

# Baltimore Yearly Meeting

of the Religious Society of Friends  
17100 Quaker Lane  
Sandy Spring, Maryland 20860-1296

301/774-7663  
800/962-4766  
Fax: 301/774-7087  
bym@bym-rsf.org  
<http://www.bym-rsf.org>

October 7, 2007

Brent McKinney  
Presiding Clerk  
Friends United Meeting  
101 Quaker Hill Road  
Richmond, IN 47374-1926

Dear Brent McKinney:

This letter transmits a copy of the report given during our Yearly Meeting by our General Board members Rachel Stacy and John Smallwood. The report stunned those present. The Yearly Meeting asked that you receive a copy of the report. (I understand that the BYM office quickly forwarded a copy of the report to the FUM office in Richmond.) The report concludes with these words:

It is difficult to send money to an organization with the dysfunctional aspects described above. On the other hand, it is also difficult to remain within FUM, advocating change, but not to contribute financially. It is difficult to remain a part of an organization which exhibits so little concern for our own BYM history and suggestions for policy and direction. It is difficult to participate in an organization with the corporate governance problems and the spiritual direction which FUM exhibits. The path that the FUM leadership is presently traveling does not seem to lead to our inclusion. It is also difficult to sever ties with part of our history.

However, it is also essential to acknowledge that BYM is a consolidated, not united, yearly meeting. We have members who are committed Christians sympathetic to orthodox and conservative Friends. We have members to whom FUM's mission statement deeply resonates. To separate from FUM, may leave such members without avenues of expression, fellowship and nurture. The care and development of all BYM members must be considered.

While both of us are united in our assessment of FUM, we each reach slightly different conclusions. Rachel feels it is time for BYM to depart from this damaged organization. John is willing to continue another year, only with BYM's clear mandate to do so and to advocate serious FUM corporate reform. He is not hopeful of change, but feels a tug of common history with orthodox Friends. As Thomas Hamm said at the FUM Board retreat, **separations in Quaker history have rarely brought the peace and tranquility that some had expected.** [*Emphasis in the original.*]

We now know John and Rachel were not aware of the Board approval of assuming responsibility for the Kaimosi Hospital. John Smallwood also points out that as FUM goes forward, it continues to confront major decisions that impact directly on people's lives, both physical and spiritual.

From our minutes:

During consideration of this issue, we were reminded that we need to witness to the truths we hold as Quakers even in cultures where those truths are unwelcome. We were reminded that most Quakers are to be found in Africa, and that we cut ourselves off from the body of Quakerism when we refuse to support the work of Friends United Meeting. We were reminded that justice without mercy is merely vengeance, and that we need to stay grounded in compassion and the desire for unity as we seek our way forward. We were reminded that conflict resolution skills and approaches may be helpful in healing the divisions among us. We were reminded that we should not only listen to each other, but listen for what God's will is for us. We were reminded that we may need simply to wait with open hearts until such guidance comes, even though the wait seems long.

We will also be forwarding a copy of the report to our constituent Monthly Meetings, asking for guidance. John Smallwood will present this report to the General Board. I am also attaching the report of our General Secretary, Riley Robinson. We have not been able to reach a decision on corporately funding FUM; we will attempt to reach unity soon. Most of the funds we would have sent are sitting in escrow awaiting a decision.

On behalf of Baltimore Yearly Meeting

Howard Fullerton  
*Presiding Clerk*