

## SEYM Adopts a Call for Spiritual Uplift

At Fall Interim Business Meeting, the Peace and Social Concerns Committee brought forward a proposed 'Call for Spiritual Uplift' (below) for our consideration. The following minute was adopted:

**2021FIBM-06. Fall Interim Business Meeting agrees to designate a day of fasting and prayer, with the intention of healing individual ills and social conflicts and seeking our way forward. SEYM will petition other yearly meetings, Friends' agencies, and groups like the Poor People's Campaign to unite on an upsurge into a worldwide focus on how we are ruining Planet A and inflicting grievous harm on each other, then resolve to turn about-face and march together toward freedom and peace.**

SEYM will continue discernment on what date to have this day of fasting. Friends are asked to consider the proposed statement:

### **Call for Spiritual Uplift in the face of armed conflict**

For nine months talk among the people of the USA has centered on denial and insurrection. It is high time to discuss responsibility for change and the right use of our financial resources. I am proposing a movement, grounded in fasting and prayer, to accomplish this. By fasting, I do not mean trying to placate God or grab God's attention, rather to free up and focus our energy for a vital cause. And prayer is no sticky sentimental whine, rather asking God to empower us for tasks beyond ordinary human capability.

A recent event strikes me as emblematic of the crisis in which we are foundering. During the evacuation through the Kabul airport, what is called intelligence detected suspicious movements of a man loading packages into his car and then driving to a staging area close to the airport. A drone was sent to take out this target, killing a family including seven children. Too late we learned that this man had been stowing bottled water to meet his family's needs.

For times when the demons of war are set loose in our midst, passages from the Bible come to mind (from the Revised English Bible): Havoc and violence confront me, strife breaks out, discord arises. Therefore law becomes ineffective, and justice is defeated. . . . Because you yourself have plundered many nations, because of the bloodshed and violence you inflicted on cities and all their inhabitants over the earth, now the rest of the world will plunder you. (Habakkuk 1,3f. and 2,8.) Yet even now, says the Lord, turn back to me wholeheartedly with fasting, weeping, and mourning. Rend your hearts and not your garments, and turn back to the Lord your God, for he is gracious and compassionate, long-suffering and ever constant, ready always to relent when he threatens disaster. (Joel 2,12f.) -- His disciples asked Jesus privately, 'Why could we not drive this demon out?' He said, 'This kind cannot be driven out except by prayer.' (Mark 9,28f.) -- [see Psalm 139,4-6 - Isaiah 55,8f.,11 - Matthew 5,3-10 - Ephesians 6,12]

From biblical times and up to the Civil War, at critical moments a public "day of fasting, humiliation and prayer" was declared. During my lifetime I recall isolated, individual acts of protest but no broad-gauge anti-war movement. Astonishingly we continue to squander our resources on

feeding the insatiable wealth of profiteers from the military - industrial complex. Therefore I repent of my country's wrongheaded imperialism. I repent of my complicity in evading responsibility for devoting our resources to the needs of war and climate refugees worldwide. For only through global cooperation and mutual aid will life on earth as we know it survive.

I propose designating as a day for fasting and prayer -- with intention of healing individual ills and social conflicts, and seeking our way forward -- either or both of these Saturdays in November: the 6th (during 2021 United Nations Climate Change Conference, 31 Oct - 12 Nov) and/or the 27th (day before the season of Advent, a time for beginning anew). I envision an upsurge into a worldwide awakening to how we are ruining Planet A and inflicting grievous harm on each other, then resolving to turn about-face and march together toward freedom and peace.

Drafted [20 September 2021](#) by a Friend. Approved and minuted [2 October 2021](#)  
by Southeastern Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends