

**Pacific Yearly Meeting Committee on Unity with Nature,  
Friends in Unity with Nature  
and  
Quaker EarthCare Witness  
with  
Intermountain Yearly Meeting**

Minutes from 1976 and 1977 provide the basic principle of affiliation, representation and financial support of organizations outside the Yearly Meeting by Intermountain Yearly Meeting depending, first, on ‘specific interests arising among individuals within the Yearly Meeting and, second, on interest in local meetings and discussion groups at IMYM. . Page 2

The remaining minutes in this extract are of Intermountain Yearly Meeting’s response to various concerns brought to it on concerns with respect to the environment.

**Summary of the extracts**

In 1986, the Yearly Meeting responded to a minute from Pacific Yearly Meeting, inviting participation with its Committee on Unity with Nature. Page 2

In 1987 and 1988, the activities of the IMYM Environmental Concerns Work Group set up in 1986, were reported . Page 3

In 1990, responding to a minute from Tempe Monthly Meeting, Intermountain Yearly Meeting urged its Meetings to study the concern. Page 4

In 1991, Intermountain Yearly Meeting gave its attention to not affiliate with but to provide representation to Friends in Unity with Nature. Pages 4 - 6

In 1992, a concern group provided a report on its study in depth of the reasons for the difficulty of Intermountain Yearly Meeting Friends coming to unity on providing representation to Friends in Unity with Nature. Their report appears as an attachment to the minutes and is not mentioned therein. Pages 6 - 8

In 2001 and 2002, Sandra and Tom Farley visited Intermountain Yearly Meeting representing Friends Committee on Unity with Nature. Page 8

In 2004, Ruah Swennerfelt, of Quaker EarthCare Witness, presented its “Vision and Witness” to a plenary session of Intermountain Yearly Meeting. Page 8 - 9

In 2005, Quaker Earthcare Witness representatives Ruah Swennerfeld and Louis Cox, displayed their interest for a formal relationship with Intermountain Yearly Meeting and, also with its monthly meetings. Page 9

The following are extracts from the minutes of Intermountain Yearly Meeting.

## **Intermountain Yearly Meeting, June 1976**

### **1976-18**      Other Friends Organizations

- Associated Committee of Friends on Indian Affairs
- Faith and Life Movement
- Friends Committee on Economic Responsibility
- Friends Coordinating Committee for Peace
- American Friends Service Committee

These and other Friends organizations outside of IMYM have kindly invited the participation of IMYM in their activities, representation, and in some cases, affiliation with them. The Meeting approved the adoption of the general principle: That representation with other Friends organizations be made as specific interests arise from among individuals within the Yearly Meeting.

## **Intermountain Yearly Meeting, June 1977**

**1977-14**      Other Friends Organizations      Four organizations — Friends for Human Justice, Quaker Center for Prisoner Support Activities, United Society of Friends Women, and Quaker Office at the United Nations — request representatives, correspondents, and financial support from IMYM. Following the previous minute 1976-18, interest in local meetings and discussion groups at IMYM is needed before representation and financial aid is provided by IMYM.

## **Intermountain Yearly Meeting, June 1986**

**1986-35**      The Yearly Meeting approved the following minute:

As our religion touches all life and all acts, we of IMYM recognize our fundamental responsibility as planetary stewards. Among our concerns at the 1986 IMYM was that of the damage being done to the ecological system of which we are an integral part. To this concern we have given considerable, although clearly insufficient, attention, including the discussions of several of our interest groups, an evening presentation, reflection within a number of our worship sharing groups, and considerations with our business meetings of minutes from Pacific Yearly Meeting and the New Mexico Quarterly Meeting. We feel a deep sense of appreciation for all who have contributed to our added sensitivity to the nature and spiritual dimensions of this complex problem and to the need for increased study, spiritual seeking, and direct action on our part. Recognizing that there are many unanswered questions and deep unresolved fears at work in any call for change in lifestyle and human management of the earth's resources, we call upon all Friends in Monthly Meetings and Worship Groups:

- 1) to study, carefully reflect upon, and write queries regarding Friends' responses to problems in ecosystems, both local and global;
- 2) to give testimony and witness to how we can best become better stewards of the earth, and partners with God in caring for Creation;
- 3) from this year of study, to bring back to Continuing Committee seasoned recommendations of ways that Friends can be most faithful to the directions of the Spirit in choosing appropriate actions.

The Yearly Meeting encourages interest Friends in IMYM to form a working group to study

these issues and to act as a resource for Monthly Meetings. The Clerk of IMYM will act as a contact for the Pacific Yearly Meeting Committee on Unity with Nature.

**Intermountain Yearly Meeting, June 1987**

Business Session I

11 June 1987

Richard Lang presented the report of the IMYM Environmental Concerns Work Group (attachment 1).

**IMYM 1987-2** The Yearly Meeting encourages its Monthly Meetings and Worship Groups to consider the call of **IMYM 1986-35** to examine our relationship to environmental concerns. Monthly Meetings and Worship Groups are encouraged to send any reports to the IMYM Environmental Concerns Work Group.

**IMYM 1987-3** The Yearly Meeting accepts and approves the 1987 reports of the IMYM Environmental Concerns Work Group

Attachment 1 is accompanied by minutes from six monthly meetings and a statement of consensus from one monthly meeting.

**Intermountain Yearly Meeting, June 1988**

Business Session I

9 June, 1988

Item #3 Environmental Concerns Work Group Shirl Olmstead presented the report (attachment 3). The convenor, Dick Lang, recommended that the work Group be reconstituted if a need be felt.

**IMYM 1988-3** Yearly Meeting accepts and approves the 1988 report of the Environmental Concerns Work Group and recommends that the IMYM Work Group be laid down for the present, but urges Monthly Meetings and Worship Groups to continue discussion and action at the local level.

The attachment (#3) to the above minute notes that the Work Group was formed according to **IMYM 1986-35**. It is a page in length and seems to be adequately summarized above. It does report that, “communications have come from meetings and individuals in Arizona, Colorado and New Mexico. Although they have been relatively few in number, and no new queries or extensive commentaries on the 1986 IMYM minute (**1986-35**) have been received since the first half of 1987, the letters, postcards, and telephone conversations provide a body of information of interest to this meeting.”

**Intermountain Yearly Meeting, June 1990**

Business Session I

6<sup>th</sup> month, 14<sup>th</sup> day, 1990

**Item #9.** The Clerk of Continuing Committee discussed Tempe Monthly Meeting’s minute to consider affiliation with Friends in Unity with Nature.

The request is that monthly meeting’s weight the proposal this year and report to the

continuing committee in February of 1991. Further, Continuing Committee suggests a copy of the organization's newsletter, Befriending Creation, be attached to the IMYM minutes, C-6.

Ted Church indicated that Yearly Meeting had a committee on environment until 1988 when it was laid down with the suggestion that month meetings carry the concern.

The national organization meets three times annually, usually in conjunction with other major meetings such as FWCC or Friends General Conference.

**Yearly Meeting urges** monthly meetings to weigh this broad concern of unity with nature, giving careful attention to the spirituality of all creatures and all living things.

The attachment to the above minute, # C-6:

**PROPOSED MINUTE TO INTERMOUNTAIN YEARLY MEETING**

The destiny of the planet is in human hands. The technology that has been created in the past century has brought chaos to our ecosystems. Humans now have the responsibility to reverse the destructive behaviors and acknowledge all life is interrelated and sacred. Friends Committee on Unity with Nature envisions a spiritually rooted network for education and exchange of environmental issues. The minute from their Ben Lomond conference reads:

Our concern for the earth is a spiritual one. We feel the need to examine our faith and practice in the context of this concern. We invite and celebrate the Light that each Meeting has to shed on this.

Intermountain Yearly Meeting has not yet joined hands with Quakers of the United States and Canada to accept the invitation to send a representative to the Friends on Unity with Nature meetings. Tempe Monthly Meeting proposes that such action be discussed in monthly meetings and worship groups throughout the regions and that Friends meetings subscribe to the newsletter BeFriending Creation to learn more about the group and action proposals that it makes. After consideration, we ask that Meetings bring recommendations to the February 1999 meeting of the Continuing Committee. By our participation in Friends Committee on Unity with Nature, we can affirm our spiritual relationship with nature and the unity divine creation.

**Intermountain Yearly Meeting, June 1991**

Business Session I

13<sup>th</sup> Day, 6<sup>th</sup> Month, 1991

Item #5 Tom Carr, Clerk of Continuing Committee, reported:

a. There is no unity in monthly meetings regarding Intermountain Yearly Meeting affiliation with Friends in Unity with Nature. Continuing Committee recommends that activity be at the local level.

**91-2** The Continuing Committee report was accepted and approved with one exception. It was requested and approved that we reconsider the request that IMYM affiliate with Friends in Unity with Nature.

The Friends in Unity with Nature request will be put on a later agenda.

Business Session IV

15<sup>th</sup> Day, 6<sup>th</sup> Month, 1991

Item #6. Marshall Massey spoke concerning possible misunderstandings by Friends of precisely what was requested concerning possible representation by Intermountain Yearly Meeting to the FRIENDS IN UNITY WITH NATURE. He requested that Meetings be asked to reconsider the request previously put forward to send a representative to dialogue with Friends in Unity with Nature, not necessarily to affiliate as a yearly meeting. The clerk noted the original minute from Tempe Monthly Meeting (1990) mentioned representation. Much discussion ensued.

A Friend suggested returning the issue to Monthly Meetings to consider sending a representative to dialogue with Friends in Unity with Nature. Financial support must also be considered.

A Friend noted that Monthly Meetings and members may not wish to contribute financially to inmy attendance by a representative to dialogue with Friends in Unity with Nature.

A Friend spoke to the importance of Friends in Unity with Nature and that it provides information and curriculum for Friends with environmental concerns.

One Friend objected that he needed a representative from IMYM to represent him to the organization.

Another Friend expressed surprise that there would be any reticence to send a representative or to affiliate with the group.

A Friend restated the concern of those who chose not to send a representative, or someone to dialogue with the organization.

The Clerk, recognizing the lack of unity concerning sending a formal representative or one representing IMYM to dialogue with the group, noted that Friends of Intermountain Yearly Meeting are free, as individuals, to attend Friends in Unity With Nature meetings and report to our annual sessions concerning the dialogue.

**91-23 Friends approved that a traveling minute be written by the Clerk for any person called or led to attend the Friends in Unity With Nature meetings.**

The Meeting fell into silence.

Friends offered ministry concerning the incremental nature of progress as well as the need to love those who differ in their leadings.

Martin Cobin, Clerk Designate, felt charged to evaluate the leadings of persons

seeking a traveling minute.

Another Friend noted that two different forms of minutes can be written:

1. A charge of the Yearly Meeting to represent IMYM; and
2. A recognition that Friends travel to Friends in Unity with Nature as members of Intermountain Yearly Meeting to attend their sessions.

The Clerk Designate noted his willingness to issue minutes of the second sort.

### **Intermountain Yearly Meeting, June 1992**

The minutes for IMYM-1992 do not appear to contain a reference to the Concern Group meeting during Intermountain Yearly Meeting, Sixth Month, 12, 1992 on the Friends Committee on Unity with Nature, however, there is a report from the Concern Group as the last attachment to the minutes. The report of the Concern Group follows.

#### Friends Committee on Unity With Nature

Report of the Concern Group  
Meeting During Intermountain Yearly Meeting  
Sixth Month 12, 1992

The concern group was convened during IMYM 1992 with the hope of eliminating confusion about why IMYM Friends were reluctant to accept FCUN's invitation to identify a representative of IMYM to interact with it. After all, Friends have been washing plastic bags for years, even before it became fashionable, and nearly every Friend acknowledges a spiritual dimension to the relation of humans to the non-human. The concern group helped clarify the matter.

The resistance to affiliation with FCUN comes from a combination of deeply held Quaker values of simplicity, veracity and speaking to that of the Deity in everyone, on the one hand, and lack of familiarity with FCUN on the other. Not being familiar with FCUN, traditional values and recent experience with Quaker organizations make IMYM Friends cautious about involvement with FCUN.

Simplicity requires resistance to unnecessarily complicating our lives, our organizations and our searching. Some Friends believe that FCUN does, or may, duplicate the activities and approaches of other environmental groups. Duplication is complication. If FCUN is unique, IMYM Friends are not aware of that. Some Friends, who are already focused on environmental concerns and active with environmental groups, do not have time to affiliate with another. These Friends are reluctant to have IMYM join FCUN if it is in name only. Such affiliations are confusing and insincere. Some IMYM Friends are opposed to a perceived trend in our society to compartmentalize issues. Such compartments proliferate, each with its own expert or experts and jargon. Others believe that because dealing with environmental issues engages many traditional

Quaker values, process and projects, affiliation with FCUN may provide unique opportunities to synthesize leadings, values and witness. Some IMYM Friends believed that the first contacts by FCUN were addressed to the yearly meeting level. They thought this "top down" process felt artificial. These Friends have no objection to affiliation with FCUN, but not until interest and commitment to it is demonstrated at the monthly meeting level.

Veracity requires avoidance of even the appearance of insincerity or ill considered speech. IMYM's affiliation with any organization is a statement to other Friends and the world at large. In view of the recent controversy regarding the policies and practices of AFSC, with which IMYM has long been affiliated, IMYM Friends are properly cautious about lending the name and support of IMYM to an organization about which many feel ill informed.

Speaking to that of the Deity in each human forecloses from Friends some tactics which have given notoriety for some environmental groups. Many IMYM Friends are unfamiliar with the activities of FCUN. Affiliation would be improper unless its approach and perspective is unique to Friends.

One participant who knows the editors of the FCUN publication described them as quintessential Quakers. This sharing suggests that IMYM Friends should make it a point to get to know them and FCUN better.

Another participant shared with a concern group the conclusion of a group of diverse religious leaders that we are witnessing the emergence of a world religion, reverence for the earth. (To say that there is that of the Deity in every ecosystem rings oddly in the ear only because of the mix of traditional and technological language; it is intuitively true. Because of Friends' reluctance to be boxed in by concepts of language, because of Friends' traditions of decision making through collective insight, because of Friends' commitment to passivism, we have a lot to offer and gain from involving ourselves in the emerging world dialogue. Where does FCUN fit in?

The concern group proposes that IMYM adopt a minute encouraging all monthly meetings and regional meetings to facilitate awareness of the spiritual dimension between humans and that of the Deity which is worldly and not human. It also proposes that IMYM facilitate opportunities for Friends to gain inspiration from addressing environmental issues. Further IMYM and its constituent Meetings should encourage the use of FCUN as resource, perhaps by subscribing to its publications or making available monthly meeting directories to FCUN so that it may send written material. Finally, IMYM should encourage those monthly and regional meetings that feel led to do so to affiliate directly with FCUN.

### **Intermountain Yearly Meeting, June 2000**

Introduction of Visitors and Roll of Monthly Meetings and Worship Groups

After a brief session of singing together, Ted Church, the clerk to Intermountain Yearly Meeting (IMYM), asked that visitors introduce themselves. We were pleased to meet the following:

Sandy Farley, bringing letters of introduction from Friends Committee on Unity with Nature and Palo Alto Monthly Meeting

### **Intermountain Yearly Meeting, June 2001**

#### 1. Introduction of Visitors and Roll of Monthly Meetings and Worship Groups

The following visitors to the Yearly Meeting introduced themselves to this and subsequent meetings:

Tom Farley, representing Friends Committee on Unity with Nature, Palo Alto Monthly Meeting, CA.

Intermountain Yearly Meeting, June 2002

#### 1. Introductions

##### a. Introduction of visitors

The following visitors to the Yearly Meeting introduced themselves to this and subsequent sessions:

Sandy and Tom Farley, representing Friends Committee on Unity with Nature; Palo Alto Meeting, CA (*see introductory letter, Documents-in-Advance*)

### **Intermountain Yearly Meeting, June 2004**

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Guest Introduction

Co-Clerk Hal Wright introduced several guests of Intermountain Yearly Meeting

Ruah Swennerfelt, Quaker EarthCare Witness

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The Quaker EarthCare Witness Report was presented by Ruah Swennerfeld.

Of the thirty-five (35) Yearly Meetings I North America, fifteen (15) —IMYM is not among these—send representatives to Quaker EarthCare Witness meetings. The organization’s “Vision and Witness is as follows:

“WE ARE CALLED to live in right relationship with all Creation, recognizing that the entire world is interconnected and is a manifestation of God.

“WE WORK to integrate into the beliefs and practices of the Religious Society of Friends the Truth that God’s Creation is to be respected, protected, and held in reverence in its own right and the Truth that human aspirations for peace and justice depend upon restoring the Earth’s ecological integrity.

“WE PROMOTE these Truths by patterns and examples, by communicating our messages, and by providing our relationship with the Earth.”

## **Intermountain Yearly Meeting, June 2005**

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Quaker Earthcare Witness representatives Ruah Swennerfeld and Louis Cox spoke of their desire for a formal relationship with IMYM and their hope of finding Monthly Meeting representatives. They invited Friends to explore their website, <[quakerearthcare.org](http://quakerearthcare.org)>