

PACIFIC YEARLY MEETING OF THE RELIGIOUS SOCIETY OF FRIENDS

Minutes of the Interim Committee Meeting, March 17, 1956, San Francisco, Calif.

PRESENT: Ted Freedman, Sue Freedman, William and Anna James, Madeleine Stephenson, Isabel Smith, William Acord, Harriet Rietveld, Ruth Schooler, Nancy Welch, Eleanor Foster, David and Catherine Bruner, John Ullman, Oliva Davis, Robert and Margaret Simkin, Etta Vogel, Patricia Stewart, John Wells, Thornton and Sara Conrow, Georges Weber, Vern James, Phillip Wells, Charles and Laura Gritzner, Kearns and Emily Plauche, Elizabeth Kramer, Betty Keeney, Ann Combs, Fred Allan, Peggy Church, Edith Sperry, Harold Carson, Beulah Thornburg, Esther Richards, Lois Barton, Ruth Schmoer, and Mildred Burck.

The meeting opened at 9:30 with a period of worship.

Yearly Meeting: Fred Allan reported on the location of Yearly Meeting at the San Francisco YMCA Camp at Jones Gulch, 70 miles Southwest of San Francisco. Yearly Meeting will begin with the evening meal on August 15 and end on August 19. Phoebe Seagrave will be in charge of registration. Concern was expressed that child care be arranged for, by hiring individuals who are not Friends who need to attend sessions.

Hospitality Grants: A fund for hospitality grants to cover expenses at Yearly Meeting for those needing consideration will be raised by individual donations to the Hospitality committee, William and Anna James, chairmen. Contributions and applications for grants may be forwarded by monthly meetings.

Young Friends: There is concern for integrating the youth of our meetings into the sessions of Yearly Meeting so that they are participating members of the group. The representatives in the Young Friends Section will work with the Planning committee in arranging the program to meet their needs. One session of Yearly Meeting will be offered to the young people to present anything about which they are concerned. Bill Acord was asked to serve on this committee.

Some of the concerns of the meetings were as follows: Military infiltration in the public schools; What can friends usefully do regarding the racial tension problem?, regarding mental health problems?; Clarification of the position of attenders in business sessions of monthly meetings; the Yearly Meeting should not act as a pressure group legislatively.

Mention was made of Howard Brinton's concern that Pacific Yearly Meeting join a re-named, reconstituted Friends General Conference. Since there is not unity regarding this concern, it was felt best not to consider it further. What Pacific Yearly Meeting desires is spiritual fellowship with all Friends.

Ministry and Oversight Committees: A minute was received from Southwest Half-Yearly Meeting suggesting that there be an opportunity for sharing among members of monthly meeting ministry and oversight committees, that monthly meetings include members of these committees among their representatives to Yearly Meeting, that the Yearly Meeting set up a continuing committee of ministry and oversight on whom would be laid the concern to travel among the monthly meetings and to be available for their guidance and counsel, that travel funds be made available for such visitation, and that a summary of their experience and concern be forwarded to the Discipline Committee for consideration.

It was decided that on the afternoon before the opening of Yearly Meeting there will be a meeting for mutual sharing of all present who are members of the Ministry and Oversight Committees (or the groups performing a similar function) for their meetings. It was felt that any specific suggestions for action should come from this group rather than from the Interim Committee. Olivia Davis will act as convener.

Opening of Yearly Meeting: Many suggestions were considered for setting the spiritual tone of the Yearly Meeting. It was agreed to have a longer period of worship at the opening session.

Committee reports are to be given through the Bulletin this year. They are to be sent to Esther Richards by the end of June. Only items requiring action will be taken up in the Yearly Meeting sessions. The State of Society reports will be given through the Quarterly or Half-yearly meetings where this is possible.

The Education Committee will have one session of Yearly Meeting. They will present their findings in regard to a Friends School in the West.

The Discipline Committee will make copies of our present Handbook or Organization and Practise for distribution and consideration before Yearly Meeting. They will have time at Yearly Meeting to present various subjects which might be included in the Handbook. It was suggested that they might follow the pattern of dividing up into sections for discussion.

AFSC: Patricia Stewart reported on the last meeting of the Representative Council of the AFSC at which they considered their concern to improve communication between Yearly Meetings and the AFSC. Suggestions were made for steps which might be taken by the Board of Directors: making the Corporation smaller; arranging annual area meetings in different parts of the country; asking Yearly Meetings to designate one of their Corporation members to carry major responsibility for communication between the Yearly Meeting and AFSC; holding Annual Meetings of the Corporation just prior to or just following Representative Council, with some overlap. The members of the corporation of the AFSC are appointed by the Yearly Meetings, the total number not to exceed 250. They elect officers and appoint a nominating committee which chooses the Executive Committee. The Interim Committee felt it would be very helpful if representatives of the Yearly Meeting could work closely with the AFSC Regional offices on the West Coast in their two-way reporting.

Home for elderly Friends: The money left by John Beamish toward a home for elderly Friends has a time limit, after which it will revert to the heirs. The Yearly Meeting is not able to take on this project, much as they are in sympathy with it. They would encourage interested Friends to join in a group which could begin such a project. Vern James, Edith Sperry, Georges Weber and Ruth Schooler were appointed to act as a committee to collect information pertaining to a home for elderly Friends.

The following appointments are continued until next Yearly Meeting:

AFSC - Robert Young

FCNL - Georges Weber, Elinor Ashkenazy, Lois Barton, Stanley Shaw

FWC - William James, Leslie Spelman

FWC - Pacific Rim Committee - Ed Sanders

New Meetings: Eugene Preparative Meeting applied to be recognized as a monthly meeting and was referred to the Northwest Half-yearly meeting because this would be the division of Willamette Valley Monthly Meeting into two meetings. Salt Lake Friends wish to apply for Preparative Meeting status. This is under consideration by College Park Quarterly Meeting.

Meetings which feel a need for visitation are not sufficiently articulate in expressing this need to the Visitation Committee.

Esther Richards reported that she has a quantity of the Bulletin on Religious Education in the Home, edited by the Education Committee.

Robert Simkin presented the audited financial report.

Nominating Committee: Margaret Simkin, Patricia Stewart and John Salyer were named as members of the Nominating Committee for two years. The Committee is to present nominations at next Yearly Meeting for Friends to attend the 1957 All American Friends Conference.

The All American Friends Conference is to be at Wilmington College June 26 to July 3, 1957. There will be room for 550 adults plus children and the attendance of children is to be encouraged. The theme will be "A call to face the implications of our faith".

Yearly Meeting in 1957: Lois Barton presented the report of the committee responsible for arranging the location of the Yearly Meeting for 1957. The best prospect is Jennings Lodge, ten miles South of Portland, Oregon.

It was reported that \$623 has been contributed by meetings of Pacific Yearly Meeting toward the financing of an American participant in the AFSC work camp at Kaimosi Hospital in Kenya, East Africa.

There has been some uncertainty among California Friends regarding the legality of marriage after the manner of Friends when one or both of the participants is not a Friend. Georges Weber is going to attempt to have the law clarified on this point.

A letter was read presenting the concern of Argenta Meeting that a representative of Friends should not be working with the government in forcing Doukhobours to go to school against their will. After lengthy consideration, Catherine Bruner, Harold Carson and Phil Wells were asked to write a letter, which follows:

Dear Friends:

The Interim Committee has considered your letter thoughtfully and at considerable length, and we concur in these points:

We share your misgivings over a public statement on your part. We feel that it would be misused to bring great harm in a very difficult situation. We appreciate your struggle to find an answer and a way to carry out your concern.

We feel that what Emmett Gulley does can be left to his conscience and trust him to remain in his work only so long as he feels clear to do so.

We understand that he is not acting for the American Friends Service Committee or the Society of Friends, but is acting as a person who happens also to be a Friend. We believe further that he himself has not participated in the enforcement program. It is not our understanding that the Society of Friends as such has taken or could take a position or any action vis a vis the British Columbia government's school law enforcement program.

We pray that Friends may be humble and not sit in judgement. We suggest that you speak privately with the Sons of Freedom and avoid the public statement that could be exploited.

We send you our love and hope to see you at Yearly Meeting and discuss this further with you if necessary.

The letter was approved, and signed by the Clerk. It was expressed that Argenta Meeting is free to object to the actions of the government.

The Clerk was asked to express appreciation to San Francisco Friends for their hospitality.

The meeting closed with a period of worship, to meet again at 9:30 A.M., August 15, 1956, at La Honda, California.

Ruth Schmoie, Clerk
Mildred Burck, Secretary