

MONTHLY MEETING MINUTES ON FUM
COMPILED AS OF APRIL 9, 2008

General FUM Minutes

Alexandria Friends Meeting

Alexandria Friends Meeting has struggled over the past several months with the question of Baltimore Yearly Meeting's relationship with Friends United Meeting. After much prayerful conversation, we find we are not in unity about whether the Yearly Meeting should retain its membership in FUM.

We are in unity around certain basic principles. We are committed to inclusion. We have passed a minute expressing our willingness to marry same-sex couples. We welcome unmarried couples into our fellowship. We are deeply uncomfortable with the exclusionary policies of FUM. Nevertheless, we are divided about what course to take.

Some of us feel strongly led to witness to our precious heritage of silent worship, inclusive community, and decision-making dependent on a gathered community of equals, not an imposed hierarchy. We are concerned that holding membership in FUM defines us as being something other than what we are called to be. We respect the work being done by FUM around the world, but would like to see the Yearly Meeting find some way other than membership to support such good works.

Others among us feel deeply called to witness to our commitment to inclusiveness by opening our hearts and expanding the circle of our love. We are mindful of the teaching of Jesus: "whosoever shall compel thee to go a mile, go with him twain." (Matthew 5:41) We feel led to be present within FUM, in joyful affirmation of the life and power we experience in our loving, inclusive meeting communities. A group of us plans to attend the FUM Triennial in July, and report to the meeting on our experiences there. We do not want to see more schism among Friends. We feel as though separating from FUM would be walking away from the work and witness to which we are called.

Although we have been unable to reach unity on the question of membership in FUM, we are united in our love for each other. We are committed to supporting each other in the different forms of witness to which we feel led.

Approved at Meeting for Worship With a Concern for Business Sixth Day,
Fourth Month, 2008

Annapolis Friends Meeting

One comment by email on materials sent out prior to our Mtg. for Business

discussion:

* I think it is clear that BYM has not been able to come to unity. That being so, why not leave individual Meetings to decide whether they want to contribute to FUM? BYM could maintain representation, and forward the sum of contributions made by individual Meetings, documenting the source of funding for FUM. BYM should also explore ways of getting financial support to FUM supported African Quakers without using the FUM (discriminatory) administrative mechanism.

Oral Statements at February Meeting for Business after report but before Committee of Four report *FUM serves as a bridge between Evangelical Friends and FGC and FGC will be present at FUM's summer Triennial.

*Three Friends emphasized: We need to provide funds from our Emerging Social Concerns fund to lessen the suffering in Kenya. (In fact, AFM did approve and send, a couple of weeks later, \$600.00 for Kenyan relief.)

*We need a larger, not smaller, presence at FUM. How can we support causes FUM works with without giving money directly to FUM?

* BYM's approach has been good and I commend its efforts. To change someone, you need to speak their language, e.g., use language from Jesus' teachings to make points on tolerance and equality. We should determine the % of money that FUM puts towards actions that BYM can't unite with and withhold only that % of funds from our financial commitment.

* Intervisitation has been extensive, going to both large gatherings and monthly meetings. The goal has been simply to get to know one another better. 40 years ago, FGC also found homosexuality unacceptable. It takes time to change. Give FUM space while we continue with a steady and constant message.

Comments by email after Committee of Four report was sent:

*I wish (the Committee of Four report) had spelled out the ministries of FUM that are hurt if we don't pay. And the fact that 35 years ago, Friends in FGC were no further along than those in FUM today. But I think it's the right decision, and I do agree with the reason given--that you can't make peace with money. Then we figure out another approach to moving the hearts of people in FUM (including in some of our own rural meetings). In Africa, it's going to take awhile, as they think homosexuality is "an American problem."

*I believe it would be good to release the yearly meeting funds to FUM; but not without a statement reiterating our disagreement about their attitude/hiring policy towards our GLBT Friends, as well as the spiritual unpinning for our decision in the Committee of Four report. I was touched by the report of the Committee of Four and agree to the minute they propose.

*I think the Committee of Four report is beautiful. It is time BYM Friends stop our judgmental ways and respect theological differences among Friends.
*We are in total agreement with the Committee of Four Committees proposed minute to Interim Meeting that states: "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".

Carlisle Friends Meeting

Minute approved by Carlisle Friends Monthly Meeting on February 10, 2008, in response to a BYM queries asking that monthly meetings consider how Friends wish to relate to individuals based on sexual orientation, to African Friends and to various Quaker bodies. Adoption of this minute was preceded by an extensive second-hour threshing session held on January 28 and attended by 20 Carlisle Friends - a number approximately as large as our average adult attendance at meetings for worship.

-- FDB, clerk,
02/10/2008

Carlisle Friends affirm our wish to be faithful to the teachings of Jesus and the vision that convinced Peter that the gospel message is for all people. We believe that denying employment or positions of leadership to Friends based on sexual orientation or openly acknowledged sexual commitments risks following what Paul called "the letter of the law" at the expense of "the Spirit that gives life." We acknowledge, however, the good faith of those who disagree with us. We know that they have tried as hard as we, often harder and under more difficult conditions, to be faithful to gospel teachings. We hope that Baltimore Yearly Meeting will be able to maintain and restore a spirit of unity with Friends United Meeting, based on a shared commitment to a Quaker process that keeps us all open to the possibility of new insights and leadings. We hope that BYM will base its financial and other decisions on whether there appear to be reasonable grounds for hope of improving relations through patient listening and open and respectful dialogue.

Frederick Friends Meeting

Report to Frederick Monthly Meeting held March 30th 2008:

"A small group of meeting members met three times on the issue of BYM's relationship with FUM. The first meeting was spent educating ourselves on the issues. The second meeting was more reflective; the range of responses varied widely and mirrored the diverse and conflicting responses discussed already at YM. The third meeting was poorly attended it was not meaningful to attempt to reach unity. " presented by Anne Bittenheim Meeting for Business heard an oral report of the discussions, reports and minutes on

this topic given at Interim Meeting, Williamsburg March 29th. We were moved by the sense that the Spirit had been moving in similar directions through several groups and committees. We are hopeful that there is growing clarity on a way forward on this seemingly intractable issue.

Respectfully submitted,

Anne Buttenheim - Convenor of the tasked Worship Group Francy Williams,
Clerk Frederick Monthly Meeting

Dunning Creek Friends Meeting

"Friends agreed to inform BYM that our meeting is in favor of accepting the offer from Hugh and Georgia Fuller to pay BYM's portion of funding for FUM's administrative costs. It is noted that we disagree with FUM's policy regarding homosexuality."

Bernie Hoffnar, clerk - October 14, 2008

Gettysburg Friends Meeting

The following minute was approved by Gettysburg Monthly Meeting on February 10th.2008.

It is fundamental to Quaker Faith and Practice that we honor the equality and integrity of all human beings and affirm individuals in their leadings. Gettysburg Monthly Meeting strongly expresses its support for withholding financial aid from any organization that discriminates on the basis of sexual orientation. At the same time we hope that BYM will continue dialogue with members of FUM.

Friends were reminded of a cogent statement by Episcopal Bishop John Shelby Spong. On page 14 of the soft-cover issue of his book "A New Christianity for a New World" he states

"Homosexuality is more like left-handedness. It is a part of the very BEING of a minority of the human family and therefore it is something to which one awakens, not something one chooses to be."

Gunpowder Friends Meeting

Approved 16th Third Month 2008

Friends of Gunpowder Monthly Meeting have complex and long-standing relationships with Friends United Meeting (FUM). In past years, some of us have held membership in Midwest meetings affiliated with Five Years Meeting/FUM; others of us witnessed and worked for the reunification of the two yearly meetings in Baltimore, thereby building what had seemed impossible bridges between monthly meetings aligned singularly with Friends General Conference (FGC) or FUM. More recently, one of us served as a Baltimore Yearly Meeting (BYM) representative to the FUM Board, and one of us participated in the intervisitation program promoting dialogue among affiliate FUM yearly meetings. Today, we are all thankful for FUM's work at

the Ramallah Friends School and in bridging American and African (namely Kenyan) Friends.

All of us, however, have experienced the hurt arising from the FUM personnel policy that defines marriage narrowly as between a man and a woman and prevents those who participate in sexual activity outside of marriage so defined from serving as employees or volunteer leaders within FUM. This policy has been applied in a discriminatory manner against gay and lesbian Friends. We are also gravely concerned about the reports of fiscal mismanagement and lack of openness and transparency in the FUM Board. Given this complex, historical relationship and these recent struggles, we have reflected on whether or how we should remain in relationship with FUM.

Gunpowder Friends unite with the sense of many other meetings within BYM that "certain FUM policies and practices - the personnel policy foremost" among them - are hurtful and contrary to our understanding of the Quaker testimony of equality. However, we call upon BYM to "remain in relationship with FUM through membership, representation to the Board, and continued support for FUM programs. We also encourage BYM's continued funding of the intervisitation program and other such efforts that sustain dialogue across this pain and difference. In these circumstances, we urge BYM "to continue to speak plainly and lovingly our concerns and to allow for" Gospel order.

Quakers have historically labored long-avoiding judgmental actions-with one another during times of difference such as when Americans (including Quakers) held African slaves or when American women sought the right to vote. In the mid-20th century, BYM Friends spent considerable time unifying our two yearly meetings after years of separation since the Hicksite-Orthodox split. Friends seek to retain or regain relationship in such times, believing that we will be led to greater understanding of God's will by working together than by separating along lines drawn by human will. BYM has spent tremendous energy over the past six years discerning whether we should remain in relationship with FUM. We have, indeed, labored long. We believe that this labor calls us to remain in relationship as we wait for God's time to reconcile our differences. So, too, we need to move beyond this all-consuming focus on our relationship with FUM so that we can do the other works to which we are called as members of BYM.

We do not know where our relationship with FUM will lead us, but we know that it is a relationship that has been tested over time, challenged by difference, and graced by God's transforming power. We also know that faithful living requires that we learn how to love on the other side of hurt. How can we do this, going forward, as BYM members of FUM? Perhaps by acknowledging what we already do well together, and by committing ourselves to staying present to our differences.

While our relationship with FUM is something we value, we value even more deeply our unified BYM. None of us would want to jeopardize the unity of BYM because of irreconcilable differences of perspective about FUM. If these differences of perspective persist, we should consider ways in which BYM can divest from our membership in all external organizations (i.e., FGC, FUM) or sustain membership but focus funding decisions for such organizations at the monthly meeting level.

Little Britain Friends Meeting

Little Britain Monthly Meeting is encouraged by the proposal of Georgia and Hugh Fuller to pay the administrative fee for Friends United Meeting funds, so that the Yearly Meeting can send funds towards the services offered by FUM, rather than pay any administrative costs. We join with them in asking for other Monthly Meetings to prayerful consider this, as a way to get beyond the present no funding. August 20, 2007

Little Falls Friends Meeting

Little Falls Meeting of Friends held an after-Meeting discussion of BYM's relationship with FUM on January 27, 2008, and again on February 4th. There was general agreement that FUM does not represent our concept of Quakerism. It has become another conservative Protestant denomination. We definitely disagree with its exclusion of gays and lesbians and, while we applaud its works in Africa, Belize, and other countries, we deplore the proselytizing that results in the establishment of Quakers Meetings which are essentially fundamentalist missions. We are also concerned for the policies and financial management of these foreign enterprise which seem to be in some disarray. There are many innovative and reputable institutions working in Africa and other third world countries giving help which may be more direct. After considerable discussion, we feel strongly that BYM should continue to interact and share contacts with FUM but not support its personnel policies or its missions.

However, in the light of the present catastrophic conditions in Kenya, we could support releasing a portion of the funds currently being held in escrow by BYM to be used for purely humanitarian crisis assistance.

Nottingham (Oxford) Friends Meeting

February 10, 2008

****MINUTE:** (1) To effect change, we must remain a part of FUM, hence, we urge BYM to remain a part of FUM.

****MINUTE:** (2) We urge BYM to continue the dialogue with FUM and let the Spirit work.

March 9, 2008

****Minuted:** We considered BYM's financial commitment to FUM in a worshipful manner. We, as a Meeting, know this issue will not go away. We did not reach

unity, and will continue to discuss this issue as need arises.

Patuxent Friends Meeting

25 January 2008 - Patuxent Friends Ministry and Counsel Patuxent Friends Meeting, in the spirit of looking for that of God in every person, offers the following responses to Riley Robinson's queries:

" If we want to support Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer (LGBTQ) people in the Religious Society of Friends, in America and elsewhere, how can we best do that?

We should support LGBTQ people and others in the Religious Society of Friends by withholding financial support of FUM and any other organization whose stated policies and management actions are discriminatory against others, thus not recognizing and honoring "that of God in every person".

" If we want to have meaningful relationships with other parts of the Religious Society of Friends, how can we best do that?

We should cling to meaningful relationships with others by choosing not to disassociate with them, by holding them in the Light, and by trying to love them.

" If we want to be of service to and in relationship with Friends in other

countries, particularly Africa, how can we best do that?

We can be of service to and in relationship with Friends in other countries by targeting financial support directly to well managed and effective programs that improve the quality of lives and increase peace in specific communities.

" How can these goals be pursued in a harmonious way?

We can pursue these goals in a harmonious way by holding each other in the Light, encouraging continued participation on the FUM Board, maintaining open communications, and continuing intervisitation between and among various Friends meetings and organizations.

We note also that FUM's mission statement expresses commitment to "gather people into fellowships where Jesus Christ is known, loved and obeyed as Teacher and Lord". We call to mind Matthew 22:37-40, which states "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments."

Pipe Creek Friends Meeting

Pipe Creek Monthly Meeting, in response to a request for advice regarding Baltimore Yearly Meeting's (BYM) Relationship with Friends United Meeting (FUM), held a Called Meeting on November 11, 2007 to consider our response, which is as follows.

We disagree with Friends United Meeting's restrictive employment policies as well as allusions to other issues regarding FUM's decision making process as

reported by the BYM representatives to the recent FUM board meetings in August of this year. We are aware that there have been attempts toward better understandings between those concerned but observe that these have not been fruitful or exhaustive.

Pipe Creek Monthly Meeting feels that greater efforts should be made at rebuilding the relationship between BYM and FUM at the Monthly Meeting level by way of inter-visitation and discussion. This works toward our corporately held conviction that BYM ought to strive to continue its relationship with FUM. We feel that we do not best encourage diversity or tolerance by rejecting those with whom we disagree.

Although we view ourselves as an independently oriented Monthly Meeting, we are aligned with our Yearly Meeting and may subscribe to its decisions, but not feel constrained to act on all of them.

It is the sense of our meeting that reconciliation is a goal most compatible with our faith and practice and one not often acquired in haste. We expect FUM to change their restrictive policies and accept all Gods children as equal. Pipe Creek Meeting will reconsider our position in 12 months.

Richmond Friends Meeting

While Richmond Monthly Meeting members have participated in FUM-affiliate missions in Africa and in our own and BYM's Intervisitation efforts, we strongly object to FUM's discriminatory policies regarding gays and lesbians. Our monthly meeting honors gay and lesbian marriage, yet we recognize that we may not reflect broader BYM community.

We recommend that Baltimore Yearly Meeting not withdraw or ignore differences but instead strive for meaningful conflict resolution through dialogue. We thus ask that BYM continue to actively engage with Friends United Meeting.

That said, our monthly meeting is not in unity regarding the type or depth of that engagement, some favoring dues-paying membership and some continuing dialogue with financial support. We also recommend that, whatever the engagement, those representing BYM clearly witness our testimonies, particularly that of equality with regards to sexual orientation and marital status, yet also integrity, peace, and community.

This was approved at Meeting for Worship with a Concern for Business on First Day 16, Third Month, 2008.

Sandy Spring Friends Meeting

At the request of BYM, our Meeting has met and considered our interest in

maintaining relationships between BYM and Friends United Meeting. The results of two listening sessions (held January 13th and 15th) were presented for discussion at Meeting for Business on First Sunday of February, 2008. This slightly edited Minute is presented to Meeting for Business on First Sunday of March for second reading.

We, members and attenders of Sandy Spring Monthly Meeting, recommend a continued relationship between the Baltimore Yearly Meeting and the Friends United Meeting that acknowledges our many commonalities and mutual interests as well as underlying beliefs. By finding ways to communicate our combined missions, we will build stronger bridges and provide opportunity for growth of both corporate bodies.

We seek to find new and improved methods in which to engage and structure our work - "moving in rather than moving away." Our desire is for a relationship based on mutual respect, love and kindness: one in which all parties are respected without pressure to change the others' beliefs.

State College Friends Meeting

We at State College Friends Meeting support the peace work of Friends in Kenya but not discriminatory policies toward gays and lesbians. We therefore approve the release of money for the purpose of peace work in Kenya. We as a Meeting continue to struggle with certain policies of FUM and are not yet clear about support for FUM itself. We will continue to dialogue about this in our Meeting.

Stony Run Friends Meeting

Baltimore Monthly Meeting - Stony Run, meeting in Worship on Firstday, Fourth Month, 1st, 2008, considered the following:

Stony Run Friends have previously minuted our lack of unity with Friends United Meeting personnel policy which we believe denies the universality of the light in every person. We further affirm our experience as a Meeting of being enriched by the ministry and service of a number of persons who would have been excluded by FUM policy.

Baltimore Monthly Meeting - Stony Run is proud of its role in the consolidation of two former Yearly Meetings, but has never considered itself, as a Monthly Meeting, a member of Friends United Meeting. In 2004 we minuted our recommendation to Baltimore Yearly Meeting that BYM withdraw all financial support of FUM, while continuing in dialogue. In 2005, we recommended that BYM's funds be allocated toward a BYM-FUM intervisitation program.

We have been deeply troubled by reports of our representatives to Friends United Meeting. We are concerned with persistent reports of problems in governance and leadership at the General Board and Executive Committee levels of the organization. We are also distressed about the problems of management of property and programs in Kenya. We are deeply

grateful to BYM's representatives to FUM Board for diligent and persistent work to express our concerns and contribute to amelioration of these problems. We note that our representatives are not hopeful, at this time, of significant changes in what we see as governance problems.

We have grown to cherish members of Baltimore Yearly Meeting who have deep affection for and allegiance to Friends United Meeting, and we have found love and respect for staff and visitors from FUM who have worshipped with us at our Monthly Meeting and Yearly Meeting sessions.

We continue to support intervisitation among Friends for the foreseeable future. We are unwilling to sever ties with Friends; however, we are equally unwilling to financially support an institution which we see as deeply flawed.

We pray for God's healing among us; that our eyes will open wide to see God's love and God's will made manifest by our fellow Friends, and that all who call themselves Friends will share the joy we have found in knowing the Spirit manifest among us in Friends whose life experience and beliefs may be different from ours.

Stony Run Meeting recommends that BYM allocate the portion of accumulated and future BYM-apportioned funds which otherwise would have been directed to FUM without restriction to instead support inter-visitation and possible shared education initiatives among Friends and to support work in Africa through the Africa Great Lakes Initiative.

Committee of Four Committees

Roanoke Friends Meeting

Friends could not come to unity approving the minute offered from the Committee of Four Committees. The Clerk will send a letter, drafted in consultation with the Recording Clerk, to the Clerk of the Committee of Four Committees and the Clerk of Interim Meeting, stating that we do not have unity on releasing the funds, based upon our strong objection to FUM's exclusionary employment policies regarding gay/lesbian/bisexual employees and volunteers. We recognize the efforts of the Committee of Four Committees and share the committee's view of the transformational power of our spiritual concern, and we request that more specific information be provided about a plan for how the committee will proceed, absent the use of money and its leverage.

Warrington Quarter

Warrington Quarter supports an ongoing dialog with Friends United Meeting about their Personnel Policy. We cannot recommend that Baltimore Yearly Meeting support Friends United Meeting financially until there is a change in Friends United Meeting's policy.

February, 2008

Peace & Social Concerns Minute

Adelphi Friends Meeting

While I sensed unity that this effort might be something that we could unite with, many at the meeting today expressed a lack of confidence that any money sent directly to Kenyan Yearly Meetings would all get to the areas where it was needed, there being a history of money being misdirected. It was suggested that we tell BYM of two projects (African Great Lakes Initiative being one -- they're now doing 40 projects in Kenya -- and another in Nairobi -- Global Philanthropy? Harold Confer knows the exact name -- providing food and other relief directly to affected people) run by individual Quakers in which the money IS actually getting to the people in need. It was further suggested that BYM request that any funds sent to FUM be designated for those projects or others that can be vouched for, instead of sending it to the Yearly Meetings.

Concerns were raised that such an action should not be decided in March, but that it wait for Annual Session, or at least until Summer Interim Meeting, so that people would have a chance to consider and respond to full information, and have a second reading before action is taken.
Sunday, March 9, 2008

Floyd Friends Meeting

We, of Floyd Friends Meeting, feel that the BYM's Peace and Social Concerns committee speaks our minds in the concern over the violence in Kenya and to request that BYM release monies to FUM for the express purpose of supporting peace activities in Kenya.
Sunday, March 9, 2008

Gettysburg Friends Meeting

Gettysburg Monthly Meeting wishes to express its support for using AFSC or the African Great Lakes Initiative as an overseer for BYM funds to be used to promote a peaceful resolution to the current violence in Kenya.
Approved February 10th.2008.

Little Britain Friends Meeting

It is too far for us to physically get to Williamsburg on Saturday. I am not sure who the committee is that is discussing the issue, but will send a few emails, hoping that the Yearly meeting is aware that Little Britain has not changed its position on continuing to be a part of FUM and we should fully fund them. I know that you do not preside, but will you please pass this on to the one who brings up the subject. Sue Lamborn. March 25, 2008