

## **Excerpted from the minutes of Pima Monthly Meeting's Meeting for Worship with a Concern for Business of December 9, 2007**

Queries from InterMountain Yearly Meeting:

a) Intergenerational Nurturing: As our Meetings and Yearly Meeting get older, many of us are faced with the multifaceted challenge of providing for the needs of our elders, our young, and those in transition (e.g., Young Adult Friends).

- Please tell us about your successes and challenges in meeting these needs as a Meeting.

Pima Monthly Meeting is proud of our response to the needs of our elders and young. Our pastoral care coordinator, Roberta Streicher, organizes volunteers from Pima Meeting to provide for the physical, spiritual, and social needs of those who fall ill. Such needs include, but are not limited to travel assistance, food, song, and companionship. Friends echoed the sentiment of a Friend who stated that she is not afraid to grow old because she knows that Pima Meeting will care for her.

Our Young Adults group provides fellowship among young adults. Patricia Morrison holds a weekly worship-sharing for high school and college students.

- What could the Yearly Meeting do to help?

IMYM could share how other meetings address concerns regarding the elderly and the young. In particular, we are seeking ways of developing a stronger First Day School. We could share the success of our pastoral care network. Perhaps IMYM could facilitate an intergenerational dialog regarding the environment at the yearly gathering. Or IMYM might invite a keynote speaker that would focus on our children.

- Are there concerns around the safety and well being of children and the elderly in your Meeting?

We have no concerns about safety within our Meetinghouse. We are concerned about our First Day School program. And despite our best efforts, there are gaps in our care of home-alone elders. Our Domestic Violence subcommittee could use guidance.

b) Annual Gathering: As a Yearly Meeting we continue to recognize

that Friends find barriers to attendance at and participation in our annual gathering.

- What barriers are you aware of?

There is a strong sense within Pima Meeting that IMYM is quite cliquish. Many members shared the experience of attending the annual gathering for the first time and being ignored as old friends and acquaintances caught up with one another. These members have, by and large, not returned. This perception of cliquishness is not limited to just a few members of our Meeting but is also shared by members who have frequently attending (and continue to attend) the annual gathering.

Some members shared their perception of Yearly Meeting as uncompassionate. Our Friend Robert Solenberger did not receive the care that he needed at the last annual gathering that he attended before passing away. Other members described lingering anger regarding the move to Ghost Ranch and feel that Yearly Meeting continues to dismiss the feelings of those who were not in unity with the move. This sentiment that IMYM lacks compassion keeps some of our members from attending and has driven away previously faithful attenders.

Members who attend the annual gathering feel that IMYM is too inwardly focused and needs to reach out to the wider world of Quakers. Some members desire a deeper spiritual grounding within the annual gathering and suggested that currently it is more of a vacation than a nourishing spiritual retreat.

- Are there ways we can help to remove these barriers?

We have few specific recommendations apart from a general sense that Yearly Meeting needs to do more to welcome and integrate newcomers to the annual gathering. One member recalled that one year, the badges of first-time attenders were affixed with blue

dots. Relying upon the individual efforts of attendees is, unfortunately, not enough. Perhaps a “buddy system” whereby newcomers are paired with seasoned attenders might facilitate integration and fellowship. We urge IMYM to implement explicit strategies to combat cliquishness and foster a more nurturing and caring community at our annual gathering.

Queries regarding Peace and Justice were held over until our next Meeting for Worship with a Concern for Business. In the meanwhile, the Clerk will relay these observations to Yearly Meeting. He will also include a discussion of our current Meetings for Worship with a Concern for Peace in his communication as an example of how our Meeting is responding to concerns regarding peace and social justice.