QuakerSpeak—a YouTube channel for videos on Quakerism**

Do you know about the exciting web video series on various aspects of the Quaker way? You can view the whole series on the [QuakerSpeak videochannel](#) website. The goal is "to educate and engage viewers and invite them into a Quaker community, as well as to help existing Quaker communities become more responsive to these (and other) newcomers." Below is a sample video, *What to Expect in Quaker Meeting for Worship*. Each video includes discussion questions, a transcript of the content, and a comment section. There are several dozen videos already. *QuakerSpeak* is a project of *Friends Journal* in collaboration with Friends General Conference and Quaker Voluntary Service; it is directed by Jon Watts.



## **Podcast and video on the Woodbrooke website.**

Woodbrooke is a Quaker Study Center in England. They have posted a podcast of Stephen W. Angell's [George Richardson Lecture](#) called "Richard Farnsworth, Samuel Fisher, and the Authority of Scripture among Early Quakers." Stephen Angell is the Geraldine Leatherock Professor of Quaker Studies at Earlham School of Religion.

Woodbrooke has also posted a video on YouTube of the 2014 Swarthmore Lecture by Ben Pink Dandelion, titled [Open for Transformation: Being Quaker](#), a powerful and insightful message about how early Quakers were transformed in their spiritual experience and how we can be transformed today. As is the usual practice for the Swarthmore Lecture, Dandelion has expanded the oral message into [a book-length essay](#) that this editor can say from personal experience is itself transformative written ministry. Check them both out.

## **William Penn Quaker Workcamps**

Are you looking for a way to invigorate your service learning programs? Are you looking to make a sustainable difference in the world? Are you seeking ways to connect or reenergize your faith with action? William Penn House in Washington DC invites you to join a workcamp, to develop a workcamp for your group in Washington DC, to lead a workcamp, or to nurture your own leadings and skills as a young adult in their Gap Year Project. Click the following to [download a brochure](#) on William Penn Quaker Workcamps, [visit the Workcamp page](#) of their website, or [read a newsletter](#) dedicated to describing the Workcamps.

## **High school leadership forum**

The New York State Council of Churches is sponsoring a leadership forum for high school youth, traveling by bus to the United Nations in New York City on Presidents Day, Monday, February 16, and returning Wednesday, February 18, 2015, picking up and dropping off in Ilion and Albany, New York. This year, they will study "Jesus goes to Ferguson: Christianity and Race in 21st Century America." The cost of \$350 covers lodging, travel by chartered bus, lunch on Tuesday and Wednesday, and breakfast on Wednesday. Click the following to download a [trip flyer](#) and to download the [application](#).

## **Folk music and food to support AVP in El Salvador—January 10, Purchase Meeting**

John Scardina and Friends provide the music, the meeting provides the food. 6:30 pm to 9:00 pm, Saturday, January 10, 2015, Purchase Meetinghouse, 4455 Purchase Street, Purchase, NY. Adults \$25, children \$15. Reservations appreciated: contact Margaret Lechner, by [email](#) or phone, 203-661-8516.

## **Elizabeth Ann Bogert Memorial Fund scholarship**

This scholarship for the study of Christian mysticism is a project under the supervision of the Friends World Committee for Consultation, Section of the Americas. It provides up to \$1,000 to selected individuals, groups, or institutions. The Fund affirms the rich variety of mystical experience within the Christian context, understanding the mystical element in Christianity to be that aspect of its belief and practices that relate to an immediate and direct sense of the presence of the Divine. The Fund encourages both experiential and scholarly exploration of this realm. Grants are made without denominational, cultural, racial, or national preference of age or restriction. Click the following to view the very brief [description on the FWCC website](#). For an application or more information, email [Secretary Ken Henke](#).

## **NYYM Prayer List**

If you would like Friends in the Yearly Meeting to pray for you or someone you know, or if you would like to join the Prayer List as one of the pray-ers, or if you would like to learn more about the List, please contact [John Edminster](#), the List's coordinator. Remember that if you want to offer someone for prayer, make sure you ask them first whether it's okay to do that.

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## **Job Opportunities**

### **Internships and more: young adult opportunities at Friends Committee on National Legislation**

FCNL has expanded its opportunities for young adult advocacy. Click the following to visit their "[The Future Needs an Advocate](#)" web page. These opportunities include internships through their [Young Fellows Program](#), paid support for young people to organize in their own campuses and communities through the [Advocacy Corps](#), and [Summer Internships](#). And don't forget their [Spring Lobby Weekend](#) that brought almost 200 student advocates to Washington DC last year; this year, the focus is climate change. View their silly (their words) [video on YouTube](#). Contact [Kaeley Pruitt-Hamm](#), Advocacy Corps Coordinator, for more information.

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## **Meeting News**

### **ARCH Visitors Go Deep at Powell House**

On November 21-23, 2014, 31 Trained ARCH Visitors from all over New York Yearly Meeting, ARCH Staff, and members of the Committee on Aging Concerns gathered for a refresher course at Powell House: *ARCH Visitor Training 2*. We had a very inspiring weekend during which we grew in our sense of community; discussed how to work within our individual meetings; learned about plans and visions for

the ARCH of the future; listened to outside speakers on “Dementia and Pastoral Care” and “Hearing Loss;” and, most exciting of all, learned to design and facilitate our own workshops. Each participant demonstrated their confidence and ability to facilitate on an aging- or disability-related topic. The breadth and depth was impressive!

ARCH stands for “Aging, Resources, Consultation, and Help.” It is a program of New York Yearly Meeting funded by Friends Foundation for the Aging and supported by the Committee on Aging Concerns. The mission of ARCH is to cultivate a community of well supported aging F/friends.

If you, your meeting, or your family are called to care for and with the aging and differently-abled among us, consider becoming an ARCH Visitor. The ARCH network supports one another in the pastoral care of those living through the joys and challenges of aging and living with disabilities. The next ARCH Visitor training is now accepting applications from anyone in the Yearly Meeting and will be held March 20-22, 2015 in Syracuse, New York. There is no fee for this weekend retreat, but donations are gratefully accepted. Please contact Barbara Spring to register at [bkspring70@gmail.com](mailto:bkspring70@gmail.com) or 518-441-6405.

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## Conferences

### **Continuing Revolution: A Young Adult Friends Conference on Equality**

**Dates:** June 5–10, 2015. **Place:** Pendle Hill, Wallingford, PA.

Young Adult Friends (ages 18-35) are invited to Pendle Hill’s annual intensive six-day conference—YAFCON—designed to strengthen a networked generation of awakened and effective spiritually grounded change agents. The program includes inspirational speakers, workshops and trainings, worship and worship-sharing, fellowship, community-building activities, and discernment opportunities. Click the following to visit the [conference's page on the Pendle Hill website](#). Check out their recent [article in \*Friends Journal\*](#) to learn more about the conference series.

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## Staff Travel Calendars

### **Aging Resources, Consultation and Help (ARCH)**

**Coordinators: Callie Janoff, Anita Paul, & Barbara Spring**

**March 20–22, 2015** — Callie Janoff and Anita Paul in Syracuse for an ARCH Visitor Training

## **Christopher Sammond, General Secretary**

### **October**

- 5 Visit Old Chatham Meeting, Old Chatham, NY
- 8–11 Attend FUM General Board Meeting,  
clerk North American Ministries Meeting, Richmond, IN
- 21–23 Co-facilitate NYYM/NEYM Pastors Retreat, Weekapaug, RI
- 25 Participate in Budget Saturday, Purchase Meetinghouse, Purchase, NY

### **November**

- 15–16 Participate in Fall Sessions, 15th Street Meetinghouse, New York, NY
- 22 Visit Otisville Prison Worship Group, Otisville, NY
- 22 Attend Purchase Meeting Fall Harvest Dinner, Purchase Meetinghouse, Purchase, NY
- 23 Visit Montclair Meeting, Speak to the work of the Yearly Meeting, Montclair, NJ

### **December**

- 5–7 Attend Anti-racism Workshop, New York, NY
- 12 Visit Cayuga Prison Worship Group, Moravia, NY

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