

M&O Process for Discerning Possible Affiliation with FGC since 2014

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In Winter 2014, M&O reviewed the current status of PYM Monthly Meetings affiliating with FGC and past discussions of FGC affiliation at PYM. Contributing to this consideration was a question from Appleseed Monthly Meeting asking M&O if PYM would affiliate and saying that they would individually affiliate if the Yearly Meeting did not. This process of Monthly Meetings asking if the Yearly Meeting would affiliate, then affiliating directly (as in the cases of Sacramento and Davis Meetings), had been, and continued to, occur. We knew at the time that per capita attendance at the FGC Gathering was higher for PYM than most Yearly Meetings in the East and that many PYM Friends had served on FGC committees including Central Committee.

From the M&O report to Rep Com 2014:

“Affiliation with Friends General Conference. Because this is a recurrent issue within our Yearly Meeting, Ministry and Oversight gave consideration to the potential benefits and drawbacks of Pacific Yearly Meeting formally affiliating with Friends General Conference. Ministry and Oversight does not bring a recommendation to the Yearly Meeting at this time, however we ask representatives to take the following question to their Monthly Meetings: Are there stirrings in your Meeting to join Friends General Conference (FGC)?”

This was also included in the M&O report to 2014 Annual Session.

In Fall 2014, as a result of previous review and discussion, M&O sensed a significant shift towards peace and enthusiasm with the idea of affiliating and continued to discuss this issue at subsequent M&O meetings in 2015 and 2016, taking into consideration feedback as it was received.

From the RepCom 2016 minutes:

“Affiliation with Friends General Conference. Bronwen [Hillman, M&O clerk] raised the second item by posing a query to the gathering: What are the concerns that Ministry and Oversight (M&O) Committee needs to hear before bringing an official proposal to PYM to affiliate with FGC? After hearing comments from the floor, M&O Committee stated that they will put together a package on this subject and will send it to monthly meetings. From the floor questions were asked about what it would mean to affiliate with FGC and if PYM should also affiliate with Friends United Meeting (FUM).”

At 2016 Annual Session, the M&O report to the Yearly Meeting included the intention of the committee to further consider affiliation in the following year and the verbal report reiterated the intention to create a package on the subject.

In Fall 2016, the committee again agreed to compile additional information about affiliation and distribute to the YM prior to AS 2017. At the Spring 2017 M&O meeting, the committee came to unity on a minute to be presented at AS 2017 that would include a short FAQ on affiliation. This document was distributed to Monthly Meetings via the Assistant to the Clerk on May 5, 2017, and the minute was considered at AS 2017 where M&O facilitated lunchtime Q&A sessions regarding affiliation. Questions arising from members of the body at AS 2017 made clear that Friends wanted more information and more time to season this decision within their Monthly Meetings and revisit the question at the 2018 Annual Session.

In Fall of 2017, M&O reviewed information responsive to frequently asked questions about affiliation and established dates and a process for seasoning at the Monthly Meetings. This information was distributed to Representatives and Clerks of Monthly Meetings on February 8, 2017, with a request that meetings season and report back by April 30, 2018. Additional questions emerged at Representative Committee in March 2018 and information relating to these questions were made available on April 19, 2018.

In early June, M&O will circulate a summary of monthly meeting reflections. We anticipate asking Finance Committee to consider the budgetary implications of affiliation, specifically, the impact on the assessment of different levels of contribution to FGC if we should decide to affiliate. This will need to take into account money currently donated by individual Monthly Meetings and the Yearly Meeting.

M&O hopes that through this seasoning process, Friends will come well-prepared and with open hearts to the Annual Session discernment.