

CHAPTER 5

Friends United Meeting

Preface

Friends United Meeting (formed in 1902 as the Five Years Meeting of Friends) is a Christian association of yearly meetings and smaller Quaker groups which consult and work together for shared purposes. In the year 1950, the Five Years Meeting authorized an official statement of its organization and procedures to be published as Chapter 5 in its *Faith and Practice*. In 1963 the change to Triennial Sessions was approved, and the new name of “Friends United Meeting” was approved in 1966. In 1993 Friends United Meeting (FUM) accepted the General Board minute committing it “to energize and equip Friends, through the power of the Holy Spirit, to gather people into fellowships where Jesus Christ is known, loved and obeyed as Teacher and Lord.” The present Organization and Procedure was approved at Triennial Sessions in 1996 and revised at Triennial Sessions in 1999.

Membership and Triennial Sessions

- Membership*** 1. Friends United Meeting is composed of members of its constituent yearly meetings and other member groups.
- Jurisdiction*** 2. Friends United Meeting shall have jurisdiction over all matters delegated to it by constituent yearly meetings. Friends United Meeting may provide yearly meetings with advice and counsel, and yearly meetings may look to it for advice and counsel. Friends United Meeting shall publish a complete record of its proceedings for their information.
- Sessions*** 3. Friends United Meeting meets in Triennial Sessions at a time and place designated by the minutes of its own adjournment or by the General Board.

Representatives 4. Each yearly meeting is entitled to appoint five representatives to the Triennial Sessions, plus one additional representative for each one thousand members or major fraction thereof. Affiliated organizations (see section 36) may appoint up to three representatives each and small member groups (see section 35) may appoint up to two representatives each. Vacancies in the quota of any one yearly meeting may be filled by action of that yearly meeting, or by its representatives to the Triennial Sessions. The representatives may participate in a travel pool to equalize expenses (see section 33).

Procedures 5. The clerk and assistant clerk of Friends United Meeting shall be the clerks of the Representative Body and of the plenary sessions. If the clerk shall be absent from any meetings, the assistant presiding clerk shall preside. When the presiding clerk is reporting, this role shall be taken by the assistant presiding clerk.

The Representative Body consists of all those specifically named by their yearly meeting, small member group or affiliate organization as representatives to the Triennial in accordance with section 4. Major matters and proposals shall be considered by the Representative Body and the plenary sessions. Routine procedural matters may be acted upon by the Representative Body and reported to the plenary session which reserves the right to approve, disapprove, or reconsider.

It is the prerogative of the presiding clerk to call separate meetings of the Representative Body if needed. Alternatively, the presiding clerk may consider Triennial plenary sessions to be sessions of the Representative Body, and may ask those making presentations or responding to business to identify themselves and state whether they are representatives or attenders.

Committees 6. Each yearly meeting shall name one of its representatives to serve on the Triennial Nominating Committee and another to serve on the New Business Committee. These committees serve the Representative Body only during the Triennial Sessions.

The Triennial Nominating Committee recommends to the Representative Body for approval members of constituent yearly meetings and other member groups to serve as clerks, trustees, and treasurer of

Friends United Meeting. It makes other recommendations as directed by the clerk or by the Representative Body.

The New Business Committee screens and channels items to the Representative Body.

Clerks 7. Nominations for presiding, assistant presiding, recording, and reading clerks shall be considered and approved early in the sessions. They shall take their positions as clerks at the end of the sessions, continuing through the triennium and through the following sessions, when their successors are appointed and assume office. In the absence of one or more clerks, nominations for temporary appointments shall be made by the Triennial Nominating Committee to the Representative Body.

Referrals 8. The clerk, or the Representative Body, may refer appropriate matters to the General Board.

Appeals 9. Those presenting new proposals may appeal to the Representative Body if not satisfied with the channels used by the clerks or the New Business Committee.

The General Board

Appointments by Yearly Meetings 10. Constituent yearly meetings and affiliated organizations shall make their appointments to the General Board during the year preceding Friends United Meeting Triennial Sessions, and they shall take office at the first session of the General Board following these sessions. Persons appointed to fill vacancies shall take office at the first meeting of the General Board following the appointment by their yearly meeting.

General Board Authority 11. In the interim between Triennial Sessions, the General Board is the legal representative of Friends United Meeting. It shall have the authority and responsibility to act for Friends United Meeting between Triennial Sessions. It shall meet at least once a year, at times it determines.

The General Board shall report to the Representative Body of Friends United Meeting in Triennial Sessions. Its report shall include its appointment of the general secretary and executive staff. These

appointees shall be introduced to the representatives and the plenary sessions. The General Board is authorized to fill vacancies among the positions of clerks, treasurers, and trustees if they occur during the interim between sessions.

Composition 12. The General Board shall consist of members as follows: appointees of constituent yearly meetings; presiding clerk, assistant presiding clerk, and recording clerks (4); two continuing members from the previous General Board Executive Committee's membership; one member from each of the affiliated organizations (see section 36); the treasurer of Friends United Meeting; one member appointed by the trustees of Friends United Meeting; and three Young Adult Friends representatives (see section 14).

Attendance at meetings: meetings of the General Board are open, except when the clerk convenes executive sessions. In executive session, attendance is limited to the members designated above.

Numbers of Appointees 13. Yearly meetings are entitled to appoint the following numbers of General Board members: membership of 3,000 or less, maximum of two appointees; 3,001 to 10,000, maximum of four appointees; 10,001 and over, maximum of four appointees.

Young Adult Friends (ages 18–35) 14. The Young Adult Friends members of the General Board are nominated by the General Board Nominating Committee with the advice of the members of the General Board, who shall inform themselves of suitable Young Adult Friends in their own yearly meetings. This provision is not intended to preclude the service by yearly meeting appointment of Friends in this age range.

Resource Members 15. The general secretary and other executive staff are resource members of the General Board. At the discretion of the General Board, any of the executive staff may serve on any committee except the Executive Committee.

Clerks 16. The FUM clerk and assistant clerk shall serve as clerk and assistant clerk of the General Board and of the Executive Committee. The FUM recording clerk shall serve as a member and recording clerk of the General Board and of the Executive

Committee. The presiding clerk, or the clerk's designee, shall represent Friends United Meeting when an official presence or communication is requested or is necessary.

Committees 17. The General Board shall have four regular committees: Executive Committee, Program Coordinating and Priorities Committee, Finance Committee, and Nominating Committee. In addition, the board shall appoint from its members such program committees as are necessary to give continuity and support to the work of FUM. Every member of the General Board shall serve on at least one of its committees. A program committee may co-opt members of the constituent yearly meetings and other member groups who are not members of the General Board to assist the committee with carrying out its responsibilities. The responsibilities of the former American Friends Board of Missions, World Ministries Commission, and Meeting Ministries Commission are assumed by the General Board.

General Board Committees and Functions

Executive Committee 18. The Executive Committee of the General Board shall be made up of the following members: the presiding clerk, assistant presiding clerk, recording clerk, treasurer, two members from the previous triennium's Executive Committee to provide continuity, and three members-at-large. The three members-at-large shall not be from the same yearly meeting, nor from the same yearly meetings as the presiding and assistant presiding clerks. General Board appointees to the Executive Committee shall be named at the first meeting following the Triennial Sessions of Friends United Meeting. All members shall serve during the triennium and until the first meeting of the new General Board following the next Triennial, with the exception of the presiding, assistant presiding and recording clerks who assume office at the close of the Triennial Session. The FUM clerk and assistant clerk shall serve as clerk and assistant clerk of the General Board and of the Executive Committee. The general secretary may meet with this committee in regular sessions.

This committee shall assume responsibility for active counsel with and guidance of the general secretary. It shall have authority to act for the General Board within limits as prescribed by the General Board and shall make a full report thereto.

***Personnel
Responsibility*** 19. The Executive Committee of the General Board shall have the responsibility of screening and recommending to the General Board, meeting just prior to the Triennial Sessions, the name of one person to serve as general secretary for the next triennium. Upon General Board approval of this appointment, the Executive Committee, in close consultation with that general secretary, shall nominate the executive staff for the next triennium, to be approved by the General Board. It shall review periodically all personnel policies applying to the total staff and shall recommend changes to the General Board. The basic salary structure shall be reviewed by this committee and salary recommendations shall be sent to the Finance Committee for budget preparation.

***Program
Coordinating
and Priorities
Committee*** 20. The Program Coordinating and Priorities Committee shall make recommendations to the General Board on the implementation of the Purpose Statement through effective programs. It shall review new program proposals, undertake long-range planning, prioritize among the many goals and programs of FUM, evaluate ongoing programs in light of the purpose statement, receive detailed reports on each program, and make recommendations to the General Board.

It shall be composed of ten members, as follows: the associate secretary for Meeting Ministries; the associate secretary for World Ministries; one other staff member, appointed by the general secretary; the assistant clerk of the General Board (who serves as the clerk of Program Coordinating and Priorities Committee); one member of the Finance Committee, appointed by that committee; and five General Board members, nominated by the Nominating Committee.

The Program Coordinating and Priorities Committee shall meet immediately prior to each regular meeting of the General Board and for at least one other meeting each year.

***Finance
Committee*** 21. The Finance Committee of the General Board shall be composed of: the general secretary, associate secretaries, business manager, treasurer, and three General Board members who are knowledgeable of yearly meeting finances or are executives in their own yearly meetings, to be named by the General Board.

The Finance Committee shall review draft budgets provided by staff, taking into account the program priorities recommended by the Program Coordinating and Priorities Committee. The Finance Committee shall then prepare a preliminary budget for the General Board's review, amendment, and approval. The Finance Committee will receive and examine regular reports from the business manager or treasurer on the financial situation of Friends United Meeting.

Fiscal Year 22. The fiscal year for Friends United Meeting shall be the calendar year.

Nominating Committee 23. The Nominating Committee of the General Board (GB) shall include one appointee from each yearly meeting, to be designated by the yearly meeting, from among those who are its General Board representatives. These so named shall serve a three-year term. Vacancies shall be filled in like manner.

The committee shall present to the General Board for its approval names of those to fill the following positions: three members-at-large to serve on the Executive Committee; five General Board members to the Program Coordinating and Priorities Committee; three General Board members who are knowledgeable of yearly meeting finances or are executives in their own yearly meetings to serve on the Finance Committee; persons to serve on the Pension Committee; five members-at-large on the Friends Extension Corporation; and three Young Adult Friends to serve on the General Board. The Nominating Committee shall present to the General Board at its last regular meeting in a triennium the names of two from the Executive Committee to serve on the Executive Committee and the General Board for the next triennium. If possible one of these two continuing members shall be the previous presiding clerk or assistant presiding clerk. It shall also make other nominations for appointments as directed by the General Board.

Nominating Policies 24. The General Board follows the following guidelines in its nominating process:

- a. The General Board will not make appointments where there might be a conflict of interest, or where the appointment would involve the hiring, supervision, promotion, reporting, or dismissal of a close relative (child, spouse, sister, or brother).

- b. The Nominating Committee will ordinarily do its best to find out whether the Friends it recommends for appointment are willing to serve, before bringing names to the General Board for approval. The Nominating Committee may suggest, and the General Board may approve, the names of people subject to their later consent. In this case, the acceptance of such appointments should be reported at the next General Board meeting.
- c. Friends United Meeting will budget the expenses of: officers appointed by the Triennial Session, to attend the next session of the Triennial at which they will serve; officers who are members of the General Board Executive Committee; the two carry-over members of the General Board Executive Committee; the three Young Adult Friends serving on the General Board; and special meetings of committees authorized by the General Board (e.g., Program Coordinating and Priorities Committee).
- d. Appointments are normally for the period of the Triennium, unless otherwise stated by the General Board.

***Pension
Committee***

25. The Pension Committee consists of six members appointed by the General Board of Friends United Meeting. This committee supervises the national group pension program which is designed for pastors and other employees of the monthly and yearly meetings and others employed by any Quaker organization or agency which wishes to participate. This committee is under the supervision of the General Board, and the plan is administered by the general secretary.

General Board Staff

Executive Staff

26. The executive staff shall include the general secretary, the associate secretaries and the business manager. The general secretary shall be appointed by the General Board for a term as prescribed by the General Board. The other executive staff shall be nominated by the Executive Committee of the General Board in consultation with the general secretary, and approved by the General Board.

Other Staff 27. Other staff may be appointed by the general secretary, after appropriate consultation, to carry out the purposes and functions of Friends United Meeting.

Personnel Manual 28. Further details of staff procedures and policies can be found in the Personnel Manual of Friends United Meeting which is to be used as a supplement to this Organization and Procedure.

Property and Finances

Treasurer 29. The treasurer of Friends United Meeting shall be appointed by Friends United Meeting upon the recommendation of the Triennial Nominating Committee. The treasurer will monitor the business operation regularly and report to the Finance Committee.

Budget 30. The income to support the administration and program of Friends United Meeting is provided through per capita and voluntary giving by the yearly meetings and other member groups and affiliated organizations. Income is also received from monthly meetings; individuals; deferred gifts and income from endowments; and from grants obtained from organizations, foundations, and governments. Each yearly meeting is expected to raise a fair share of the support needed for the joint ministries it has helped authorize through Friends United Meeting.

Trustees 31. The Board of Trustees shall hold and administer such property as Friends United Meeting shall place in its custody and shall have management of annuity, trust, and endowment funds given for the use of Friends United Meeting or one of its subordinate units or programs.

The Board shall consist of seven members chosen for periods of six years, three to be selected at one Triennial Session and four at the next. They shall be appointed by Friends United Meeting upon the recommendation of the Triennial Nominating Committee. The appointees shall take their positions at the first meeting of the trustees following the Triennial Sessions, continuing through the triennium and the following session, until their successors are appointed and assume office. In keeping with Quaker ideals of service and the distribution of responsibility, the service of trustees should not

extend beyond the limit of twelve consecutive years, not counting the filling of unexpired terms.

Friends Extension Corporation 32. The Friends Extension Corporation serves to offer financial assistance through loans and small grants to new fellowship groups preparing to establish a Friends meeting, and to existing Friends meetings planning to extend their physical facilities. Consideration is also given for financial assistance to Friends retirement homes, camps, conference grounds, and educational buildings. The corporation solicits funds and property from individuals, meetings and trustee groups who wish to invest in this program of extending the witness and work of Friends.

The membership of the Friends Extension Corporation Board of Directors shall consist of two associate secretaries to be named by the general secretary, the Friends United Meeting treasurer, one member designated by FUM trustees, five members-at-large to be appointed by the General Board, and the FUM business manager *ex-officio*. The directors annually appoint the officers of Friends Extension Corporation: chairman, vice chairman, secretary, and treasurer.

The Friends Extension Corporation Executive Committee shall consist of the officers and one other director appointed by the Friends Extension Corporation chairman. The Executive Committee shall conduct interim business delegated to it by its board.

Expense Pool 33. Expenses for travel of the designated number of representatives to and from the Triennial Sessions of Friends United Meeting shall be paid by the yearly meetings. To equalize these expenses, a pool shall be arranged whereby each yearly meeting shall pay the expenses of its quota of representatives according to the average expenses of all the representatives in attendance. Details in connection with the pool shall be determined by the General Board.

Joining Friends United Meeting

Membership of Yearly Meetings 34. Any yearly meeting that is established from one or more existing FUM yearly meeting(s) and is recognized by such yearly meeting(s), upon application is entitled to associate membership in

FUM. The General Board may ask the new associate member yearly meeting to follow prescribed guidelines before being accepted into full membership by the General Board. Upon acceptance by the General Board as full members, the yearly meeting shall name members to the General Board and assume the other rights and responsibilities of membership. At the next Triennial Session, the new member yearly meeting will be recognized as a full member.

Applications for membership in Friends United Meeting received from other yearly meetings will be considered on an individual basis, following guidelines established by the General Board.

Membership of Small Groups 35. Any application for membership in Friends United Meeting received from a natural grouping of Friends which is not organized as a yearly meeting will be considered on an individual basis, following guidelines established by the General Board. (Examples of such groups are Ciudad Victoria Friends Church and Ramallah Monthly Meeting.) Such groups shall not appoint members to the General Board, but their observers may attend General Board meetings and shall have the freedom to place business items on the agenda of the General Board and of the Triennial Sessions of Friends United Meeting. Such groups are entitled to appoint up to two representatives to Triennial Sessions.

Relationships With Other Bodies

Affiliated Organizations 36. Affiliated organizations each appoint one representative to the General Board and three representatives to the Triennial Session. They share in the discussion of business matters and in the decisions made.

- a. *United Society of Friends Women International* — The United Society of Friends Women International has, as its principal objective, the uniting of all Friends' women in Christian fellowship, service, spiritual development, education, and mission among Friends. The United Society includes the women's societies in the member yearly meetings.
- b. *Quaker Men International* — The Quaker Men movement among Friends started essentially as a local meeting enterprise, later becoming a yearly meeting and Friends

United Meeting movement. It seeks to enlist the manpower of its membership for effective service through the local meeting. With a background of development in several yearly meetings, the Quaker Men organization of Friends United Meeting was formed. This organization promotes and supports special projects for which the local meetings, yearly meetings and Friends United Meeting are concerned.

- c. *The Western Association of the Religious Society of Friends* — The Western Association of the Religious Society of Friends is an entity through which monthly meetings and individuals can join together in a common bond of support of Friends United Meeting.

Cooperative Organizations 37. Cooperative organizations are those whose interests and concerns parallel or supplement the work of Friends United Meeting. They are welcome to attend General Board sessions as observers at their own expense. An observer has the privilege to speak but may not enter into the decision making.

- a. *American Friends Service Committee* — The American Friends Service Committee (AFSC) is a channel for service in a wide range of humanitarian activities at home and abroad through which many Friends in Friends United Meeting may express their convictions in relief and service. Its membership includes representatives of many of the constituent yearly meetings of Friends United Meeting.
- b. *Friends Committee on National Legislation* — The Friends Committee on National Legislation (FCNL), with headquarters in Washington D.C., seeks to relate Friends principles to current national policy. Through meetings and literature, the FCNL informs Friends on matters pertinent to Friends beliefs and provides a channel of action. It seeks to work with legislators and administrative officers for those laws which will help make a peaceful world. The General Committee of the FCNL is made up of Friends, many representing constituent yearly meetings of Friends United Meeting.

- c. *Friends World Committee for Consultation* — The Friends World Committee for Consultation (FWCC) has headquarters in London, England, and other offices around the world. The committee seeks to nurture the spiritual life and growth of the worldwide community of Friends through literature, conferences, intervisitation, and outreach. It is composed of representatives from yearly meetings around the world. Its purpose is to strengthen in Friends the sense of unity and interdependence and to enable Friends to take their place in the development of a Christian world community.

Ecumenical Organizations 38. Ecumenical organizations are those that promote Christian fellowship and service through national or international structures. Those so identified are the National Council of Churches of Christ and the World Council of Churches, as well as the state and local Councils of Churches. Their representatives may attend the General Board sessions by request as observers at their own expense. The General Board may make appointments to these organizations in response to requests from them.

- a. *National Council of Churches* — The National Council of Churches of Christ in the United States of America is an organization whose object is to manifest the essential oneness of the Christian churches of America in Jesus Christ as their Divine Lord and Savior and to promote the spirit of fellowship, service, and cooperation among them. Friends United Meeting is a constituent member represented in the organization. The General Board may make appointments to the National Council of Churches as requested by that body.
- b. *World Council of Churches* — The World Council of Churches is an organization of like purpose to the above, but worldwide in scope. It is basically, “A fellowship of churches which accepts our Lord Jesus Christ as God and Savior.” Friends were represented at the Advisory Conference in 1938, which drafted the constitution of the proposed council, and in 1940 the Five Years Meeting approved the proposal of membership in the World

Council of Churches with this statement: “The Five Years Meeting of Friends in America wholeheartedly accepts the invitation to join the World Council of Churches. Our central interest is to affirm our absolute loyalty to Jesus Christ as the Head of the Church and to express the spirit of love, the power of truth, and the promotion of vital religion of life.” The General Board may make appointments to the World Council of Churches as requested by that ecumenical body.

***Amending or
Revising
Friends United
Meeting’s
Organization
and Procedure*** 39. These administrative practices and procedures may be amended or revised by Friends United Meeting at its Triennial Sessions. Proposals for amendment or revision of these procedures may originate with a yearly meeting, with Friends United Meeting, or its General Board. Such proposed amendments must be sent to registered Triennial representatives and the clerks and offices of constituent yearly meetings and affiliated organizations at least thirty days prior to the start of the Triennial Sessions.