

West Richmond Monthly Meeting, Indiana Yearly Meeting

Minute of 19 August, 2012

West Richmond Monthly Meeting (WRM) hereby meets the September 1, 2012 date for a response in the yearly meeting reconfiguration process. That process time line has asked that Monthly Meetings make a choice of identification/affiliation with group A or group B, as separately described and outlined in Indiana Yearly Meeting (IYM) documents from the Reconfiguration Task Force.

We make this statement with a substantial amount of concern, objection, and regret about the prospective reconfiguration/separation. We are not of a single mind about this concern; but for various individuals it includes such matters as (1) regret over the inglorious, long history of fractiousness and schism in the Christian church as a whole and Quakerism in specific, (2) a strong desire to maintain ties of history, service, friendship, and affection with our sisters and brothers in IYM, (3) concerns about some actions of IYM leaders that have seemed to be predisposed to separation and exclusion of our Monthly Meeting, and (4) a process that has been rushed, forced, and lacking in Friends' characteristic patient listening for God's leading. We reiterate to all Friends in IYM and to all observers in the world that we have never sought division or separation in any form; nor have we sought to impose any demand, request, or expectation upon other Monthly Meetings or upon IYM to take the position to which we have been called over a long period of prayer, study, and deliberation.

As a Monthly Meeting that has been called into affirmation and full inclusion of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) persons, reflected in our minute of June 2008, WRM believes that such affirmation and inclusion are compatible with our current membership in IYM. **Yet recognizing the realities of the reconfiguration process that is underway, we clearly state that WRM as a body recognizes that our identity is as described in the Task Force characterization of Yearly Meeting 'A' rather than Yearly Meeting 'B'.**

While we affirm our witness expressed through the WRM minute that has brought to the surface a much broader group of serious disagreements within IYM, to which separation has been one response, we reserve for the present our future options about organizational affiliation. It is not entirely clear to us that immediate affiliation with a group known as IYM 'A' will be the wisest or best choice for us, although it might be. We are open to other possible models of yearly meeting or affinity group affiliation.

We are also mindful that a significant number of other Monthly Meetings have been led not to choose either A or B, expressing reservations like those we express in this minute. We know that Friends are meeting to pray, discuss, and support one another in this leading, in the hope of the emergence of options for reconciliation that have not yet been included in the process. WRM remains open to the possibilities to which this movement might lead.

Finally we express our care and concern for all our fellow Monthly Meetings in IYM, both those which reached a decision about reconfiguration and those that have been led not to choose. We feel sadness for struggle, anxiety, and internal division that might have been elicited in any Monthly Meeting as an unintended result of our action.

We send this report with our love and blessing for peace, in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord.

At the direction of West Richmond Monthly Meeting,

Richard L. Sinex
Presiding Clerk