Dear Friends Everywhere,

Intermountain Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends (IMYM), made up of seventeen monthly meetings in Colorado, Utah, Arizona, New Mexico and Western Texas, met amongst the red-soiled mesas, dry arroyos and soul-stirring vistas of Ghost Ranch near Abiquiu, New Mexico. Friends gathered for our fortieth annual sessions during the week of 6th month, 11th to 15th, 2014, with early days the 8th through 11th. 289 Friends attended, with 75 children in that number. Optional early days allowed for relaxation before our business began, with 60% of IMYM attendees taking part. IMYM is the only yearly meeting that is a member of Fellowship of Quakers in the Arts, and our diverse early days seminars reflected that. This year they included a full palette of workshops in the arts—theater, writing, watercolor, storytelling movement, SoulCollage®, and creative discernment. We see art as an effective tool for positive change in our needy world.

IMYM implemented a new organizational structure this year. We have replaced our overworked Continuing Committee with a structure including more volunteers as the Representatives Committee (the discerning voice of our monthly meetings, standing committees and youth group leaders) and the Arrangements Committee (which plans and implements the annual gathering).

Continuing our focus on the Kabarak Call for Peace and Ecojustice from last annual sessions, our theme this year was “What do we have to offer as Quakers in these challenging times?” We were blessed to have Diane Randall, Executive Secretary of Friends Committee on National Legislation (FCNL), and Shan Cretin, General Secretary of American Friends Service Committee (AFSC) as our plenary keynote speakers. They spoke about a joint initiative of FCNL and AFSC to envision a new U.S. foreign policy grounded in worldwide shared security for our global community. It is a big project, a fifty-year vision, but we are excited by the collaboration of these two strong Quaker organizations and the conversation they have started among us. The speakers emphasized that we must have both an inward faith journey and outward witness to make effective change in the world. The Peace Testimony is not so much a philosophical position but the fruit of an inward spiritual journey. Diane Randall expressed her belief that Friends can offer the world our abiding love of the Spirit that takes away the occasion for all war. Shan Cretin challenged us to start our work in the world by laying down the worn out American and Quaker exceptionalism that we bear, shining a light on our privilege. We must heed George Fox’s admonitions and be a pattern, walk cheerfully and really see that of God in everyone.

So, what does a faith-based Quaker witness in the world look like?

• It looks like an IMYM Young Adult Friend, reporting on his experience as Friends General Conference Gathering clerk, sharing a vision of a coming Quaker Renaissance.
• It looks like an artist making a movie about homelessness in her hometown.
• It looks like getting to know each other more deeply in our beloved small daily worship sharing groups. One of the morning groups is held in Spanish, reflecting our appreciation for Latino heritage and cultures and our proximity to the U.S./Mexico border, once north, but now south of this land. Afternoon groups are intergenerational, led by our Senior Young Friends.
• It looks like Friends Peace Teams getting trained in trauma healing in Nepal and taking the technique back to New Mexico prisons.
• It looks like working with one another to shift from the big theoretical conversation of privilege to examining what we can actively do to create change.
• It looks like our adult meeting creating a safe space for our Junior and Senior Young Friends to share in an intergenerational Listening Session on Youth and the Quaker Testimonies.
• It looks like the lives of elderly friends, celebrated in their memorial minutes, who exemplified inward journey and outward witness.
• It looks like our own musicians forming a Contra Band with our own caller for our Friday night dance, using our gifts to spread joy in our midst.

After two years of work, and in solidarity with indigenous rights organizations, IMYM approved a minute affirming the U.N. Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. Over two plenary sessions we tenderly labored with this concern, wanting to be certain we were supporting the voices of indigenous peoples without creating an “us versus them” dichotomy and not outrunning our guide. This was deep and heartfelt work as we desire to live in right relationship. The minute is attached.

Upon hearing the keynote speakers and the reports from Friends organizations, an octogenarian Friend remarked, “we are leaving the Society of Friends in good hands.” We feel energized by hope as we hear the voices of our youth and reports on our service in the world. We enjoy acknowledging the threads of connection we have and cultivate in the complex Quaker web and send our greetings and encouragement to you.

How is God calling you to live into the vision of the world that we seek?

In the Light,
Intermountain Yearly Meeting of Friends
Sara Keeney, Clerk
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The Intermountain Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends (Quaker) united on the following minute during our annual gathering in June of 2014. Study of the issue began with workshops provided in 2012 and has continued throughout our four states for two years.

Minute to Affirm the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples

Friends who reside in the Inter-Mountain region of the United States are aware that we occupy lands that were recognized by treaties as the territories of many Indigenous Nations and then taken from them. Consciously or unconsciously, non-Indigenous people benefit from historical and ongoing injustices committed against the Native peoples of this land. This benefit comes at great human cost to all of us, indigenous and non-indigenous, in the loss of opportunities to grow in transformative understanding from other cultures. We commit ourselves to humble self-reflection, as individuals and as a community of faith, to align our actions with the practice of right relationship among all peoples.

In order to build relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples founded in equity and justice, we affirm our support for implementing the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. The Declaration was adopted by the U.N. General Assembly in 2007 and endorsed by President Obama in 2010. It affirms the right of Indigenous Peoples to exist as unique cultural groups and to exercise self-determination and self-government. It seeks to ensure that Indigenous Peoples collectively and individually enjoy all the human rights and fundamental freedoms recognized in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and international human rights law. It establishes standards for equitable political, legal and social policies that can assist Indigenous Peoples in combating discrimination, marginalization, and oppression.

Just as Quakers played a role in promoting passage of the U.N. Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, we acknowledge that we must labor to implement it. We call on our government to make necessary changes in U.S. laws and policies so that rights of Native Americans, Alaska Natives, and Native Hawaiians are fully supported, in conformity with the U.N. Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. As Friends, we will endeavor to learn how we can support the rights of Indigenous Peoples and take conscious steps toward living in right relationship.

For centuries, European policies, principles and legal constructs, grounded in the ethic of conquest and colonization, have been used to justify oppression of Indigenous Peoples throughout the world and denial of inalienable rights, both individual and in national and community existence. These justifications for conquest, occupation and exploitation have the common feature that they violate principles of international law which European peoples and settler states have claimed for themselves, widely accepted Christian teaching and our Quaker testimonies of equality, peace, integrity, community and stewardship. Throughout the centuries and even today, Indigenous Peoples attribute many forms of discrimination to these racist doctrines and their expression in contemporary law and policy.

In solidarity with Indigenous Peoples and guided by the requests from representatives of leading Indigenous rights organizations, including, among others, the International Indian Treaty Council, the North American Indigenous Caucus, and the American Indian Law Alliance, and in concert with a growing number of religious organizations, Intermountain Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends utterly rejects any legal doctrine which accords less than full human and communal rights to any of the world’s peoples or their members. We urge our governments at every level of our federal system and all of the world’s states to review their laws, regulations, and policies impacting Indigenous Peoples and to repeal laws, regulations, and policies that reflect ethnocentric, feudal, and religious prejudices. We accept our own responsibility to work to change the economic, social, cultural and educational structures of privilege and injustice rooted in the historical regimes of discovery, occupation and colonization. We welcome the opportunity, in appropriate settings and to the extent freely offered by people themselves, for learning from each other about world views and cultural perspectives of Indigenous communities and persons.

We ask our constituent monthly meetings and worship groups to each take at least one action during the next year to educate themselves about the history of colonization and its current effects in our country and area and/or to consult with Native Americans in their area to build relationships.
Queridos Amigos y Amigas:

La Junta Anual de Entre Montañas de la Sociedad Religiosa de los Amigos (IMYM), conformada por diecisiete Juntas de Colorado, Utah, Arizona, Nuevo México y el oeste de Texas, se reunió entre mesetas de tierra roja, arroyos secos y vistas panorámicas que mueven el alma, cerca de Abiquiu, Nuevo México. Amigas y Amigos se congregaron para nuestra cuadragésima sesión anual en la semana del sexto mes, días del 11 al 15 del 2014, los días previos siendo del 8 al 11. Asistieron 289 Amigas y Amigos, 75 de los cuales fueron niñas y niños. Los días previos nos permitieron relajarnos antes de comenzar con los acuerdos, con el 60% de los asistentes acudiendo a estos. IMYM es la única junta anual que es miembro de la Hermandad de los Cuáqueros en las Artes, lo cual se vio reflejado en la diversidad de seminarios efectuados en los días previos. Este año incluyeron una gama de talleres artísticos: teatro, escritura, acuarela, movimiento narrativo, SoulCollage® y discernimiento creativo. Vemos al arte como una herramienta efectiva para el cambio positivo en un mundo muy necesitado.

IMYM implementó este año una nueva estructura organizativa. Reemplazamos a nuestro saturado Comité de Continuidad con una estructura que incluye a más voluntarios como el Comité de Representantes (la voz de discernimiento de nuestras juntas mensuales, comités de posicionamiento y líderes de grupos de jóvenes) y el Comité de Arreglos (el cual planea y lleva a cabo la reunión anual).

Continuando con el enfoque de la Proclamación de Kábarak para la Paz y la Justicia Ecológica de nuestra sesión anual del año pasado, el tema este año fue: “¿Qué es lo que podemos ofrecer como Cuáqueros y Cuáqueras en estos tiempos tan desafiantes?” Tuvimos la bendición de contar con la presencia de Diane Randall, la Secretaria Ejecutiva del Comité de los Amigos para la Legislación Nacional (FCNL), y la de Shan Cretin, Secretaria General del Comité de Servicio de los Amigos Americanos (AFSC), quienes dieron los discursos inaugurales en la plenaria. Hablaron sobre la iniciativa conjunta de ambas organizaciones para visualizar una nueva política exterior estadounidense que se base en la seguridad mundial compartida para nuestra comunidad global. Es un gran proyecto, una visión a cincuenta años, pero nos emociona la colaboración de estas dos organizaciones cuáqueras tan fuertes y la conversación que han empezado entre los miembros de nuestra comunidad. Las oradoras principales hicieron énfasis en la necesidad de tener un proceso interno de fe, así como ser testigos de manera externa para llegar al cambio efectivo en el mundo. El Testimonio de Paz no es una postura filosófica, sino el fruto de un proceso espiritual interior. Diane Randall expresó su convicción de que los Amigos podemos ofrecer al mundo nuestro amor perdurable hacia el Espíritu, el cual nos mantiene alejados de la guerra. Shan Cretin nos retó a comenzar nuestro trabajo en el mundo dejando de lado el excepcionalismo americano y cuáquero con el que cargamos, y estando conscientes de nuestro propio “privilegio”.

Entonces, ¿En dónde encontraríamos a un testigo cuáquero basado en la fe?

- Se encuentra en un Amigo Adulto Joven de IMYM, platicando sobre sus experiencias como secretario de la Reunión de la Conferencia General de los Amigos y compartiendo la visión de un Renacimiento Cuáquero venidero.
- Se encuentra en una artista haciendo una película sobre personas en situación de calle en su ciudad natal.
• Se encuentra en el conocernos más a profundidad en nuestros queridos grupos de contemplación. Uno de los grupos matutinos es en español, y refleja nuestra apreciación por la cultura y herencia latinas, y nuestra cercanía con la frontera México/Estados Unidos, la cual antes estaba al norte, pero ahora se encuentra al sur de este lugar. Los grupos de la tarde son intergeneracionales y coordinados por los Amigos Adultos Mayores.

• Se encuentra en los Equipos de Paz de los Amigos, quienes se capacitaron en sanación de traumas en Nepal y quienes trajeron la técnica a las cárceles de Nuevo México.

• Se encuentra en el trabajo en conjunto para cambiar de la gran conversación teórica del privilegio a examinar lo que realmente podemos hacer para crear un cambio.

• Se encuentra en la creación de un espacio seguro para nuestros Amigos/as Jóvenes por parte de las/os adultos, para compartir una Sesión de Escucha intergeneracional sobre la juventud y los Testimonios Cuáqueros.

• Se encuentra en las vidas de las y los Amigos Adultos Mayores, celebradas en las minutas *In Memoriam*, quienes nos dieron el ejemplo de proceso interno y testimonio externo.

• Se encuentra en nuestros propios músicos/as, al formar un grupo de contradanza con todo y animador, para nuestro baile de viernes por la noche, difundiendo alegría.

Después de dos años de trabajo, y en solidaridad con las organizaciones de derechos indígenas, IMYM aprobó una minuta ratificando la Declaración de las Naciones Unidas sobre los Derechos de los Pueblos Indígenas. Durante dos sesiones plenarias, trabajamos cuidadosamente en este asunto, queriendo estar seguras/os que apoyábamos las voces de los pueblos indígenas sin crear una dicotomía de “ellos/as contra nosotros/as”, y no dejar atrás nuestra guía. Este trabajo fue profundo y sincero, ya que deseamos vivir en una “relación justa”.

Escuchando a las oradoras principales, así como los reportes de las organizaciones de los Amigos, una Amiga octogenaria nos compartió: “estamos dejando a la Sociedad de los Amigos en buenas manos”. Sentimos que la esperanza nos da mucha energía al escuchar las voces de las y los jóvenes y los reportes de nuestro servicio en el mundo. Disfrutamos el darnos cuenta de las grandes conexiones que tenemos y cultivamos en la compleja red Cuáquera, y les enviamos saludos y mucho ánimo.

¿Cómo es que Dios les llama a vivir en la visión del mundo que buscamos?

En la Luz,
Junta Anual de Entre Montañas de los Amigos
Sara Keeney, Secretaria
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Greetings to Friends Everywhere,

Travelling through tornadoes, dust storms, and extreme thunderstorms, our SYF family gathered once more at picturesque Ghost Ranch, New Mexico. While many fellow SYF’s were not able to return this year, our group still grew and we were able to bond more as almost all of our members came for the whole week. From the spontaneous sing-alongs we have with those of us who are awake in the morning to the late night worship sharing with the full moon illuminating our groups across the grounds of Ghost Ranch, we found our home together. Through this year’s theme of “What do we have to offer as Quakers for the challenges of our time? What are the sources of the uniquely Quaker gifts that we have to offer?” we contributed suggestions about the Quaker testimonies through our annual listening session which this year took on the form of a “fishbowl”. The “fishbowl” idea is a way where people, in our case younger members of the community, sit inside a circle and pass around queries allowing time for responses while other members of the community sit in the circle around those speaking.

This year we made business meetings a priority early in the week to avoid last minute emergency meetings on our last day together. As we do every year we lose one of our amazing FAPs (Friendly Adult Presence) however, this year we have been blessed to have such amazing nominations for FAPs, which while it makes our decision difficult we are so lucky to have so many members of the community who want to be with us. This year we were faced with a more difficult concern about rooming and transportation issues for the less able bodied members of the meeting which will become an issue next year, as our IMYM community grows bigger each year. Through business meetings, field trips to the Mesa to look at rooming options, and lots of time pondering possible solutions we are hoping to find a solution by next year when the need comes about.

As we finish out our week with late night games, worship sharing and spending time together we will be saying goodbye to one wonderful FAP as well as some of our older SYF members. While that goodbye will be sad we will also be looking forward to next year when we will be able to see our family in our beautiful Ghost Ranch, when we reunite to continue our spiritual journeys together.

The IMYM Senior Young Friends
(Roughly high school and college-aged)
One of the testimonies that spoke to the Junior Young Friends this year was community. We found it to be a reoccurring theme in the new things we did this year, and the old favorites. Every morning we started with a gathering, and then split into small anchor groups. Anchor groups were an introduction to worship sharing, answering questions related to a theme. After our anchor groups we would typically do an activity. One of the favorites from year to year was low ropes. Low ropes builds connections by accomplishing tasks as a team. One morning Elizabeth Fry visited [Editor’s note: Quaker actress Roena Oesting as Quaker prison reformer Elizabeth Fry (1780-1845)]. She taught us about the benefits of community in any time or place. We had the pleasure of hosting the directors of American Friends Service Committee and Friends Committee on National Legislation for an hour. They told us a story about an underprivileged boy named Elmo and the positive impacts of serving your community.

The Senior Young Friends have a listening session every year, where young adults have the opportunity to hear what the younger members of the community have to say on things relevant to the community at the present moment. This year’s theme was Quaker testimonies and youth. Those who attended the listening session learned about others, new ways of thinking, on old topics and themselves. This year’s session was particularly poignant.

The annual contra-dance showed that the differences that usually separate us—gender and age—dissolve when having fun.

Intermountain Yearly Meeting brings old and new friends together, expands your Quaker world, and can be (no matter how hard to believe) a place of serenity from the rest of the world.

Junior Young Friends
Intermountain Yearly Meeting
June 14, 2014
For many of us this year it was our first time attending. We liked playing with the Ghost Ranch staff and making prayer flags. We played outside and enjoyed the beautiful mountain landscape. We went swimming except when there was thunder. We explored Ghost Ranch with the scavenger hunt and went to the Cantina. We made volcanoes and enjoyed playing groundies with friends. We made origami and built sand castles. We climbed the mountains. CYM represents friendship! CYM Rocks For Kids!

CYM visual epistle featuring the mesa and hills and drawings of CYM activities: