

MINUTES OF THIRD MONTH 20, 2004
BETHESDA MONTHLY MEETING

I2004-1 *Opening.* Baltimore Yearly Meeting's Interim Meeting gathered on 3/20/2004 at the Bethesda Meeting House in Bethesda, MD. The Presiding Clerk twice read excerpts from George Fox's Letter No. 149, "To Friends, to know one another in the light."

All Friends everywhere meet together, and in the measure of God's spirit wait....

And Friends meet together, knowing one another in the light which was before the world was....

[I]f ye turn from this light you grow strange; and so neglecting meetings ye grow cold....

Therefore, in the light wait and walk, that ye may have fellowship one with another.

Let this be read among Friends everywhere.

I2004-2 *Friends United Meeting Concern.* Howard Fullerton and Rick Liversidge, two of BYM's representatives to FUM, delivered a lengthy summary of developments related to FUM policy on homosexuals, especially from 1988 to the present. Rick Liversidge read aloud to IM requests from Baltimore Monthly Meeting Stony Run and Gettysburg Monthly Meeting to withhold financial support in response to FUM's current policies and procedures with respect to homosexuality, policies viewed as not in consonance with Friends' testimonies on equality.

MINUTE APPROVED AT GETTYSBURG
MONTHLY MEETING FOR BUSINESS
FEBRUARY 8TH 2004

For the indefinite future Gettysburg Friends Meeting would like to withhold its portion of the assessment made to Baltimore Yearly Meeting for the purpose of supporting the programs and activities of Friends United Meeting. This Meeting has watched patiently for the response to the Lamar Matthew incident and other concerns that relate to the relationship between FUM and BYM, with growing disappointment and dismay. Like any large or small organization, we too, have to make hard decisions about how best to use our limited resources, time, and energy.

While we recognize that FUM has accomplished worthwhile achievements over the years, several of its policies, practices, and attitudes over a considerable span of time, have lead us to take a position of withdrawing our financial support, as small as it is, in the hope that a corrective course might be found and taken in the future.

**MINUTE APPROVED BY BALTIMORE MONTHLY MEETING, STONY RUN,
MARCH 7, 2004**

WITHDRAWAL OF FINANCIAL SUPPORT TO FRIENDS UNITED MEETING

Baltimore Monthly Meeting, Stony Run, is not in unity with Friends United Meeting (FUM) with respect to its policy toward gays and lesbians, specifically because it denies the universality of the light in every person. We recognize the value of FUM's programs and its importance to Quakerism; however, we must recommend that Baltimore Yearly Meeting withdraw all its financial support from FUM while continuing to maintain a dialogue in the hope of change in FUM's position.

We had hoped that FUM might change its policy over the years, but this policy has continued and there is currently little expectation of change. We regret the need to take this action and, as noted, fully expect BYM to continue to maintain a dialogue with FUM in the prayerful hope that a change of policy will occur in the future.

Clerk, *Alice Cherbonnier*

Many Friends present were not aware of the Baltimore, Stony Run and Gettysburg Meeting minutes nor fully cognizant of the FUM policies about homosexuals. One Friend asked for a period of silent worship to consider the information and the Interim Meeting rested into a time of silence.

**FRIENDS UNITED MEETING
POLICY ON MARRIAGE**

We affirm our traditional testimonies of peace, simplicity, truth-speaking, gender and racial equality, personal integrity, fidelity, chastity and community. We recognize that there is diversity among us on the issues of sexuality. For the purpose of our corporate life together, we affirm our traditional testimony that sexual intercourse should be confined to the bonds of marriage, which we understand to be between one man and one woman. (FUM General Board, 10/88)

We learned that our Yearly Meeting through its budget contributes \$17,400 in unrestricted funds to FUM; compared to other Yearly Meeting contributions to FUM's budget, BYM's is very small. Despite this relatively small contribution, the question emerged as to whether we want to support FUM corporately if its policies affecting employment and program participation continue to exclude many Friends. We do want to keep open our communications with FUM Friends, its Yearly Meetings, and the General Board.

After a lengthy period, Friends moved through the loving expression of many possibilities and APPROVED that the Ministry and Pastoral Care Committee, in consultation with Stewardship and Finance Committee and the Ad Hoc Committee on Gender and Sexual Diversity Concerns, develop for consideration at next Interim Meeting a query, an epistle, or a minute of response. It was hoped that way would open for the Monthly Meetings of Baltimore Yearly Meeting to unite around a loving, humble, worshipful self-examination and approach to Friends United Meeting on this tender issue. We plan to send the usual quarterly payment of support to Friends United Meeting at the end of June, pending decisions made at Interim Meeting about its disposition.

Y2004-3 *Long Range Property Planning.* Sheila Bach described the history of the formation of this committee from members of Stewardship and Finance, Trustees, Camping Program, and Camp Property Management committees. [See **Y2003-46** and **Y2002-45**. Y2002-45 contains the committee charge and a list of members.] They sent facilities survey questionnaires to each Monthly Meeting, and have compiled the results. Each Monthly Meeting should check the information applicable to themselves for accuracy. The committee hopes to produce a booklet with the information of each Monthly Meeting, the camps, and other sites including The Clearing, Friends Wilderness Center, William Penn House, and the Mark Brabson house for the possibilities of holding small retreats.

Y2004-4 *Friends General Conference.* Trudy Rogers distributed and reviewed the report from Friends General Conference, and encouraged Friends to take some of the outreach materials she had brought. She also encouraged Meetings to take advantage of the wonderful opportunity of the FGC Gathering for individuals and families. Eight Friends rose in response to her invitation to show their activity on the Central Committee or Planning Committee for FGC. Trudy shared informally the current activity of FGC to explore creating a statement of the experience of the value of GLBT Friends' service and leadership in our midst. The Young Friends already have a minute on some of these issues.

FGC REPORT TO INTERIM MEETING

This summer the FGC Annual Gathering will be July 3-10 at the University of Massachusetts campus in Amherst MA. The theme is Simple Lives, Radiant Faith. Advance programs are "in the mail" and full information about the Gathering will be on the FGC website about 4/1/04. I

would encourage you to think about going and to encourage others in your meeting to attend. Meetings might think about helping folks in their meetings attend. FGC is prepared to match meeting support for first time attenders.

Next year the Annual Gathering will be returning to VA Tech in Blacksburg (7/2-9/05). Planning for this Gathering has started. The Planning Committee will be meeting in mid April if anyone wants to be involved. Those of you who like to think ahead may be interested to know that present plans are for the 2006 Gathering to meet at Pacific Lutheran College on the Puget Sound in Washington State.

But FGC is more than the Gathering! There is lots of information about FGC programs and services on 3 websites:

<www.fgcquaker.org> has info about Religious Education, Outreach and other Resources for local Meetings, the Traveling Ministries Program as well as the Gathering. Among the resources now on the web are a talk on Spiritual Discernment by Michael Gibson and one by Bruce Birchard on Spiritual Roots of the Peace Testimony. This latter talk will be published soon as a pamphlet.

<www.quakerbooks.org> is the on-line bookstore with secure ordering—if you want something quicker (more easily) than mailing a paper order, and it's too late in the day to call the 800-966-4556 order number to place your order.

<www.QuakerFinder.org> is the way to locate several Friends meetings near you (or where you're going). [Deborah Haines, Ken Stockbridge or Trudy Rogers would love to hear if you've had new people find your meeting through QuakerFinder.] All BYM Meetings should be listed—you might check your meeting's listing for accuracy. Plans are underway to expand the QuakerFinder website to help isolated Friends make contact with each other if they wish to consider starting a meeting or worship group.

Several things happening within FGC

We have expanded our development staff, allowing Michael Wajda time to visit with individual potential major donors and also with monthly meetings. Early results are encouraging but we also need your help in encouraging every monthly meeting to support FGC financially. [10 of BYM's 40 monthly meetings contribute regularly to FGC; 10 more have sometimes contributed; 22 monthly meetings are regularly represented at Annual Gatherings, and 11 more occasionally have someone attend the Gathering—but we'd like more of the meetings involved with FGC activities to support FGC financially.]

We have also started a Monthly Meeting Contact program to involve individuals who value the work of FGC and are willing to serve as a communication link between their meeting and FGC. This is two-way communication; FGC wants to hear about interests and needs of local meetings as well as share information about FGC programs and services.

During the last few years FGC has been working on issues of racism within the Religious Society of Friends and has set up a Committee for Ministry on Racism. Another aspect of diversity among Friends is also of concern at present. We are mindful of the mixed reception given service and leadership by gays and lesbians in some parts of Quakerism and have begun working on a statement of our experience, as FGC, of the value of the service and leadership of GLBTQ Friends as part of FGC's service to the Religious Society of Friends. [At our recent Executive Committee meeting one lesbian Friend noted that she had always felt accepted and her service valued, but after 26 years she was deeply moved to hear the organization say this.]

Trudy Rogers, Representative to Central and Executive Committees

I2004-5 Staff: Youth Secretary. Frank Massey introduced Hope Braveheart, the new Yearly Meeting Youth Secretary, who will oversee the Junior Young Friends and Young Friends programs. Hope mentioned her pleasure in attending Sandy Spring Friends School, now attending Sandy Springs Friends Meeting, and expressed her desire for more Friendly Adult Presence volunteers for conferences.

I2004-6 Search Committee. An ad hoc committee of two was needed to name a Friend to the Ad Hoc Search Committee. Sheila Bach and Michael Cronin agreed to serve.

I2004-7 Nominating Committee: Ruth Flower presented the report of the Nominating Committee.

Camping Program Committee

Anna Krome-Lukens Williamsburg 2005

Faith & Practice Revision Committee

Mochiko DeSilva Sandy Spring

Education Funding Resources Committee

Deborah James Adelphi 2005

To replace Ralph Blankfield, who was given a second term in error

Meeting are made every three years at the Yearly Meeting sessions immediately preceding the Friends United Meeting Triennial sessions. Appointments to such responsibilities are made by the Yearly Meeting, upon nomination by the Nominating Committee, in accordance with the procedures and requests of the respective bodies.

Friends World Committee for Consultation

Friends World Committee for Consultation (FWCC), formed in 1937, is a worldwide association of Yearly Meetings and affiliated groups. It is a consultative body whose purpose is to provide links between Friends who may be separated by geography, culture, or practices that emphasize different aspects of Quakerism. It aims to facilitate loving understanding of diversity among Friends; to discover together, with God's help, our common spiritual ground; and to facilitate full expression of Friends' testimonies in the world.

Friends World Committee for Consultation is organized into four geographical sections. Baltimore Yearly Meeting is in the Section of the Americas, which covers the entire western hemisphere. The Section, in turn, is divided into smaller geographical regions, of which Baltimore Yearly Meeting is in the Southeastern region. Some activities of the Section of the Americas are the Quaker Youth Pilgrimage (in collaboration with the Europe and Middle East Section), Wider Quaker Fellowship, and Comité de los Amigos Latin-americanos (Committee of Latin American Friends). The principal function of the regions within the Section is to provide opportunities for as many Friends as possible within a particular geographical region to come to know Friends outside of their own Yearly Meeting.

Each Yearly Meeting in the Section appoints representatives to the Section based on a formula of four persons for the first 1000 members of the Yearly Meeting and one for each additional 2500 members or fraction thereof.

Baltimore Yearly Meeting representatives are nominated by the Nominating Committee and appointed by the Yearly Meeting for terms of three years, not all representatives being appointed in the same year. As with other Yearly Meeting appointments, service as a representative will generally not exceed six consecutive years. The representatives should be committed to openness and learning from Friends representing other traditions of worship, theology, and culture.

These representatives attend Sectional and regional meetings (usually an annual meeting for each) and are eligible to serve on the various committees of the Section. All Friends are welcome at Sectional and regional meetings. The representatives help keep the Yearly Meeting informed about the activities of the organization.

All Yearly Meetings and groups affiliated with FWCC worldwide meet together once every three years. In an effort to keep these gatherings to a workable size, attendance is restricted to Yearly Meeting representatives and other appointed delegates and observers. Representation of Yearly Meetings at the triennial sessions is based on a formula of two persons for any Yearly Meeting or group, three persons for Yearly Meetings with between 1001 and 3000 members, 4 representatives for Yearly Meetings with between 3001 and 5000 members, and one additional representative for each additional 5000 members or fraction thereof. The Yearly Meeting's representatives are selected by the Interim Meeting from among the representatives to the Section of the Americas. Those attending the FWCC triennial sessions are encouraged to report to as many groups within the Yearly Meeting as possible.

Request from Indian Affairs Committee

We understand that the Indian Affairs Committee wishes for the Yearly Meeting to end its association with the Associated Committee of Friends on Indian Affairs. We suggest that the Indian Affairs Committee bring that request to Interim Meeting. Once the request is approved, we will make the necessary changes to the committee's description in the *Manual* and drop the description of ACFIA on page 52.

Discussion of Working Groups

The Ad hoc Committee on Restructuring has recommended that the Yearly Meeting have Working Groups, rather than Special Groups, as currently described in the *Manual*. Working Groups are somewhat different from Special Groups. Among other differences, Working Groups are under the care of specific Committees, although they may have an entirely separate membership. We hope to bring proposed wording to Interim Meeting in June. Not only do we have a Working Group, it appears one or two committees might function better as Working Groups.

Unity with Nature Committee

Since the North American Quaker body formerly known as Friends Committee on Unity with Nature has changed its name to Quaker Earthcare Witness, the description of our Yearly Meeting's committee affiliated with this group will need to reflect the name-change as will of the description of the national group.

Unity with Nature Committee, p. 36, last paragraph, change “Friends Committee on Unity with Nature” to “Quaker Earthcare Witness.” In the section on Representatives to Other Organizations, p. 50, change “Friends Committee on Unity with Nature” to “Quaker Earthcare Witness.” The description remains the same.

Because the *Manual of Procedure* is also a reference, we notice that the descriptions of the American Friends Service Committee and Friends Committee on National Legislation in the *Manual* do not include statements about the purposes of these organizations. We expect to bring these changes to Interim Meeting this June.

Streamlining the process of approving changes to the *Manual of Procedure*

Committee members have long felt that sometimes the process of approving changes to the *Manual of Procedure* is overly cumbersome. We discussed ways the process might be streamlined. We identified two categories of changes.

Some changes are substantive. In these cases, by putting something into words in the *Manual*, we actually establish or change the procedures of the Yearly Meeting. An example is the description of a new committee. In approving such changes, the Yearly Meeting not only approves the wording but the new procedures as well.

But other changes are not substantive. An example is changing the *Manual* to accurately describe a procedural change the Yearly Meeting has already approved, such as laying down the Counseling Service. An equally non-substantive change would be changing the description of the Committee on Unity with Nature because the national body it is affiliated with has changed its name.

We think our current practice of having *Manual of Procedure* changes approved first by Interim Meeting and then by the Yearly Meeting in Annual Sessions is appropriate when the changes are substantive. And we think all changes to the *Manual* should be reviewed and approved by some body larger than our committee. But we think that approval at either Interim Meeting or Annual Sessions, whichever comes first, is sufficient for *Manual* changes that do not establish new procedures for the Yearly Meeting. We are drafting a revision of Section VII of the *Manual* (“Changes in the *Manual of Procedure*”) incorporating these ideas.

I2004-9 *Yearly Meeting Clerk.* Lamar Matthew reminded Friends of Annual Sessions, 7/26-8/1. This will be his last time at the Clerk's table, and he remarked that it has been a joy to serve the Yearly Meeting in this way. The business schedule is set up, and he has four agenda items already. Materials need to reach Lamar at least two weeks before Annual Sessions for consideration.

I2004-10 *Supervisory Committee.* Friends APPROVED the recommendation of Supervisory Committee that would add the name of the General Secretary as signator to the primary banking accounts. Expenses of \$2000 and above would require an additional two signatures, who would be identified as assistant treasurers. Supervisory Committee will bring forward names for these co-signators to Interim Meeting for approval.

I2004-11 *Working Group on Ending Racism Among Friends.* It was explained that this group works on the same issues as the FGC Committee on Racism. They announced a showing of a video at rise of the current session. Diversity will be the theme of Annual Sessions, and the speakers planned for that time promise to be enlightening.

I2204-12 *Invitation to next Interim Meeting:* Betsy Wollaston, of Deer Creek Meeting, hopes to have information from committee clerks as to which committees will be meeting. The Meeting is looking forward to Interim Meeting's visit.

I2004-13 *Closing:* Friends MINUTED their appreciation for the generous hospitality provided by Bethesda Friends. Also appreciated were the efforts of the new Interim Meeting Recording Clerk. The above minutes were read, corrected, and approved. After settling into silence, Friends arose to gather next at Deer Creek Meeting in Darlington, MD 6/19/04

Michael Cronin, presiding

Frances Preston Schutz, recording