

To the Listening Session:

From Southview Church, Business Mtg, Aug 3.2014

Dear NCYM

The great hope for North Carolina Yearly Meeting lies in the super group of Young Adults and Young Friends currently involved in our denomination. However, if we do not correct a core problem, we will lose most of these great "kids" to other parts of the Kingdom of God that are not so dysfunctional. In fact, we have been made aware of some who have already given up on Quakerism, and/or left faith entirely after witnessing the behavior of adults at NCYM.

Southview has been, and remains, extremely loyal to NCYM and the general doctrine of Friends. We have sacrificed to pay Askings. We believe NCYM offers opportunities to do things that we cannot do as individual meetings, such as Mexico Mission, Intern programming, Campus Ministry, etc. We believe our theology and doctrine to be superior to all other groups because we believe the Quaker way is the closest of all to the New Testament. But, the structure of our Yearly Meeting is severely flawed. One of our members says that in 40+ years of attending NCYM business meetings, he can never remember attending a single business meeting that had unity of Spirit when anything of significance was discussed. The Ministry & Counsel meeting at Forsyth in 2011 was not an aberration; it was a clear example of typical, usual, Quaker procedure.

Someone at that meeting used the word dysfunctional. We ARE dysfunctional. Not as defined in that meeting, but in the sense that we can't function at all. The only types of business we accomplish is routine, nonessential, and only on limited projects, such as Disaster Service, can the 2 sides of NCYM work together.

We are divided. There are two distinct groups in the Yearly Meeting and we may as well admit it and stop pretending that we have "unity but diversity." We do NOT have unity- we have

two different core beliefs. One group is referred to as "evangelicals"; the other group identified themselves at Forsyth as "universalists." But that still does not identify the problem sufficiently: the evangelicals say that universalists cannot be Christians according to the evangelical definition of both words. The universalists claim to be Christians by their own definitions of the two words. Indeed, tempers flared at Forsyth over this very conflict of "Christian or not." The core problem is that evangelicals want their theology determined by a book, while the other side believes theology should be determined by inner self. Neither side will budge from their core. Persons on opposite sides of a chasm can talk all they want about unity, but they cannot hold hands. Bridges cannot be built when neither side trusts the other.

Jesus said a house divided cannot stand (Mk 3:25). Oil and water do not mix. Hugh Spaulding described this Yearly Meeting as a covered wagon with a horse on each end pulling in opposite directions. This Yearly Meeting needs to recognize and admit our core division, and for the mutual benefit of both sides, stop fighting and simply divide. It is ironic that those who have proclaimed the message of peace, do not have peace among ourselves and never will so long as this persists. Let's go separate ways so there can be peace.

There is an story about a lion and a lamb that lived in the same cage at a zoo. Visitors were always amazed that the lion and lamb could co-exist in the same cage. One day a visitor asked what the secret was for coexistence. The zookeeper answered- 'I put a new lamb in the cage every night.' We are eating each other up- Let's get different cages.

We would rather present to the coming generation a smaller, but structurally sound Yearly Meeting, than the odd, dysfunctional, mess that now exists. Believing this, we want to affirm the letter written by Poplar Ridge dated July 8,2014. NCYM must find a way to either bring unity according to our Faith and Practice, or to separate and create new functioning bodies. To continue talking is fruitless- it has all been talked over many years without meaningful change. Also, simply ignoring the problem fixes nothing.

Unless this division is solved, there is no point in talking about Superintendents, Staff, Vision, Direction, Purpose, etc. Solve the issue now so the work of the Kingdom may go forward.

We have been asked to give solutions. The only solution we can see is for the two sides to agree to go separate ways.

Regrettably, but sincerely, approved by Southview Church

Chris Blamer, Clerk
Mike Wall, Pastor