

Pacific Yearly Meeting Representative to Friends United Meeting Triennial Report to Annual Session 2021

INTRODUCTION

About Friends United Meeting *(from the FUM website)*

The Friends United Meeting community stretches far and wide across the globe. We are a collection of Christ-centered Quakers, embracing thirty-seven Yearly Meetings and Associations, thousands of local gatherings and hundreds of thousands of individuals.

Joined together through our shared experience of God and united in common ministries, we form a beloved fellowship that is powerfully at work in our local areas and through cross-cultural service.

From the Caribbean to Palestine, Africa to North America and scattered places in between, FUM is building a global partnership in a season of history when much of the world is being stretched and strained by cultural, political, and geographic differences. An important part of our work and witness is to express the love and peace of Christ with one another, believing God is transforming us into a people who are more lovely and whole than we could ever be on our own. As we are powerfully energized by the Holy Spirit, equipped for faithful service and leadership, and deeply connected to one another, we experience a unity that transcends our diversity.

Four ministry priorities shape the ways we serve the FUM Community—Leadership and Resource Development, Evangelism, Communication, and Global Partnership.

TRIENNIAL 2021 Report

The first day of Triennial was “travel” to 2 destinations of your choice: Kaimosi, Kenya to the Friends Theological College; Samburu and Turkana to learn about Friends work among pastoralist (nomadic) Friends; Ramallah Friends School in Palestine; Friends Church Peace Team work to reconcile communities and support victims of violence; Living Letters program of travel in the ministry for service, prayer, learning, solidarity, discernment, encouragement, and more; Belize City Friends Centre-School and Church.

I chose Ramallah Friends School and Belize. In Ramallah, the new Head, a third generation alumnus, gave a tour and spoke of their witness in challenging times. In Belize, the Friends Center is run by a missionary from the U.S. and one from Africa. Their school provides remedial assistance to children who were not able to pass an entrance test for high school. Most of their students have learning disabilities that were not addressed in primary school. Most of their students are eventually able to attend high school or they are given vocational training. The Centre is providing a safe place for youth in a city with serious gang violence and human trafficking problems.

Staff reports to Triennial included their visions for Quaker renewal, leadership development in North America and Africa. Also the opportunities and challenges of moving communications increasingly in to electronic communications.

The appointment of a Sustainability Task Force was approved to assist with financial sustainability of various ministries. The purpose is for this Task Force to be a core group with local members added to address a particular ministries needs. A new pathway was approved for smaller Quaker groups and local meetings to apply for membership in FUM. This was in response to many new African Friends meetings being established by immigrants to North America.

“Finally, Friends approved the location for the next Triennial sessions in 2023. God willing, si Dios quiere, Inshallah, Mungo Akipenda....Friends will gather for the 2023 Triennial in Kisumu, Kenya.”

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This Friend has already experienced, through FWCC, the opportunity to visit Quakers in Africa. It was an experience that I highly recommend. I am hopeful that someone from Pacific Yearly Meeting might be called to attend the FUM Triennial in Africa in 2023.

Some years ago, FUM approved a minute about FUM employees/volunteers that was a great concern to PYM in regard to homosexuality. In response, PYM decided to stop an annual donation to FUM, but to continue to send a PYM Representative to FUM Triennials.

After the 2023 Triennial, I contacted a Friend from FUM to get an update about that minute. The minute had caused considerable concern within FUM as well. The minute was discussed at each FUM executive committee from 2002 to 2005. There was no unity to remove the policy and no unity to reaffirm the policy. It has been generally accepted that unity would not be reached and the matter has not been revisited.

Details can be found at: <https://nyym.org/content/timeline-crisis-points-fum-personnel-policy>

Faithfully submitted,
Donna Higgins Smith
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