

Meeting for Worship for the Conduct of Business
Asheville Friends Meeting
Tenth Month 11, 2015

Present: Kitti Reynolds; Katherine Kowal; Nancy Kuykendall; Lauren Adams; Pat Johnson; Margaret Normile; Nick Mimkin; Jim Cavener; Margaret Farmer; George Gjelfriend; Kristi Gjelfriend; Jim Hipkins; Sarah Jane Thomas; Edie Patrick; David Greenson; Rylin Hanson; Desaray Smith; L. A. McCrae; Adrienne Weir; Barbara Esther, recording clerk; Alan Robinson and Gail Hipkins, co-clerks; and a visitor whose name was not recorded.

We began our meeting for business with a period of silent worship from which the presiding clerk read the following:

Once I traveled several hundred miles to speak on a Sunday morning at a Friends' meeting. In some way I wanted to share in the quality of the religious experience upon which their whole spiritual encounter was projected. I made no preparation. I gave not thought to what I should say. No subject or text was selected. I sat with the leader of the meeting on the facing bench. We settled down into the quietness. Little by little, I became still within. That stillness merged with the stillness of the meeting. Then a very strange thing happened. There began turning up in my mind, words, words which were a part of a sentence. I had to wait for each word to be spelled out slowly and gradually. Finally the sentence spelled itself out. I read it! It formed a statement that had once come from the lips of Jesus. My mind seized upon it. I began wrestling with the idea that it gave me until it seemed that there was something within me that was ripe for expression. I moved my right foot back and my left foot just ahead and put my hands on the rail in front of me and was in the act of standing, when I heard behind me a woman's voice quoting that passage. She talked about it! All over the meeting people arose, talking on the point, so that I began to wonder if I would have my chance at all. I had come many miles just to speak to these people. Only just before the hour was up, I had the opportunity to give my witness. During the waiting silencer the traffic within me had stopped, the floodgate had opened, and there had begun to flow through me the spirit, the infinite resources of the living God. The moment when this takes place becomes a sacramental moment, a moment that marks the step between the final act of meditation and the awareness of prayer. It is a moment when God appears. The waiting, the readying, the focussing, the centering down; then the spirit seems to pass over an invisible line of consciousness. The awareness of God bursts through all the corridors, all the reaches of the spirit.

from *The Growing Edge* by Howard Thurman

Friends accepted the agenda as prepared.

Treasurer's Report

The reports from July and September 2015, were accepted. There were some errors in the reports as entered into Quickbooks. Pat will be making those corrections.

Committee Reports

Nominating Committee

The Nominating Committee is having difficulty accessing certain records regarding some appointments. It would be a blessing to us to merely re-approve some positions.

Barbara Esther is reasonably certain that she has already been approved as "recorder," but perhaps not as "recording clerk." Since the titles are so similar, we ask your indulgence in approving or re-approving her for BOTH positions.

Will you approve of Barbara Esther as Recording Clerk?
Will you approve of Barbara Esther as Meeting Recorder?

Everyone involved thinks that Sarah Jane Thomas is a member in good standing of Care & Nurture, but we can't actually prove it. Will you approve of Sarah Jane Thomas as being on the Care & Nurture committee?

Minute #1 Friends approved the service of Barbara Esther as recording clerk and as meeting recorder for the 2015-2017 time period. Friends also approved the appointment of Sarah Jane Thomas to the Care and Nurture sub-Committee.

When a Friend has come to the end of his/her two year commitment on a committee, it has been customary to release that Friend without approval of MFB. Nonetheless, we feel that some public acknowledgement of the Friend's service is in order. Accordingly,

Will you acknowledge, with thanks for her service, that Patti Hughes has left the Peace & Earth committee at or beyond the end of her two year commitment?

Will you acknowledge, with thanks for his service, that Scotty Utz has left the House & Grounds committee at or beyond the end of his two year commitment?

Respectfully submitted, George Gjelfriend, clerk of Nominating Committee.

Minute #2 Thanks were extended to Steve Livingston for his service as recording clerk. Friends acknowledged the service of Patti Hughes on Peace and Earth Committee and of Scotty Utz on House and Grounds Committee as each steps down from a two year term.

Racial Justice Committee - Desaray Smith

1.) In the month of September, the Racial Justice Committee clarified that the committee should have as many members as feel led to serve and created a list of the members of the committee. At this time, the members of the Racial Justice Committee are:

- 1.) Adrienne Weir
- 2.) David Greenson
- 3.) Desaray Smith
- 4.) George Gjelfriend
- 5.) Jim Barham
- 6.) Lauren Adams
- 7.) Margaret Farmer
- 8.) Rylin Hansen
- 9.) Scotty Utz
- 10.) Sharon Smith
- 11) Gita Larsen-pending

2.) In the month of September, the Racial Justice Committee discussed the status of the committee's mission statement. Currently the mission statement has not been approved by the wider meeting due to concerns about the use of the words "white supremacy". An interim mission statement is currently in use on the Meeting's website. The RJC is now in unity on the most appropriate description of the committee's work at this time and asks AFM to post the following on the Meeting's website, to eventually be replaced by a mission statement:

"In January 2015, Asheville Friends Meeting began working toward unity on the following mission statement for the Racial Justice Committee: The Racial Justice Committee of the Asheville Friends Meeting works to address white supremacy and racism in Asheville Friends Meeting, the City of Asheville, and the greater SAYMA community."

3.) On October 4, the committee presented a program "recognizing racism", with fourteen participants. Also this month, the Racial Justice Committee clarified activities for upcoming collaborations with the Spiritual Enrichment Committee for second-hour programming. The RJC and SEC will host viewings of the films "Cracking the Code" and the "Doctrine of Discovery" and use excerpts from the text of Joseph Brandt's book Understanding and Dismantling Racism, and other reading materials, to highlight concepts from the films. Cracking the Code will be viewed on Sunday, February 7th and the viewing of Doctrine of Discovery will be held on Sunday, May 15th. Sharon will secure the films using funds from RJC's budget. (\$200)

A Friend suggested that committees receive our permission to appoint members of a committee when they choose, noting that Gita Larsen's name has not been brought forward for approval on the Racial Justice Committee. Another Friend reminded us that there is a reason for the process we have in place asking committees and individuals to go through the nominating committee, which then asks that the meeting approve those names brought forward. Additionally, a Friend reminded us that the calling to serve on a

committee comes from God. We were encouraged to discern and season participation on a committee before asking Nominating Committee to bring a name forward.

Minute # 3 Our present policy will be continued with seasoning followed by bringing forward names for approval through the Nominating Committee.

We were also reminded that there may be a double standard in bringing names to the business meeting in that when there is a dearth of members on a given committee there appears to be a shortcut in bringing the name forward, whereas the bringing of a name when a committee is well populated may be under more scrutiny. We need to use and support our Nominating Committee as it does its work in seeking to find the match between leadings and the needs of the meeting as a whole. Racial Justice Committee is blessed with more members than usual, a reflection of our interest and our vulnerability in the work the committee has taken on. A Friend suggested that a category of "Friends of a Committee" be developed since most committees are open to visitors who can work with the committee as they discern whether that is where they want to work before being approved as a member of that committee. [The only committee that is not open to visitors without invitation is our Ministry and Counsel Committee, due to confidentiality concerns.]

Friends were asked to consider the status of the Racial Justice Committee's mission statement. One question was raised regarding the inclusion of SAYMA in the statement. Several Friends noted that there are specific incidents that have caused concern, and that other meetings in our yearly meeting have expressed interest in work on racial justice. One Friend asked that the mission statement not be published on the website until we have come to unity on its wording. Regarding the website information, all committee descriptions and names of those serving on committees have been replaced with the chart board that records that information for better ease in updating. It was suggested that the meeting blog is a venue which could be a format for discussion and information to those using the blog. The Communications Committee, with only two members at present, has struggled to discern what should be on our website, blog or homepage.

Minute #4 The meeting is not ready to move forward with the working mission statement for the Racial Justice Committee. We are still struggling to find the words that represent our meeting's goals regarding the work of the committee. We are grateful for the faithful work of the committee and for the reports they have brought to our business meetings. We want to commit to finding unity, scheduling time to work toward that goal.

As there was no other business to consider, we closed our meeting with a period of silent worship to meet again as way opens on Eleventh Month 8, 2015.