

Report on Outreach to Affiliated Meetings NPYM Ad Hoc Committee to Explore Affiliation with Friends General Conference

The Ad Hoc Committee was appointed by the Coordinating Committee in 2024 to explore possible affiliation with Friends General Conference (FGC). The Committee consists of the following Friends: Jane Snyder, clerk; Theo Mace; recording; Carol Bellin, Patty Lyman, Mico Sorrel, and Caroline Wildflower.

In doing its work, the Ad Hoc Committee has reached out to the three monthly meetings within NPYM that have independently affiliated with FGC as well as the two western yearly meetings that have affiliated. The monthly meetings are Olympia, Lopez Island, and Multnomah. The yearly meetings are Intermountain (IMYM) and Pacific. (PYM). We asked these meetings about the financial arrangements they had with arrived at with FGC, whether the requirements for representation to FGC made it difficult for the monthly or yearly meeting to fill other governance positions, what benefits or difficulties were experienced with affiliation., and what the affiliating meetings themselves brought to FGC.

Financial arrangements

None of the meetings were required by FGC to contribute a fixed monetary payment; rather, FGC left it up to the meetings to contribute what they felt rightly ordered. FGC itself indicates that the main financial contribution they expect from affiliates is financial support to allow representatives from the meeting to attend FGC governance meetings. The travel burdens are lessened now because FGC conducts many of its meetings on zoom and The Gathering itself is on zoom in alternating years. Representatives or their meetings may be expected to assume the cost of a zoom account. It is unclear what the financial impact will be if NPYM does affiliate in light of the current affiliation of three of its monthly meetings. Would the independent affiliates cease to send representatives to FGC, or will those meetings' representatives begin to serve as NPYM's representatives? Would NPYM then shoulder the cost of any required in-person travel?

Filling governance positions

Generally, the meetings contacted found no hindrance to filling their own governance positions because of affiliation. They report that there are dedicated people within their meetings who are happy to attend FGC meetings and are quite involved with FGC committees and governance. Often these people are not interested in filling roles within their monthly meetings anyway. Or, they are active in roles at both the monthly and yearly meeting levels as well as with FGC.

Benefits of affiliation

Generally, the meetings contacted were attracted to FGC because of its programs related to racial justice, Latino and indigenous issues (including Quaker connections with Indian Boarding schools) and the environment. These programs were said to connect with and enrich the meetings' own work in those areas. Meetings appreciated: regular communications from FGC on these issues through publication of a newsletter called *Vitality*; use of educational materials that FGC developed and provided; FGC workshops that strengthened their spiritual life and social justice work; visits from traveling ministers such as Vanessa Julye, which were instrumental in enriching anti racism work; and, the work FGC does with Junior Friends. One Friend reported that his participation in the FGC Central Committee meeting was a deeply spiritual experience, despite its length and attention to detail. There was a feeling that FGC offered more experience and depth on issues that concerned Quakers and that affiliating with FGC was a way of making a public statement about shared values.

Difficulties with affiliation

One difficulty expressed was that sitting through the annual Central Committee meeting was tedious even if the representative was able to attend on zoom. Because the zoom meetings were often on east coast time, this made for some disruption in the schedules of west coast attenders. Another difficulty was a representative's perceived inability to bring back to her monthly meeting as much as she wished she could.

What meetings brought to FGC

Some meetings reported bringing a different, west coast, perspective to some of FGC's work on Latino and indigenous issues. Also, the west coast meetings' environmental concerns, related to travel to attend FGC's east coast meetings, caused FGC to turn more to hybrid or zoom meetings to do its business. The environmental cost of travel to Gathering was, among other reasons, why FGC decided to alternate zoom and in person Gatherings every other year.

For a comprehensive, in-depth examination of questions and issues that might arise related to affiliation, see the document **NPYM Considerations on Affiliation**

