

*Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need. Hebrews 4:16*

Greetings to Friends worldwide from the 120th sessions of the Northwest Yearly Meeting of Friends Churches (NWYM), held at George Fox University in Newberg, Oregon. Our theme was *Let us Come Boldly*. Our visitors were: Emma Condori Mamani of Holiness Friends Yearly Meeting, Bolivia; Christine Hall of Whidby Island Worship Group; Ron Marson of North Pacific Yearly Meeting; Sheila Hoyer of First Friends Greensboro, North Carolina; Jane Snyder of Bridge City Monthly Meeting NPYM; Rae Lawrence, Multnomah Monthly Meeting NPYM; and Alexandra Bosbeer, Quaker Council for European Affairs. We thank the many meetings and associations of Friends that sent greetings to us, and are grateful for each of you. Our new Superintendent, Becky Ankeny, was the speaker during our sessions. Each night she challenged and encouraged the members to look closely at prayer, starting with our elder brother Jesus' prayer for the unity of his followers. Through an adept use of multimedia, including works of art and music, we were encouraged to pray as exiles in a foreign land, as leaders pleading for our people, as children praying for everything and anything, and finally as the broken praying for the forgiveness of ourselves and others.

There is a song that speaks of the paradoxes of following Christ. The paradox we face is found in the first verse which repeats, "We are one in the Spirit / We are one in the Lord," followed by the entreaty "and we pray that all unity will one day be restored." The NWYM has begun to engage in a dialogue around human sexuality that begins in a place of disagreement. We rejoice to report that our actions and words in this week have echoed the resolution proposed in the chorus of that song: "And they'll know we are Christians by our love, by our love. Yes, they'll know we are Christians by our love."

To aid us in preparing for our meeting, the Elders provided a prayer guide for the 50 days preceding the Yearly Meeting. The attitude of prayer this guide developed has undergirded our week together and the evidences of the Spirit at work were myriad. The Spirit's presence was highly evident in humorous moments that brought us together and taught us to look differently at ourselves. There was a skit in which some came "baldly" and eventually realized that "boldly" was the intent, and we had plenty of times in which we laughed at ourselves as we stumbled over words or statements that didn't come out right the first time.

We heard the inspiring stories of the transformative work of God, both by Friends serving their local communities and by Friends serving abroad. We were especially excited about a new beginning for involvement with Friends in Ramallah and by how many in our meetings traveled in ministry to such diverse places as the Friends World Committee for Consultation "Salt and Light" conference in Kenya, the celebration of Peru Yearly Meeting's 50th year, and many other locations in Europe, Southeast Asia, Africa and South America. We were blessed by the testimonies shared by Tim Henry, Mindy Burns, and Dan Burns, whom we recorded as ministers. We also affirmed the gifts shared with our Yearly Meeting by Dan Cammack as he steps into the role of Director of Evangelical Friends Mission. Happily, this will not require him to leave the area. Dan would therefore love to continue sharing his ministry with interested meetings. We honored the outgoing EFM director, Chuck Mylander, and wish him well in his retirement.

Our youth, as always, encouraged us and challenged us by examining and holding up to us the sixth query of our faith and practice: "*As followers of Christ do you love and respect each other? Do patience and consideration govern your interactions; and when differences arise, do you resolve them promptly in a spirit of forgiveness and understanding? Are you careful with the reputation of others?*" In leading worship on Wednesday night, the youth displayed a sense of play and exploration including the kinesthetic combination of walking paint onto canvas followed by the youth washing the paint from the feet of those who walked. Their

worship queries called us to a deeper sense of who we are and how God leads us to be present to “others.”

After 120 years, NWYM continues to work on being bold as its members go into the world and share the spirit and love of Jesus Christ. We, as God's children, are works in progress and in need of the Spirit's guidance as we wrestle with the paradox of being unified while praying for unity. We have weathered many storms as a Yearly Meeting through the mercy and grace of God at work among us. We invite you to join us in coming boldly to the throne of grace.

Tom Stave  
NWYM Clerk

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