

Minute of Exercise

For over a year, NYYM has been laboring with concerns being raised about the integrity of our supporting Friends United Meeting, given the discriminatory nature of the sexual ethics portion of the organization's personnel policy. During the past year, the Nurture Coordinating Committee has twice asked monthly meetings from across the yearly meeting to weigh in on this issue. About a third of the meetings and worship groups have responded. From these responses, and times of discussion and discernment by NCC, we can name places where we sense unity, and places where we as yet do not have unity.

Places where we have unity:

- We joyfully affirm that each and every person is equally loved and cherished by the Divine, equally worthy of love, respect, and equal treatment, and that the gifts which God bestows upon a community are equally distributed to all for the benefit of the community regardless of sexual orientation, gender identity, race, class, or any other distinction.
- We find the Friends United Meeting sexual ethics portion of its personnel policy to be at variance with that knowledge and experience, and therefore discriminatory and unjust.
- We hope for, and advocate for, its revision.
- We are deeply pained to be in the position of financially supporting an organization engaging in injustice and discrimination.
- We seek actions which might be effective in changing this situation.
- We recognize and value the good works that FUM is doing throughout the world.

Places where we do not yet have unity:

- We are not clear as a yearly meeting to disaffiliate from the other yearly meetings that comprise FUM.
- We are not clear as a yearly meeting to withhold financial contributions from FUM as either a matter of conscience, or in protest.
- Some NYYM Friends are aware that the FUM General Board does not have unity on this portion of the personnel policy, either unity to retain it, or to revise or eliminate it. Some are not.
- Some of our meetings see the benefit of withholding funds from the general fund of FUM, while others do not.
- Some of our meetings, as a matter of conscience, are withholding from their covenant donation an amount they deem equivalent to what would go to the FUM general fund. Some are choosing not to.
- In some cases, current withholding of funds to FUM by meetings and individual Friends is a matter of conscience and integrity. In other cases, withholding of funds seems to be for the purpose of trying to exert leverage in this process.
- Some of our meetings would support a more assertive advocacy on this issue by NYYM's representatives to the FUM General Board, while others support the more quiet diplomacy and ministry of presence which has characterized the stance of board members over the past nine years.

January 28, 2017