

**New England Yearly Meeting and NEYM Young Adult Friends—2005 sessions
Minutes relating to a concern with Friends United Meeting Personnel Policy**

New England Yearly Meeting

NEYM Minute 60. The working party on the FUM Personnel Policy brought to us a revised minute. We affirm the sense of the Minute of Exercise on FUM's Personnel Policy (04-74).

Friends in New England believe the Divine Light is present in all; we have learned that gifts and leadings of the Spirit to ministry and service are given without regard to sexual orientation. As our 2004 Minute of Exercise says, “. . . we have been blessed countless times by the ministry and leadership of those who would not be allowed to serve under the FUM policies.” For many reasons, we are deeply pained by the exclusion of some in our midst and by the implied condemnation contained in the FUM policy.

Despite this pain, we intend to remain a full member of Friends United Meeting. Our connections with Friends throughout the world help us to experience the common ground of our Quaker faith and call us to seek more deeply in those areas where we disagree. We affirm our intention to work with the General Board and other yearly meetings to change current personnel policy to allow Friends to be considered for full participation in the work and ministry of FUM.

We have more to do in New England.

1. We encourage monthly meetings whose discernment is not complete to continue their work.
2. We encourage intervisitation among Friends within NEYM. The key to grappling with concerns regarding FUM's personnel policy is to come to know each other in a deeper, richer, fuller way and to support each other in our lives.
3. We need to care tenderly for gay, lesbian and other Friends who feel pain because of the current policy. We also need to care tenderly for Friends who feel this policy reflects their spiritual and ethical guidelines. We likewise need to care for Friends who feel uneasy about expressing their views about this concern because they are not in agreement with most Friends in their monthly meeting, whether their meeting supports FUM's policy or wishes to see it changed.
4. We need to explore a common sense of sexual ethics.

We also have more to do in our ongoing relationship with other yearly meetings of FUM.

1. We encourage intervisitation among yearly meetings in FUM, as suggested by the FUM General Board. To better recognize on the Light in each Friend, we need to know one another on a personal level. We will build trust through bringing love, humility, tenderness, clarity and truth to our relationships.
2. We need to seek common ground, appreciating the good intentions of others who have different practices and understanding of God's will.
3. We need to learn how to witness with love, patience and openness.
4. We ask the Ministry & Counsel working party on FUM's Personnel Policy, in consultation with both M&C and the NEYM FUM Committee, to continue its work and to report its progress to Sessions 2006. We send this minute to the General Board of FUM, and to all its member yearly meetings.

Thanks to the grace of God, the tenderness of Friends, and the hard work of the working party, Friends were able to approve this minute. Five Friends stood aside from this approval and three of them requested that their names be recorded: Joanna Cole (Burl); Katherine Fulton (Worc); Pamela Hughes (Sand).

NEYM Minute 61. To support intervisitation with other yearly meetings within FUM, we authorize the establishment of a contributory fund to receive gifts to support such travel. We ask the Finance Committee to recommend and appropriate transfer to this new fund. We ask Permanent Board to develop an oversight structure for administration of this fund. Friends approved. The Treasurer informed us that this morning we had received a check for \$3000 for this purpose.

NEYM Minute 62. The Young Adult Friends read a minute of exercise approved at their business session in response to the FUM Personnel Policy and expressing their concern about NEYM's reluctance to talk openly about issues of sexuality. We encourage the NEYM Ministry and Counsel working party to continue the work they have begun, including consideration of how the YM can begin to explore a common sense of sexual ethics.

See YAF Minute 05-13 below for the text of this minute.