

MEMORANDUM

To: BYM INTERIM MEETING

From: Rich Liversidge and John Smallwood, BYM Representatives

Date: 20 October 2007

Subject: Report on FUM General Board Meeting 12-13 October 2007

The General Board (“GB”) held its fall 2007 meeting in Greenfield Massachusetts on Friday-Saturday 12-13 October. John Smallwood and Rich Liversidge attended; Walt Fry was unable to attend because of business commitments.

FUM’s various committees met in advance of the full Board meeting. The Executive Committee (Walt’s on that committee but was absent), the Trustees (Rich is one of FUM’s trustees), the Finance Committee (John and Rich attended) and the Program Coordinating and Priorities Committee, or PCPC (John and Rich attended). The North American Ministries Committee and the Triennial Planning Committee also met.

The General Board met from 1:00 pm Friday through Saturday afternoon.

Overall Impressions:

This GB session was more settled and businesslike than the meetings that were addressed in the GB Representatives report made in August 2007. There were periods of deep worship and an attention to the sense of the meeting on several important matters. There was little evidence that the GB was expected to rubber-stamp Executive Committee decisions, and discussions in advance of decisions generally were open and sensitive.

As a result, we can report that we did see progress. We applaud the clear steps taken to improve decision-making and governance. However, serious governance problems remain. A clear example is how Kaimosi Hospital has been handled. In hindsight, FUM accepted an unknown but possibly substantial liability for its operation and rehabilitation.

We recommend that BYM participate actively in the nominating process for new FUM leadership, which will be installed at the Triennial next summer. We also urge BYM to move forward on its own discernment process concerning financial support of FUM. There is a clear need for our program participation and our representatives have been helpful. However, BYM’s present financial absence reduces our effectiveness.

Statement against Violence among Quakers - There has been much made in blogs and elsewhere of the hurtful words said in prayer by Andrew Kurima, the then-presiding clerk of Uganda Yearly Meeting in February 2007 (there is now a new clerk). The Executive Committee met under the weight of this concern and proposed a minute that was adopted and approved by the General Board in Richmond. It was a clear FUM repudiation of violence and threats of violence against all persons.

All GB members consider this an important statement, even as we recognize the differences of theology and practice existing among GB members and yearly meetings. The two of us view it as a unifying statement, something that is needed within FUM.

This is the minute:

“Allegations that Friends United Meeting (FUM) is hostile to homosexuals and their allies, and that FUM condones physical or emotional violence against homosexuals and their allies, have been circulated among Friends and on the internet.

The General Board of FUM/Richmond, in session this 13th day of 10th month 2007, is clear that God loves all persons, and that hostility toward any person is not consistent with the Christian Gospel. In particular, this General Board condemns the threat of physical or emotional violence against any person.”

Canadian Yearly Meeting Concerns. The Executive Committee also considered a letter dated August 20, 2007 to FUM from Canadian Yearly Meeting. In that letter, CYM raised concerns about the process by which the Richmond Declaration was affirmed as a statement of FUM faith in February 2007 in Kakamega Kenya, despite the urging for more time and consideration from representatives from several yearly meetings. The letter also raised CYM’s concern that FUM’s employment policy, while perhaps legal, is in conflict with the Quaker testimony of equality. There was no recommendation from the Executive Committee at this time.

Program and Project Evaluation Procedures – FUM has been slow in figuring out how to evaluate and prioritize its programs and projects. We are both helping to address the problem. Last year, the Trustees were given responsibility for all owned and leased facilities, and Rich is clerk of the Trustees’ property subcommittee. FUM has properties in the US, Ramallah Palestine, Kenya and the Caribbean. Each requires oversight.

Kaimosi Hospital. The GB established (belatedly) the Kaimosi Hospital Task Force to figure out whether and how FUM might restructure that medical facility. That should have been done two years ago, before FUM took on responsibility for operating the hospital. Rich has been part of that Task Force, and it is a model for evaluating other major FUM undertakings.

If FUM and East Africa Yearly Meeting both agree to proceed with FUM’s management (not a sure thing), the project will probably entail a major commitment by FUM of finances and energy. If that happens, FUM will encourage donations for its support. We urge BYM and its membership to carefully and prayerfully consider what we are called to do at that time.

Ramallah Friends School. Both of us have agreed to work with RFS on a possible \$2.6 million commercial development on school property, to create revenue for student tuition. We have agreed to help the school’s administrator develop a proposal for the FUM GB to consider at its February board meeting.

Evaluation Process. John has agreed to work with PCPC on ways to evaluate other FUM programs and projects. The goal is to have a way of tracking and prioritizing FUM support of various projects in a systematic way.

Additional Information:

FUM Personnel. FUM continues to lose senior staff. Trish Edwards-Konic has resigned as publisher of Quaker Life. Katie Terrell and Shari Veach, both young, bright staff members, will take on most of the work. Paul Smith will retire in July 2008 as Director of Operations. He will be sorely missed – he’s been diligent and successful in bringing good financial information to the GB.

FUM Finances. FUM had \$1.6 million in fiscal 2007 receipts and spent all but \$58,000 of that on missions and programs. After accounting for FUM’s publications, fundraising and management costs, and including the gains in its investment portfolio, FUM had a net increase in assets of \$95,000 for the year.

Contributions can be unrestricted (to the General Fund) or restricted (for donor-designated purposes). During fiscal 2007, contributions were down very slightly (1.7%) from 2006 levels. However, there are some clear trends in how giving is being done. Yearly meetings are shifting slightly from General Fund to restricted giving. Monthly meetings are shifting dramatically to restricted giving. And individual giving for General Fund (unrestricted purposes) is up dramatically - up 253% from \$12,837 given in 2006.

A summary of 2007 contributions includes:

	Gen'l Fund	Restricted	Total	Change fr. '06
Yearly Meetings	\$ 75,139	\$ 50,713	\$125,853	5.1%
Monthly Meetings	\$ 2,745	\$ 41,534	\$ 44,279	42.2%
Individuals	<u>\$ 32,544</u>	<u>\$ 90,113</u>	<u>\$122,657</u>	(16.6%)
Total	<u>\$110,428</u>	<u>\$182,360</u>	<u>\$292,789</u>	(1.7%)

FUM Triennial. The FUM Triennial will be held in High Point North Carolina next summer. The Triennial starts on the evening of Wednesday July 9 with a welcome from Sylvia Graves, FUM’s General Secretary. It continues through Saturday July 12.

The Triennial theme is “A Hope for the Future”, from Jeremiah 29. Workshops will be held on Thursday and Saturday, and tours will be given on Friday. John Punshon will be one of the speakers.

BYM’s Katherine Smith (Maury River) has been invited (and has agreed) to present the FUM Triennial workshop on clerking skills.