

Representative to Friends General Conference Central Committee

The annual meeting of Central Committee [CC] brings together almost 200 Friends for four days each fall in central Maryland. The schedule includes worship, business sessions, committees, and community time. In addition to hearing reports from committees, programs, and staff, CC approves nominations and the FGC budget. Most participants are YM and MM representatives, co-opted committee members, or staff. FGC is made up of fifteen YMs in the US and Canada with about 34,000 members and ten additional MMs including Davis and Sacramento. At least two thirds of FGC Friends are in four large East Coast YMs. The other 11 YMs are smaller than PYM. FGC services include publishing books and teaching materials, running a bookstore, producing conferences, and supporting outreach among Friends. Most services are available to Friends without regard to affiliation and some serve the general public.

Each representative to CC is asked to serve on one FGC committee for a three-year term if possible. I served on the Youth Ministry Committee [YMC] -- an active committee with about a dozen members supported by one staff person based in Philadelphia. It meets at CC and two other times a year. Its work includes supporting FAP workshops, YAF conferences, and visitation among younger Friends. I visited South Central YM this Spring as a YMC and FGC representative. **I recommend that JYM and Young Friends consider ways to have ongoing involvement with the Youth Ministry Committee and its projects.**

In 2008 FGC held a Religious Educators Institute [REI] in Indiana. These are held about every four years. We have had one or two PYM Friends at the last three REIs. **I recommend that PYM minute a request to the FGC Religious Education Committee to hold a Religious Educators Institute in our region.**

FGC Gathering was on the campus of Virginia Tech the first week of Seventh Month with roughly 1300 participants. In 2010, Gathering will be in Bowling Green, Ohio from 7/4 to 7/10. That is one day shorter than usual. In 2007 and 2008 about 70 PYM Friends went each year. This year about 45 PYM Friends [1/4 preteens, teens, young adults] went, consistent with our participation level from 1994 to 2005. Often about 10% of the workshop leaders are PYM Friends. Workshop leaders and staff for Junior Gathering, High School Program, and other positions are compensated with work-grants to offset fees. Scholarships are also available. FGC committees often sponsor activities at Gathering but rarely do business there. See <www.fgcquaker.org> information on FGC and its committees, programs, and sponsored events.

FGC is growing westward. Wyoming Friends Meeting [made up of five worship groups] affiliated last year. InterMountain YM approved affiliation last month. Note that if Pacific YM were to affiliate with FGC, we would be its fifth largest YM and expected to name about five representatives to CC. I expect an equal number of PYM Friends would likely be co-opted to CC or other FGC committees. We've had 3 to 5 in the last 3 years, the most of any non-FGC YM -- not counting annual Gathering Committees.

As you can see, there are many ways PYM Friends can be involved in and support the work of FGC voluntarily. Given that and the diversity of opinions about FGC's

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role and function that I have experienced at CC and Gatherings, I continue to have serious reservations about PYM requesting affiliation with FGC at this time.

I recommend that PYM increase its representation to FGC Central Committee to two Friends with the intention that one be a Friend committed to participation in the religious education, teen, and/or young adult components of FGC.

Tom Farley, PYM rep to FGC CC 2007-9