Tenth Month: Civic Responsibility

We affirm our unchanging conviction that our first allegiance is to God, and if this conflicts with any compulsion of the State, we serve our countries best by remaining true to our higher loyalty.
Pacific Yearly Meeting, 1953

We must come from a spirit of love and compassion to help our leaders and many of our fellow citizens come to see that if we truly love God then we must make a drastic change of direction in the course of our country. The only way we will gain respect is by showing it to others, even those we disagree with. The only way we will gain love is by giving it to others, even those we disagree with. Love of country must always be subordinate to love of God. Love of country alone sets us on a course towards the disasters that have befallen other countries over the centuries. Charting a new course must begin now before it is too late.
Tom Fox, 2005

Advices from Faith and Practice

We value the part we have in shaping the laws of our country. It is our task to see that these laws serve God's purposes. Our aim is the building of a social order which works toward the kingdom of God. We affirm our unchanging conviction that our first allegiance is to God, and if this conflicts with any compulsion of the state, we serve our country best by remaining true to our higher loyalty. If, by divine leading, our attention is focused on a law contrary to divine law, we must proceed with care. Before making a decision, we pray for further divine guidance; we consult with others who might be affected by our decision. When clearness on the decision has been reached, we act with conviction. If our decision involves disobedience to the law, we make the grounds of our action clear to all concerned. If there are penalties, we must suffer them without evasion. We care for those who suffer for conscience's sake.

Queries

- What are we doing as individuals and as a Meeting to carry our share of civic responsibility for our community, state, and nation?
- How are we working for change in government when change is needed?
- How do we discern between meeting our obligations to the state and society and opposing those contrary to Quaker principles?
- Do we share our convictions in a spirit of loving concern?
- In what ways do we care for those who are vulnerable or are in poverty in our communities?