

November 2011

Dear Friends,

We are basking in the afterglow of a delightfully productive General Board meeting held here in Richmond, Indiana, in October. Not only did we welcome seven enthusiastic new Board members (and hope to welcome five or six more at the next meeting) for the new triennium, we also had our new General Secretary with us. By now, you have heard that Colin Saxton will be officially joining the staff of Friends United Meeting in January and I will be stepping aside to applaud his arrival!

There seems to be a great sense of hopeful anticipation for the years ahead. Here are some signs that the Holy Spirit is on the move:

Love Joy Peace



FUM staff, left to right: Terri Johns, Colin Saxton, Shari Veach, Barbara Smith, Sylvia Graves, John Muhanji, Yvonne Snyder, Katie Wonsik, and Kim Schull. Frank Monroe not pictured. Photo by Dan Kasztelan.

- The search process was incredibly smooth and there were many indicators that the appointment of Colin was/is in line with God's will for Friends United Meeting.
- The theme for the new triennium, "**A Great People to be Gathered...for Worship, Service, Mission, Witness, and Vision,**" triggered an inspired discussion by Board members about the identity and spiritual witness of Friends United Meeting and a recognition that FUM is not a structure, but the people who make up the Church—I am FUM; You are FUM; We are FUM.
- The feedback we are receiving about *Quaker Life* magazine is quite positive and the General Board agreed to send the next three issues to every household on our mailing list to increase awareness of this magazine that tells the FUM story. Also, *Quaker Life* subscriptions are now offered online.
- In Fiscal 2011, there was a significant increase of donations from non-members for FUM ministries and many new individual donors among our members, indicating that people want to help with FUM work.

Love Joy Peace

You should have received the “State of FUM” mailing that was sent in late September. Perhaps you discovered that the reality of FUM, in spite of all the momentum building, is that our member yearly meetings are reducing their contributions. Some are declining in membership, some have been affected by the crippled economy, and others do not organize to send contributions as a yearly meeting. People seem to enjoy supporting projects, but years ago the Board decided to separate the Operating (General) Fund from the Restricted (Mission/Project) Funds. We have kept reducing the General Fund budget each year; we have kept spending below the budgeted amounts each year. And yet we are still conducting business with borrowed funds.

“The body is a unit, though it is made up of many parts; and though all its parts are many, they form one body” (1 Corinthians 12:12). I have often had this rather ugly vision of a body (our projects) with no head (our offices in Richmond, Indiana, and Kisumu, Kenya), but with extra long arms and legs reaching out to people in the Caribbean, Ramallah, East Africa, and across North America. Our head is the source of coordination, planning, and support for our field work, a means to tell the stories, assurance of financial accountability, and long-term management. How long can our body survive without a head? “If one part suffers, every part suffers with it” (1 Corinthians 12:26).

This letter is to let you know that your help is needed to pay for the basic operating expenses of FUM. Last year we sent you a yellow “FUM Fund” label to put on a jar so you could start collecting pennies, nickels, dimes, and dollars. We hope you have enjoyed your year of collecting and that you can be excited about the total you have raised. We’d be delighted if you would include a written story about your fundraising efforts when you send your check to FUM. And please don’t throw your jar away—we’d love for you to continue to participate in an annual collection for FUM! If you haven’t been collecting for FUM, we hope that you will prayerfully consider supporting the General Fund with your best gift. Good things are happening and we hope you will want to be involved in them!



For nearly six years, it has been my privilege to participate with you in the ministries of Friends United Meeting. My gratitude for this opportunity is beyond measure. May Christ’s **Love, Joy, and Peace** be yours to give away this Christmas and beyond.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads 'Sylvia Graves'.

Sylvia Graves

P.S. We celebrate those of you who regularly support the FUM General Fund and encourage you to share this letter with a friend. The highest compliment we can receive is when you share the good news of FUM with your friends and family. Thank you for your trust!

