

**BALTIMORE YEARLY MEETING
OF THE RELIGIOUS SOCIETY OF FRIENDS**

**INTERIM MEETING
MINUTES FROM MARCH 29, 2008
WILLIAMSBURG MONTHLY MEETING, WILLIAMSBURG, VIRGINIA**

I2008-1 Opening. Friends gathered in worship at 2:20 pm. Out of the silence, acting Clerk Howard Fullerton (Sandy Spring) shared a series of brief readings reminding us of the value of flexibility and openness to new insight as we search for Truth.

“Many Roman Catholics are shocked to learn that their church, although insisting that its dogmas articulate revealed truth, has recognized the historical conditioning and, hence, the limitations of dogmatic *formulations*. (p. 147)

“In our times Christians are going to have to reach answers to new dilemmas in fidelity to God’s revelation in Christ; they can be helped in that if they have seen some examples of how their ancestors in the faith had to struggle to emerge with the answers now taken for granted.” (p. 148)

Raymond Brown, *An Introduction to New Testament Christology*, 1994

“We recognize that there are still many differences of opinion among us, both theological and practical...in practice these differences seldom coincide exactly with Yearly Meeting divisions...many differences in terminology or background [give] enrichment to our own insight.”

The Cooperating Committee of the Baltimore Yearly Meetings (1959):

“Men and women discovered over the years that in working together for the good of others and for the improvement of society, the religious faith that provided the motivating power for religious living could be expressed in various terms and in different vocabularies.”

Bliss Forbush, *A History of Baltimore Yearly Meeting of Friends*, 1972

I2008-2 Welcome. Thayer Cory (Williamsburg) welcomed us, and told us what a joy it is for their small meeting to spend a day surrounded by so many Friends. Those gathered expressed their warm appreciation to Williamsburg Friends for their generous hospitality.

Clerk Howard Fullerton thanked Elizabeth “Betsy” Krome (Williamsburg) for the beautiful pottery pitcher and cups that grace the clerks table.

Howard Fullerton announced that Hank Schutz and Hugh Fuller (Langley Hill) are home recovering after hospitalization, and also announced the death this week of Diana Rugg

(Richmond). We hold these Friends and their families in the Light. A full list of the beloved Friends we have lost this year will be recorded at annual session.

I2008-3 Report on Kenyan Friends. Howard Fullerton then introduced Mary Lord (Adelphi), who shared with us her experiences in Kenya during and after the disputed election in December. She had gone to Kenya for a vacation after retiring from the American Friends Service Committee last summer, and found herself unexpectedly in the midst of an outbreak of violence that has cost a thousand lives and displaced at least 600,000 people. She was able to make contact with the Friends United Meeting staff in Kisumu and Kaimosi, including John Muhanji and Jim and Eden Grace of the FUM Africa Ministries office, and Ben and Jody Richmond and other faculty at the Friends Theological College. She heard many stories of heroism and suffering from Kenyan Quakers, and was deeply moved.

In the space of a week, the FUM staff was able to arrange for 60 Friends from the leadership of the Friends Church of Kenya to assemble in Kakamega for a consultation on the Peace Testimony and the current crisis. That so many were able to come, during a brief lull in the violence, was a miracle in itself. Mary Lord was asked to speak on the Biblical basis of our peace testimony and the experiences of Friends as peacemakers. While preparing to give the keynote address at this gathering, Mary Lord looked at the unfamiliar night sky and received a powerful message she was led to share:

"In the darkest night, in the most unfamiliar seas, in the deepest forest, (quoting George Fox) 'there is One, even Christ Jesus, who will speak to your condition' and be your guide."

Friends told her afterwards that she "opened the ground" for the Spirit to break forth. In the course of the conference Kenyan Friends claimed their Quaker peace testimony. They adopted a program of aiding those displaced people not reached by the large agencies, expanding the Alternative to Violence Program, expanding trauma healing and reconciliation programs, and preaching and teaching about peacemaking in Friends churches and schools. Kenyan Friends urgently need our help, both in funding, through the Kenyan Relief Fund administered by FUM, and in providing AVP trainers and experienced peacemakers to help carry forward this work.

Mary Lord noted that she was identified wherever she went as a member of Baltimore Yearly Meeting. While she did not discuss our concerns during the period of violence, she did have occasion to talk with Kenyan Friends during the FWCC Triennial in Dublin in August. She was asked about our witness for acceptance of gender and sexual diversity, and this resulted in some wonderful conversations. The general secretary of Nairobi Yearly Meeting told her initially that Kenya did not have a problem of homosexuality, and he was interested to hear about the scientific research suggesting that some portion of every population is born with homosexual tendencies. He said that Kenyan Friends know very little about our concerns in this area, and have not discussed these issues. Mary Lord urged us to respond to this openness, especially among younger Kenyan Friends, by engaging in direct conversation with Kenyan Friends.

We felt tendered and uplifted by Mary Lord's presentation, and express our deep gratitude for her faithfulness.

Howard Fullerton noted that as Clerk of Baltimore Yearly Meeting he has sent a letter to Friends in Kenya expressing our grief for their suffering and our ongoing support.

I2008-4 Naming Committee. Howard Fullerton asked Friends to bring forward the names of three people willing to serve on a Naming Committee to name the Search Committee. Laura Wilner (Langley Hill), Malachy Kilbride (Friends Meeting of Washington), and Herbert Tucker (Charlottesville) agreed to serve and these names were APPROVED.

I2008-5 Search Committee. Howard Fullerton read the report of the Search Committee, bringing forward the name of Elizabeth Meyer (Sandy Spring) to serve as Clerk of Interim Meeting. This name was APPROVED.

I2008-6 Nominating Committee. Flossie Fullerton (Sandy Spring) reported for the Nominating Committee:

Nominating Committee seeks your help in finding the right match for the 15 committees and 11 affiliated corporations to which it appoints BYM Friends. Please contact one of the committee members or Barbara Thomas, clerk, with suggestions.

Resignations from Committees:

At this time, we would like to report the following eight resignations:

Faith and Practice Revision Committee:	Mochiko DeSilva (Sandy Spring) Pamela Cook (Valley)
Manual of Procedure:	Phil Fratesi (Stony Run)
Youth Programs:	Peg Hansen (State College)
Friends United Meeting (alternate):	Linda Wilk (Hopewell Centre)
FUM Triennial:	Linda Wilk (Hopewell Centre)
Peace and Social Concerns:	Sylvia Olive (Annapolis)
Program	Anita Bower (Nottingham)

Appointments

We have one appointment at this time, as most committees are able to wait until Yearly Meeting for new members:

FUM Triennial:	Mary Lord (Adelphi)
----------------	---------------------

Friends APPROVED this nomination.

I2008-7 Archives. Flossie Fullerton reported on the Baltimore Yearly Meeting archives. Old records have been organized and shipped to the Friends Historical Library at Swarthmore College. All committee clerks are urged to make sure that copies of their minutes and reports are sent to the yearly meeting office. This has not been done consistently in recent years, probably because reliance on computers has changed the way we share information. These records are essential both for our own use as a yearly meeting, and as our testimony to future generations.

I2008-8 Supervisory Committee. Elizabeth Hofmeister (Bethesda) reported for the Supervisory Committee:

1. Meg Boyd Meyer is serving as Clerk of the Committee.
2. A performance review of the General Secretary was conducted by Howard Fullerton and Meg Boyd Meyer. The committee accepted their report.
3. BYM staff members have received a salary adjustment beginning January 1 of 4.5 percent--reflecting the cost of living increase in the Washington Metropolitan area--plus an additional one percent. The committee expects to bring in June a proposal for adjustments to the Manual of Procedure wording regarding the reporting of staff salaries.
4. The committee presents to you a minute of appreciation for the work of Michael Cronin as Clerk of Interim Meeting.

Elizabeth Hofmeister then read the minute of appreciation:

**MINUTE OF APPRECIATION FOR MICHAEL CRONIN'S SERVICE AS
CLERK OF INTERIM MEETING
AND
CLERK OF SUPERVISORY COMMITTEE
2003-2007**

Baltimore Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends in session for Interim Meeting, Third Month, 29, 2008, at Williamsburg, Virginia, records our deep appreciation for the focused, Spirit-led clerking of Michael Cronin, Clerk of both Interim Meeting and Supervisory Committee during the years 2003-2007.

Michael Cronin served faithfully and diligently for more than four years, during which time of service a wide array of issues and opportunities called for prayerful and careful attention by Baltimore Yearly Meeting. Michael's commitment and attention to detail and long hours of preparation helped both Interim Meeting and Supervisory Committee reach a sense of the meeting about next steps--both where the way ahead has appeared clear, and also where we await new light.

During these four-plus years of Michael Cronin's service, Baltimore Yearly Meeting experienced the departure of Frank Massey, and then, after a careful search, the call to Riley Robinson to serve as our next General Secretary. Following Lamar Matthew's service as Presiding Clerk, his successor Lauri Perman then departed to serve as Director of Pendle Hill. Our valued Friend Tom Fox was killed in Iraq following a time of captivity. Improving our relations with Friends United Meeting has required much study and dialogue and intervisitation, with an even greater range of problems involved than we first identified. Better attention to the nurture of the younger generation through our Youth Programs has been another focal point for Baltimore Yearly Meeting. In all these major transitions Michael offered reasoned counsel.

Michael Cronin frequently opened Interim Meeting sessions by readings from selections from the writings of George Fox, Margaret Fell Fox, William Penn, Katherine Evans, Caroline Stephen, and other Friends, as well as from the Bible and other inspirational writings. Such readings strengthened our ties to our forebears and to Quaker practice and helped us center and to seek and deliberate together.

This minute was APPROVED.

I2008-9 *Financial Support of Friends United Meeting.* Katherine Smith (Maury River) presented the report and recommendation of the Committee of Four Committees for a first reading:

**Baltimore Yearly Meeting
Committee of Four Committees
Report and Recommendation**

- 1) At Interim Meeting in March of 2004, the Committee on Ministry and Pastoral Care was asked to develop recommendations regarding Baltimore Yearly Meeting's financial contribution to Friends United Meeting, in consultation with Stewardship and Finance and the Ad Hoc Committee on Gender and Sexual Diversity Concerns (minute I2004-2). This group became known among us as the "Committee of Four Committees" after Advancement and Outreach was added, at their request, in July 2004.
- 2) Regular meetings were held during the ensuing year, and unity was reached around a proposal to send the funds withheld from FUM in 2004 and 2005 as a Restricted Contribution, to be used to promote intervisitation and communication among Friends. This proposal was approved at Interim Meeting in June 2005 (Minute I2005-55). The Friends United Meeting office, however, returned the contribution, citing a policy of not accepting restricted funds for projects that did not have the prior approval of the General Board.
- 3) Feeling somewhat discouraged, the Committee's attention languished during 2005 and 2006, as Friends' appointments to the constituent committees changed, and Intervisitation progressed. In the fall of 2006, Katherine Smith (Maury River) agreed to serve as Clerk of the Committee of Four Committees. Details of membership were approved at Interim Meeting (I2007-5), and the Committee was charged "to recommend

to Annual Session regarding BYM's financial contributions to FUM." The Committee's membership was reported to Annual Session (Y2007-22).

4) The reconstituted Committee held its first meeting, with all members present, in November 2007. At this meeting, we shared out of worship, listening deeply to each other. We were reminded that witnessing to the truth that has been opened to us is vitally important. We were challenged to keep faith with the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender Friends among us, and not to take any action that would seem to disavow them and thus wound our own community. We were reminded that transformation is achieved through humility, love, patience and faithfulness, not through argument and contention. We considered the question: "How can we claim to be peacemakers in the world, if we cannot make peace among ourselves?" We were reminded of the suicide rate among youth as a result of gender identity and sexual orientation concerns, and how we may serve as a lifeline to people who are desperate for reassurance that God loves them as they are.

5) We are aware that many Friends within our yearly meeting have been uneasy, as a matter of conscience, about giving money to an organization that engages in employment discrimination. We acknowledge the pain and anger our yearly meeting experienced in 2002 as a result of the FUM personnel policy of discrimination. We also acknowledge that we share responsibility for the governance of FUM and thus for the challenges it faces today. We know that many among us find a spiritual home in FUM and feel blessed by an opportunity to participate in its ministries.

6) In the course of our deliberations we have come to see that money is not really the issue. We believe that an undue focus on money is getting in the way of the work we are called to, work which includes being present with lesbian and gay Friends in FUM-only yearly meetings, and engaging actively with the rest of FUM in working and witnessing for peace and equality. Money is a clumsy form of communication—a carnal weapon—that cannot convey the transformational power of our spiritual concern. We have come to trust that the Holy Spirit is working among us, for purposes that we do not yet fully understand. We know that it is not money but the Inward Teacher who transforms hearts.

7) We remind the yearly meeting of our 2007 Carey Memorial Lecture. Joe Volk, Executive Secretary of Friends Committee on National Legislation (FCNL) spoke of the importance of hope, understood as a verb that entails faith in action and risk-taking. He told us that everything changed for FCNL once they redefined their collapsing building as an opportunity rather than a problem. As a result of their leap of faith, the FCNL offices now stand on Capitol Hill as a witness—a much-needed green and accessible witness.

8) In the spirit of seeing our relationship with FUM, not as a problem, but as an opportunity to witness actively for peace, equality, and compassion, the Committee of Four Committees offers the following minute:

We Friends in Baltimore Yearly Meeting, gathered for Interim Meeting at (place, date) agreed to direct our General Secretary to release to FUM the monies withheld since 2004, and furthermore, we ask that Stewardship & Finance Committee together with Trustees formulate a plan for paying what is owed, in installments if necessary.

The question was raised of how this recommendation relates to the discernment being done in our monthly meetings regarding whether we should remain members of Friends United Meeting. Katherine Smith explained that this recommendation only addresses the past, and the unpaid amounts that have accrued while we have been members of FUM. The issue of future membership and contributions will be decided by the monthly meetings.

After other questions for clarification, the report and recommendation were LAID OVER until annual session 2008. Trustees and the Stewardship and Finance Committee are asked to prepare a comment on the financial feasibility of the recommendation for presentation at that time. Friends asked that the recommendation be widely disseminated prior to annual session so that as many Friends as possible can have an opportunity to consider it.

I2008-10 *Support of Quaker Kenyan Relief.* Malachy Kilbride (Friends Meeting of Washington) presented a proposal from the Peace and Social Concerns Committee, growing out of a leading to respond to the violence in Kenya. The Committee prayerfully suggests that Baltimore Yearly Meeting send two-thirds of the funds that have been held back from FUM over the past several years to the Kenya Relief Fund to meet urgent needs.

In response to questions about how we could be sure that such a donation would serve the purposes for which it is intended, Rich Liversidge (Sandy Spring) and Mary Lord (Adelphi) explained the functioning of the Kenyan Relief Fund. This Fund will support both humanitarian relief and Alternatives to Violence programs. Friends United Meeting has been named the lead agency in administering the Fund, because of its resources and staff in Kenya and its ability to ensure that the money will be well spent. Contributions to the Fund have already been received from many Quaker organizations, including Friends World Committee for Consultation, the American Friends Service Committee, Friends General Conference, and Friends for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer Concerns. It was noted that FUM has agreed to forego its usual administrative cut, so that the entire amount contributed will go toward relief and peace work.

Questions were raised about whether we can responsibly commit to donating a substantial portion of the funds set aside for Friends United Meeting in past years, since these funds are not being held in an escrow account and thus may not be readily available. It was noted that any sizeable donation might have to be spread out over a period of months, because of cash flow problems.

Mindful of such constraints, Friends UNITED with the concern presented by the Peace and Social Concerns Committee, and agreed that Baltimore Yearly Meeting should contribute \$9,000 —the amount of undesignated funds in this year's budget – to the Kenyan Relief Fund administered by Friends United Meeting to support the Kenyan Friends peace initiatives. Since individuals and

monthly meetings may also want to support this work, the Yearly Meeting treasurer is empowered to accept earmarked contributions to be added to this donation.

I2008-11 Trustees. Byron Sandford (Friends Meeting of Washington) presented the report of the Trustees:

Trustees report to BYM Interim Meeting

BYM Trustees are responsible for title to all real property in the care of the Yearly Meeting and for all matters concerned with invested funds of the Yearly Meeting.

Since annual session, the Trustees have addressed the following items:

1. We have spent considerable time reconciling the various funds currently under Trustees' care with the original purposes named when they were created. The records cover several years and lack clear documentation. We are not through with the reconciliation and are not ready to make a report or make any recommendation. Trustees continue to examine the previously reported large discrepancy between funds as recorded on our books and the amounts in our investment accounts. Some progress has been made.
2. The Trustees agreed with the recommendation of the Educational Loan Committee to "write off" two loans which were in default. That Committee has already made a great effort to locate these individuals. The Trustees agreed that the committee may redefine the nature of funds provided to applicants as either grants or loans.
3. The Trustees are in the process of updating the signatures on all of BYM accounts. We have established that the investment account signatures will be from any two of the following: the Clerk of Trustees, the BYM Treasurer and two designated Trustees. These signatures are to be updated with the change of any signer's position.
4. The investment accounts will be consolidated into three or four socially responsible accounts with a portion to be invested in a more liquid account.
5. In the fall, we were informed that BYM may be the beneficiary to a sizeable estate. On the advice of a retired attorney who is affiliated with the Yearly Meeting and who was named as an executor of the estate, the Trustees engaged an attorney with specific experience with the estate laws of New Jersey. The choice of the attorney was made with the concurrence of other BYM attorneys. The attorney reviewed the material associated with the estate and felt that BYM's position justified further effort on our part. The estate is now scheduled to go to mediation in May.

Friends RECEIVED this report with gratitude.

I2008-12 Stewardship and Finance Committee. Natalie Finegar (Sandy Spring) presented the report of the Stewardship and Finance Committee:

Stewardship and Finance Committee Report to Interim Meeting

Stewardship and Finance received a request from Friends Wilderness Center for a one-time use of the Baltimore Yearly Meeting mailing list. The primary purpose of the

mailing would be to provide greater information about the services FWC provides. It will also seek financial contributions. Stewardship and Finance reviewed the request and found it to be in good order. We suggest that the mailing take place between Memorial Day and August 15, 2008, so that it will not overlap with other appeal letters planned by the Development Subcommittee.

We recommend that Friends Wilderness Center be granted permission for a one time use of our mailing list.

Friends APPROVED this recommendation.

I2008-13 *Development Subcommittee*. Natalie Finegar presented the report of the Development Subcommittee of the Stewardship and Finance Committee:

Report from Development Subcommittee of Stewardship and Finance Committee

Our appeal letters have raised over \$84,000! This means that we have met our budgeted goal of \$30,000 of unrestricted contributions for 2007. We believe the increase in contributions was not only because of the generous “matching gift,” but also due to a greater awareness of the need to contribute to BYM.

At Interim Meeting in October 2007, the Meeting approved the hiring of a Development Director subject to Supervisory Committee approving a job description for the position, and both Trustees and Stewardship and Finance certifying that the necessary funds are available. The job description is now in place. To meet the second condition, we have been able to identify enough “cash in hand” to cover seven months of the Development Director's salary, and have approved a plan for raising the remaining funds. This plan will allow the Development Director adequate time to properly acclimate him/herself to BYM without a negative impact on our cash flow. Both Trustees and Stewardship and Finance have approved our plan for the financing of this position.

We will begin the hiring process for the Development Director position in the next few weeks. We look forward to introducing you to the new staff person at Annual Session.

Friends RECEIVED this report with thanks.

I2008-14 *General Secretary*. Riley Robinson presented the General Secretary's report:

**Spring Interim Meeting
General Secretary's Report**

Each one of our staff members has decades of active experience with Friends and with Baltimore Yearly Meeting.

Administrative Assistant - In the Fall Ann Whittaker volunteered to spend extra hours filling in for the vacant Youth Secretary position on top of her regular duties. This has

been truly most helpful. She also developed a quite useful database to deal with the complexities of Annual Session registration. Ann has improved the look of the Interchange as she's learned our new publishing software, most recently coping with reduced size of the recent issue due to budget constrictions.

Bookkeeper Thanks to Margo Lehman our bookkeeping practices continue to benefit from increased transparency and order. Most functions are now on the new accounting software. Margo has met extensively with Marion Ballard, our new Treasurer. Margo officially works three days a week, but our growing Yearly Meeting needs more. Margo tracks or helps track all of the bills for four camp programs with a summer staff of more than 100, our three camp properties, and the complexities of the student loan program. She provides support for Trustees, for Annual Session, for Stewardship and Finance Committee, and more.

Camp Administrative Secretary Jane Megginson has worked hard, alone and with others, to create a very attractive new camping website, making innovations on the online registration process along the way. In the past year Jane saved a great deal of money using new service vendors. Jane has examined the weak spots in transportation that showed themselves last summer especially, and met those needs by researching, along with David Hunter, how to purchase used busses surprisingly inexpensively. Jane's move last fall to Pennsylvania last fall brought about the need for developing a long distance work plan which has shown promise. Please know there is still space available for a child to experience the Spirit in nature this summer at Camps Opequon and Shiloh here in Virginia, and tell your friends!

Camp Property Manager David Hunter is in the final stages of completing the long-awaited Camp Catoctin lagoon renovation, after famous fundraising, piles of permits, oodles of engineering, and mountains of mud. His skill, patience and endurance have been a gift to the Yearly Meeting. Through the winter he has worked first with satellite-based survey equipment and now with a volunteer profession engineer to develop a precise site plan required by Frederick County for Camp Catoctin. Everyone is welcome to join David at a beautiful Spring work weekend. Just pick your camp on one of four weekends between April 26-27 and May 31-June 1.

Development Director – I worked steadily with the very focused and productive Development Subcommittee through the fall and winter. More of those details come in another report today.

Youth Secretary Position – I am serving on the Youth Programs Committee's Youth Secretary Subcommittee as we seek to develop a balanced and useful job description. Most recently this has involved making a thorough charting of the functions and relationships of Youth Programs and then deciding which of those should be done by the Youth Secretary. Only by using the model of a large tree with many branches were we able to convey the real complexity. We are looking at all of the functions in terms of authority, responsibility and accountability as the job description develops.

Ad Hoc Committee on Youth Safety – I serve on this committee formed under the care of Trustees to develop a Yearly Meeting policy. Members share a vision of an environment conducive to health, wholeness and honesty for each member of the community, seeking the balance of helpful support, strong, useful boundaries, and wise, compassionate practices.

Annual Session preparation – Program Committee is actively preparing for annual session in many areas, but we know the word you want to hear right this moment is “**COFFEE.**” And along with that, you want to hear the beautiful words “**drip grind.**” You are hearing those words now, and you will be drinking that **coffee.** Even better, you can keep repeating these words as well – “**Fair trade!**” This is due to some wonderful work by Frostburg conference manager Dave Treber (Langley Hill).

I do want to mention that we are also making some changes in the dorms we use at Frostburg. There will be more air conditioned units as requested, more views of trees instead of parking lots and we’ve had some useful talks about dorm cleanliness.

We’re looking forward to seeing you all there. The summer Interchange/brochure will be out in a few weeks.

Moving onward, there is one more phrase that we all want to hear, and that is:

“Cost Cutting” – In recent months we have:

- Started using a free conference calling service
- Changed to a new Internet service provider
- And Margo has even been able to arm wrestle our copier leasing company into lowering our payments.

Next week we will meet with a retirement plan consultant to change to a different, less expensive kind of retirement plan for use by nonprofits.

These changes will save BYM at least three thousand dollars a year, and we’ll keep looking.

My job has an exciting ebb and flow. Yesterday the flow was coming from the Meeting office’s 14-year-old hot water heater, which will have to be replaced on Monday. There’s always something to look forward to.

My deepest thanks to all of the committees with whom I work. The level of commitment is deep and constant. I see the emails that come in from people getting to their committee work at 11:30 at night, and I witness the wealth of skills and experience that keep us all going. Thanks to everyone for this.

Friends RECEIVED this report with gratitude, and expressed deep appreciation to Riley Robinson and the rest of our outstanding staff.

I2008-15 Youth Programs Committee. Erik Hanson (Takoma Park) presented the report of the Youth Programs Committee. He distributed copies of a tree diagram, showing how youth programs are knitted into every aspect of the life of the Yearly Meeting. He noted that there were 50 to 60 Young Friends at the two most recent conferences, up significantly from last year. Four of our Young Friends recently attended a clerking workshop at Pendle Hill, with the support of the Yearly Meeting. The Junior Young Friends conferences have been going well, with attendance averaging 10 – 12.

The Youth Programs Committee is working hard to recruit and train more Friends to serve as FAPs (Friendly Adult Presences). About ten FAPs from Baltimore Yearly Meeting attended a recent training weekend at Pendle Hill, and the Committee will be holding a training session of its own in the near future. The Committee is also prepared to offer one-day training sessions at local meetings. Friends are urged to contact the Committee if they are interested.

Friends RECEIVED this report with thanks.

I2008-16 Opportunity. Howard Fullerton shared with us the following request:

Kenyan Quaker Getry Agizah is coming to the US in October-November. She works with the AGLI (African Great Lakes Initiative), doing peace work with groups in Kenya. She will come to BYM meetings to tell about the violence in Kenya after the December elections, and to raise funds for AVP (Alternatives to Violence) workshops.

If you meeting would like to arrange a visit, contact David Zarembka by e-mail in Kenya, or Barbara Myers (bmyers@vcu.edu) from Richmond Friends Meeting (804-752-7588).

I2008-17 Ad-Hoc Intervisitation Committee. Howard Fullerton presented a request from the Intervisitation Committee for approval of travel minutes for Maria Bradley (Sandy Spring), Erik Hanson (Takoma Park Preparative, Adelphi), and Susan Kaul (Bethesda). Friends empowered the Clerk to ENDORSE these minutes.

The Committee distributed the following report:

Ad Hoc Intervisitation Committee, Interim Report

We are an **Ad Hoc** Committee.

This means that **YOU** can join us, either as a meeting attender or an e-mail member.

Travel plans for 2008—Destinations:

South East YM: Maria Bradley, Sandy Spring MM (returning traveler)

Great Plains YM: Maria Bradley, Sandy Spring MM (returning traveler)
Linda Coates, Little Britain MM (returning traveler)

New England YM: Linda Coates, Little Britain MM (returning traveler)

Indiana YM: Walter Brown, Langley Hill, MM (returning traveler)
Susan Kaul, Bethesda MM (new companion)

Western YM: Jen Chapin-Smith, Adelphi MM (returning traveler)
Jean James, Richmond MM (new traveler)

New York YM: Ken Stockbridge, Patapsco MM (returning traveler)

North Carolina YM: Ken Stockbridge, Patapsco MM (returning traveler)
Erik Hanson, Takoma Park Preparative (returning traveler)

FUM Triennial: Flossie Fullerton, Sandy Spring MM;
Mary Lord, Adelphi MM
Meg Boyd Meyer, Baltimore-Stony Run MM;
Ken Stockbridge, Patapsco MM
Erik Hanson, Takoma Park;
Andrei Israel, Friends Meeting of Washington
Georgia and Hugh Fuller, Langley Hill MM

I2008-18 *Longest Walk 2.* Dellie James (Baltimore-Stony Run) announced that a grass roots Native walk is proceeding from San Francisco to Washington, D.C., commemorating the Longest Walk, to raise awareness of environmental and Native issues. The Baltimore Yearly Meeting Indian Affairs Committee is supporting this walk. In our Yearly Meeting area, arrangements are in place to provide hospitality for the group traveling the northern route through Pennsylvania, but more help is needed for the group on the southern route who will be passing through southern Virginia. Friends are asked to give whatever help they can. Those who are interested can get more information from the website: www.longestwalk2.org.

I2008-19 *Reports from affiliated organizations.* Howard Fullerton announced that, in view of the late hour, reports from our representatives to the Friends United Meeting General Board (Attachment A).

I2008-20 *Closing.* The meeting closed with a period of worshipful silence.

Respectfully submitted,

Deborah Haines, acting Recording Clerk

Attachment A: Report from FUM General Board Representative

For: BALTIMORE YEARLY MEETING

From: Rich Liversidge, BYM Representative to the General Board

Subject: FRIENDS UNITED MEETING – GENERAL BOARD MEETING

I. FUM General Board Meeting – Agenda and Actions

The FUM General Board met in Richmond Indiana on February 8-9, 2008. All three BYM representatives to the FUM General Board attended. On Thursday 7 February, there were meetings of the FUM Trustees (via conference call) and the Triennial Planning Committee.

1. Agenda. The General Board’s agenda included reports from the FUM staff, the Finance and the Priorities Committees, the Trustees and the Triennial Planning Committee.

The FUM Triennial will be July 9-13 in High Point North Carolina. **Katherine Smith** (Maury River) has agreed to lead a workshop on clerking at the Triennial.

2. Reports from the FUM Staff –

a. Situation in Western Kenya. The violence in western Kenya (where most Kenyan Quakers live) and the hardships among Internally-Displaced Persons (“IDPs”) concerned us greatly. We heard early-morning conference calls with Eden Grace (of FUM/AMO - the African Ministries Office) and Ben and Jody Richmond (directors of Friends Theological College in Kaimosi). They were safe personally but shared about the destruction and violence and changes in the social order throughout Kenya. There have been severe social and economic disruptions in western Kenya. The region has a flood of IDPs both within the region and to/from other regions. The cost of food, fuel and materials has risen dramatically because of the unrest.

b. Quaker Relief Efforts. Eden, Ben and Jody also discussed the delivery of food and other relief supplies through Quaker Church Peace Teams and other groups. BYM’s David Zarembka and his wife Gladys Namboya have been involved in that. FUM has increased its AVP (Alternatives to Violence) and other counseling along with its relief deliveries.

c. Kenyan Relief Fund. Quaker organizations agreed that one entity should coordinate Kenyan relief efforts. They agreed that FUM would be the organization. Donations through late February total \$70,822. Donors to the Kenyan Relief Fund include AFSC, FGC and FWCC. So far, the assistance has included maize (corn), beans, rice, cooking oil, blankets, water filtration equipment and trauma counseling. FUM is forwarding the funds as follows – 1/3 to FUM’s partner programs for services (to help offset higher costs related to the turmoil). These include the Mt. Elgon relief program, Lugulu and Kaimosi Hospitals, Friends Theological College, the Samburu and Turkana missions, and the AquaVis school in the Kibera slum; and 2/3 to provide relief services throughout the region, including IDP camps in several western Kenyan districts.

d. FUM's Kaimosi Hospital Task Force. This is a General Board ad hoc committee working with FUM/AMO and a reconstituted Board of Governors of Kaimosi Hospital. Its purpose is to rehabilitate the hospital and restore an appropriate level of medical service to the community. The Task Force is made up of 5 General Board members (including me) and two FUM staff members. Presently, FUM is awaiting execution of a revised Memorandum of Understanding with East Africa Yearly Meeting ("EAYM") outlining FUM's site control and the responsibilities for medical services and finances.

EAYM took over control of the hospital from FUM in the 1980s and allowed the quality of service to deteriorate. The government took it over in the 1990s and service degraded more. FUM is concerned with both restoring appropriate services and providing trauma services for local residents with machete and arrow wounds. Future services almost certainly will be less than what had existed prior to the 1980s, based on community need, the government's national medical services program and FUM's resources.

e. Ramallah Friends School. The General Board approved pre-development funding of a proposed office building project by Ramallah Friends School on land RFS owns. The building will generate cash flow for student tuition support and teachers' salaries. Last October, the General Board asked John Smallwood and me to help RFS season the initial proposal. The General Board approved spending up to \$30,000 for legal and consulting costs, including a loan application fee to the Overseas Private Investment Corporation.

3. FUM Ad Hoc Membership Committee. This new ad hoc committee met for the first time just prior to the General Board meeting. Howard Fullerton is a member. He was unable to attend, so John Smallwood attended in his place. It will meet again during the Triennial and again in the fall. It is examining:

- What does membership mean to each yearly meeting?
- How should the ad hoc committees of the North American and East African yearly meeting boards coordinate their work?
- Is FUM's Operations and Procedures manual clear about expectations for yearly meeting membership?

4. Qualities Sought of General Board Members. The GB's Nominating Committee addressed the qualities FUM seeks in its General Board members. A draft outline was presented and discussed at length. The skill base of Board members needs to be improved. One issue is the practice of some YMs making Board membership automatic for certain roles – the YM's General Secretary and/or Presiding Clerk, for example. Another is the interest of some GB members in limiting GB membership to followers of Jesus. Several changes in language and intent were made to make it more inclusive. It will be distributed to the member yearly meetings as a group of "guidelines". It was clear that individual Yearly Meetings will continue to be free to continue with their own discernment processes in selecting their representatives to the General Board.

II. Personal Reflections

1. The Member Qualities Memo Attempts an Unhealthy “Spiritual Purity”. There was disagreement among General Board members about whether "spiritual purity" in its General Board membership is good for the organization. Some believe that FUM will be more successful if Board members agree on certain theological points that seem exclusive to other Board members. Others (including me) believe diversity is more beneficial.

I believe this interest about "spiritual purity" is a reaction to interest among others on the GB in revising the FUM personnel policy. Some Board members see the personnel policy as consistent with Biblical strictures and a basis for Board unity. Others see the policy as discriminatory against both gays and singles, and divisive. After several years of disagreement, the former have begun efforts to unite around theological positions.

I see spiritual purity on both sides of the matter - the push for a restrictive and exclusive orthodox Christianity on the part of the leadership of Midwestern yearly meetings (which the large majority of East African Quaker leaders support) vs. a more muscular interest in social and relationship inclusiveness by primarily the dually-affiliated yearly meetings.

In private conversations with members of almost all of the yearly meetings involved, it is clear to me that each yearly meeting has the full array of views represented on FUM's GB, regardless of the YM's public position on the issue. The weighting differs, but the range of views is the same – even in BYM. There is no “pure” yearly meeting in FUM. Even the East African yearly meetings have younger members who disagree with their older, more orthodox (mostly male) presiding clerks and general secretaries.

However, having these divergent views represented on the Board makes some members uncomfortable. I believe the forces moving for restrictive purity are at work at the General Board level to reduce the conflict by "purifying" the makeup of the General Board. I also believe that allowing those forces to dictate what the Board should be or do would harm the organization's important work overseas.

2. Excellent FUM Staff Damaged by the General Board Disagreements. There have been dramatic reductions in the FUM staff in Richmond Indiana. There are now just nine staff members. All of them show great creativity and intense loyalty to FUM and its mission, despite the conflicts that exist at the Board level. I have enormous respect for them and their work, and wish they were not caught in the middle and were funded better.

Given the small staff size, there is very little that FUM does here in North America. In essence, the North American Ministries program is nonexistent. FUM's work now is almost all overseas - through Ramallah Friends School, a Boys School in Belize, work in Jamaica and Cuba, and various activities in Western Kenya, Uganda and elsewhere in East Africa. It's important work - I believe in it and support it (with effort and money).

3. Who Has Authority? There has been discussion at several General Board meetings about the sources of authority within FUM. What are the sources of authority that ground us as

Quakers, and as members of FUM and its General Board? Is it the Bible? Natural law? Yearly Meeting discernment? Our community? Or something else? Is it internally-derived or provided externally? This is an important issue to explore. Differences among us about this explain many of our institutional and personal disagreements. The Board's factions have managed to spend most of the last decade talking past each other, not in genuine dialogue. This has damaged the legitimate work of the organization and reduced the staff and financial resources of FUM. It has affected FUM's ability to serve communities and constituencies overseas - in Palestine, in Kenya and in the Caribbean.

III. What Next for BYM?

1. BYM's Position Regarding FUM Financial Support - My view has changed with time. I would like us to use our financial resources to help FUM's work and alleviate the suffering in Kenya and elsewhere. I believe restarting the funding will strengthen our own witness to those with whom we are in disagreement about the personnel policies. However, I do not see any softening happening soon in the personnel policy itself. I believe BYM can find a way forward on funding, if the will to fund is there. That would accommodate those within BYM who have felt excluded or marginalized in the protracted discussion about finding a way forward. Some within BYM have offered to cover the modest administrative fees on BYM donations that others have objected to paying, which would allow those BYM funds to go fully to programs.

2. Medical Facilities. FUM has been restructuring Kaimosi Mission Hospital to help it recover from 20 years of neglect and mismanagement. This is not an easy or inexpensive task for FUM. FUM recently increased funding for medicine and medical salaries. It has funded improvements to the dilapidated facilities. Perhaps BYM's funds can be used to leverage new hospital services for the community, such as an ambulance or mobile community health vehicle. Half of the cost of an ambulance was funded recently by a donor. Another \$25,000 is needed. Can BYM do that? Last month, I was authorized by the General Board to explore some creative ways to leverage funds for costs like that.

3. Maintaining Community. I don't want us to distance ourselves from the rest of the FUM community. I see what we do through FUM as serving God in very concrete ways. So I also do not want to install spiritual purity on the General Board. I believe focusing on purity would distance FUM from many supporters and continue FUM's decline.

I no longer explicitly call for a change in the personnel policy, although I continue to disagree with it. I now believe our focus on FUM's personnel policies has been too narrow – the Testimony of Integrity comes in many forms. I believe the entire matter of sexual ethics needs to be addressed. That includes the negatives – philandering pastors, divorce, affairs outside of marriage or other commitments, sex without meaning, etc. – and the positives – the nature of commitment, our willingness vs. our willfulness, and God's role in the center of our relationships. I ask what it is that we here, within BYM, are willing to address and resolve first among ourselves, before projecting it onto FUM?

Cc: John Smallwood, Walter Fry, Riley Robinson, Howard Fullerton

