

Hinkle Creek Friends Church

Indiana Yearly Meeting
Reconfiguration Task Force
Muncie, Indiana 47304

March 4, 2012

Hinkle Creek Friends spent a great deal of time over the last three years in deliberation and prayer, which led us to choose to leave Western Yearly Meeting and join Indiana Yearly Meeting. We chose to join Indiana Yearly Meeting because we saw a Yearly Meeting that cared for its members and its Monthly Meetings. We saw a Yearly Meeting that was actively working for the glory of God through missions and outreach. Most importantly, we saw a Yearly Meeting that took its responsibility to uphold the covenant of Faith and Practice seriously.

At the 2011 Indiana Yearly Meeting annual session, Hinkle Creek Friends was welcomed as a full Monthly Meeting in Indiana Yearly Meeting. When we chose to join Indiana Yearly Meeting and underwent the membership process, we operated under the assumption that there would be an Indiana Yearly Meeting to be a part of. Our membership was approved, we assume, through the consensus of the Yearly Meeting, meaning that all Monthly Meetings agreed that Hinkle Creek Friends was a good fit for Indiana Yearly Meeting. We find it disingenuous for Indiana Yearly Meeting to accept Hinkle Creek Friends under the pretense of continued existence, only to undergo a process of dissolution the very next year.

Hinkle Creek Friends has seen enough of division and strife and we strongly disapprove of any action made to force us to choose between either of the alternatives placed before us. We find the choice to be a false binary, implying that a decision to dissolve has been made when it has not. We will not consent to an act of violence against Friends who have lived up to what was expected of them through the agreed-upon covenant of Faith and Practice.

The dissolution of the Yearly Meeting and forcibly breaking that covenant is an act of violence. Calling for the dissolution of the Yearly Meeting commits violence against Monthly Meetings who have followed Faith and Practice in good faith and in the Spirit in which it was created. It causes discord and harm to relationships between Friends within and between Monthly Meetings. It increases confusion and uncertainty, preventing us from working to advance the will of God. Dissolving the Yearly Meeting is not just a violation of an earthly contract. It is an act of violence against something built by God himself.

If there is disagreement with the original covenant, there are processes through which Monthly Meetings can make changes to the agreement. If consensus cannot be reached to make changes to our covenant, procedures have been formed to allow an amicable separation. The authority of the Yearly Meeting, however, cannot be justly used against Monthly Meetings that are operating in good faith under the original agreement. These Meetings are still in a binding covenant with each other as a Yearly Meeting and in agreement with the Faith and Practice. The decision of a Meeting to seek an amicable

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separation does not dissolve the covenant made between the other member Monthly Meetings. Therefore, the Yearly Meeting is dissolved only when all member Monthly Meetings can agree that the covenant is no longer valid.

If any Monthly Meeting wishes to leave Indiana Yearly Meeting, let them leave amicably with our best wishes. Let them seek other like-minded Friends and work together for the glory of God in line with their interpretation of the leading of the Holy Spirit. They are our brothers and sisters in Christ, even if we can no longer work together in the same manner as we did before.

The members of Hinkle Creek Friends have already spent the last three years making our choice of Yearly Meeting, guided by the Spirit through prayerful reflection and discernment. Our choice was approved and endorsed last summer with the understanding that our discernment was not undertaken wastefully. Hinkle Creek Friends chose Indiana Yearly Meeting and we maintain that choice now. We hope that Friends in Indiana Yearly Meeting will join us in that same spirit of caring, ministry, and mutual accountability to move us into a new era of work for the glory of God.

Prayerfully submitted:

Jacob Isaacs
Clerk – Ministry & Oversight
Hinkle Creek Friends

Kelly Haemmerle
Presiding Clerk
Hinkle Creek Friends

Marianne Isaacs
Recording Clerk
Hinkle Creek Friends

Edie Keesee
Ministry & Oversight
Hinkle Creek Friends

Beverly Stewart
Ministry & Oversight
Hinkle Creek Friends

Patricia Morris-Butcher
Ministry & Oversight
Hinkle Creek Friends

Bonnie Zarins
Recording Clerk - Ministry & Oversight
Hinkle Creek Friends

Denny Griffith
Ministry & Oversight
Hinkle Creek Friends

Paulette Stubbs
Member
Hinkle Creek Friends

Bob Stubbs
Pastor
Hinkle Creek Friends

Larry Butcher
Member
Hinkle Creek Friends