

Quaker Life



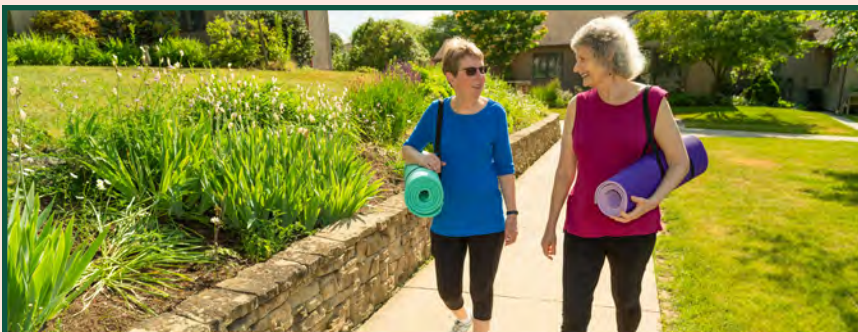
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Volume 8 | Number 4 | Spring 2024



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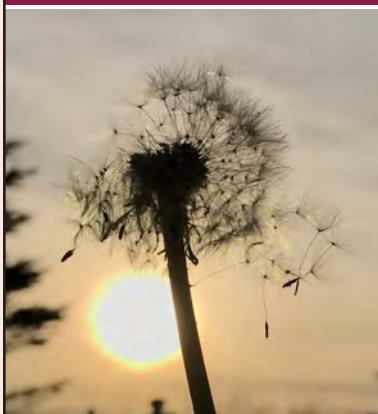
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Volume 8 | Number 4 | Spring 2024

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Memorials may be found on our website at
<https://www.friendsunitedmeeting.org/memorials>

The Friends United Meeting community stretches far and wide across the globe. We are a collection of Christ-centered Quakers, embracing thirty-eight Yearly Meetings and Associations, thousands of local gatherings, and hundreds of thousands of individuals. Joined together through our shared experience of God and united in common ministries, we form a beloved fellowship that is powerfully at work in our local areas and through cross-cultural service.

From the Caribbean to Palestine, Africa to North America and scattered places in between, FUM is building a global partnership in a season of history when much of the world is being stretched and strained by cultural, political, and geographic differences. An important part of our work and witness is to express the love and peace of Christ with one another, believing God is transforming us into a people who are more lovely and whole than we could ever be on our own. As we are powerfully energized by the Holy Spirit, equipped for faithful service and leadership, deeply connected to one another, we experience a unity that transcends our diversity.

— Colin Saxton

We are FUM

Anyone immersed in the work and community of Friends United Meeting knows how difficult it can be to explain FUM to others. We are a community of Friends, encouraging one another in faith. We are a community of Friends, encouraging one another in faith. We are a publisher. We run schools, and provide resources for schools. We plant churches, deliver babies, and teach people



how to filter dirty water. We teach adults how to read their native language, using the bible as a text. We spread programs that teach peace and conflict resolution, and facilitate trauma healing. We provide islands of green space in the urban density of Ramallah. We bring together small groups of people to talk with each other about how their congregations can flourish. We work to prevent election violence. We do so many different kinds of work, in so many different places, that it can be impossible to know how to answer the question, “What does FUM do?”

It’s not that we haven’t tried. Over the years we’ve published a dozen or more brochures that describe our work

in this place or that place, we've published brochures about the people who do that work. We've used pages and pages in *Quaker Life*, our Connections bulletin insert, and now the weekly e-news, to describe work supported by and connected to FUM, all over the world. But we've never published a comprehensive overview of Friends United Meeting. With this issue of *Quaker Life*, we are.

Early in the 2000s, the FUM board decided on four priorities that would guide all of FUM's work, directly and with partners: global partnership, leadership and resource development, holistic evangelism, and communications. The first section of this issue begins with explanations of what Friends United Meeting means when it uses those words or phrases, and also explores the way the FUM General Board works with each other and the staff to implement programs grounded in those priorities. The next section introduces the FUM staff whom, at present, are tasked with implementing FUM's programs. The third section explains the kinds of work that we do.

The fourth section presents our vision for the future, in two parts. John Muhanji writes about the next task for Friends in Africa, which is to bring the original Quaker insight into Christianity — an insight shaped by European ideas and cultures — more deeply into the lives of African Friends by allowing African ideas and cultures to shape and to adapt to Quakerism in the same manner that early Friends were both shaped and shaped by nascent Quakerism. And finally, Kelly Kellum looks forward to see what we can tell about FUM's future based on what we are working on and toward in the present.



Embracing Unity Through Global Partnership

Kelly Kellum

“Just as a body, though one, has many parts, but all its many parts form one body, so it is with Christ. For we were all baptized by one Spirit so as to form one body — whether Jews or Gentiles, slave or free — and we were all given the one Spirit to drink. Even so the body is not made up of one part but of many.”

— 1 Corinthians 12:12-14



In the dynamic tapestry of global Quakerism, Friends United Meeting strives to be a beacon of unity and partnership. At the heart of FUM’s mission lies our commitment to global partnership, a core ministry priority that transcends boundaries and fosters collaboration grounded in biblical understanding of the body of Christ, as articulated in 1 Corinthians 12. This foundational belief affirms the intrinsic value of every member within the body, recognizing that each individual or group is essential for the functioning of the whole. Just as the human body relies on every part to function harmoniously, so, too, does the body of Christ rely on the diverse gifts and perspectives of its members.

Global partnership defines the character of our work, the relationships we cultivate, and the kind of global community we are becoming. A former director of FUM’s Global Ministries department, Eden Grace, offered the following reflections in her efforts to define what global partnership meant to her:

Friends United Meeting has named global partnership as a core ministry priority.

FUM has had a stated commitment to cross-cultural equity and partnership for at least as long as I've been involved in the organization. And for as long as I can remember, Friends have had a hard time defining exactly what that meant!

In 2004 (I think), we approved the Four Priorities, and yet again we articulated our fundamental, absolute commitment to global partnership. But what does that mean? Do we know what we're trying to achieve? Will we recognize it when we experience it?

I'm passionate about global partnership, and I want to try to explain what it means to me. I'm hoping this might be helpful to the overall values FUM strives to embody.

First of all, global partnership is not the same thing as Global Ministries. It makes me a little bit batty when I see this typo, because I think it's an indication that we don't really know what global partnership is. Global Ministries is an organizational unit of Friends United Meeting (a department, so to speak). The Global Ministries department has ten directly-employed staff members (including myself), and countless partners who work with us to implement the projects. I am the Director of the Global Ministries department, which means I supervise those people. But I most certainly do not "supervise" global partnership!

Global partnership, as I look at it, is not a project or program or activity of FUM. It is a fierce commitment to a particular way of doing ministry, that undergirds all of our projects and programs — in all of the departments and locations — and all of our relationships and governing bodies and ways of making decisions and testimonies of being Christians in the world. It isn't a *what*, it's a *how*.

So, the question to consider is, what does global partnership look like? How will we know when we experience it?



FUM's focus on global partnership involves restructuring our way of thinking even as we rely on finding practical ways to relate to each other and connect Quakers across the world. This requires us to embrace the Quaker testimony of equality more fully, which is grounded in the awareness that regardless of age, gender, race, or ability, every person is invested with the divine spark and is a vital and active participant in our beloved community.

Power

South African church historian Graham Duncan writes, "The issue of power in the 'older sending churches' has been an intrusive factor in preventing the theory of partnership becoming a reality." I think this has certainly been a challenge for Friends United Meeting. FUM has a rich heritage of being a "sending church." The Quaker presence in Cuba, Jamaica, Palestine, and East Africa is evident. Early Friends missionaries responded to the call of God and did magnificent work to plant churches, provide health care, open schools,

establish mission sites, and build institutions that are deeply appreciated today. Historically, these missionary endeavors coincided with colonial expansion. For example, (American) Friends missionaries came to Kenya on the heels of the British empire, they traveled inland on the East African Railway, and were assigned to establish the church and develop the Western Province by the British “protectorate” government.

We must be thankful for the courageous efforts of these missionaries, while at the same time carefully examining and humbly accounting for how our history influences our attitudes and approaches to ministry. Known as the “mission-sending” agency of North American Quakers, American representatives to Friends United Meeting maintained decision-making power to determine policies, set budgets, and discern missional priorities for FUM. Dismantling these paradigms and addressing historical power structures is critical to our work as we strive toward authentic global partnership. As we change power structures and paradigms, we are also changing FUM’s governance, staffing strategies, and approach to missions.

Governance

Every member Yearly Meeting of Friends United Meeting appoints representatives to serve on FUM’s General Board. Yet it is rare for most board members outside North America to participate in the board meetings. This began to change in the early 2000s, when the Clerk and General Secretary traveled to East Africa to hold board meetings with African board representatives. While participating in one of these meetings, I recall a member of the board asking, “When FUM holds board meetings in Africa, are these meetings ceremonial, or do we African Friends participate in governing FUM?” The question stays with me.



In 2014, FUM's Triennial sessions approved a restructuring plan to decentralize the governing structures of FUM and address that question. While FUM has only one General Board and one Presiding Clerk, the new structure allowed for appointments of board officers to represent two regions, Africa and North America/Caribbean. Today, the Presiding Clerk and the Assistant Clerk-Africa Region will collaborate on an agenda for the General Board. Often, the Assistant Clerk-Africa Region will preside over these meetings, especially when a business matter relates more directly to African concerns.

FUM's revised *Organization and Procedures* established the Executive Board, consisting of board officers and at-large members equally representing both regions. The Executive Board has the authority of the General Board when the board is not in session, and meets frequently to discern ministry opportunities, review budgets, provide oversight and counsel to the General Secretary, and address other matters that

rise to the level of the board. Moreover, the new structure changed the composition of FUM's Board of Trustees, requiring that two Trustees be appointed from the African region.

Our goal is for Board and FUM members everywhere to feel involved in FUM decisions and programs anywhere. To turn this goal into reality, global partnership must become our way of being, our way of thinking, and our way of conducting all our business. This comes with significant learning curves and requires a great deal of cultural humility as we navigate time zones, respond to contextual challenges, address different priorities, work through theological differences, embrace new technologies, and talk about money despite economic disparities. The inclusion of Latino Friends in this shared work is a growing edge for FUM as we become an increasingly multilingual community. Our commitment to global partnership is hard work, but it ensures that diverse voices are heard and valued in decision-making, enriching our collective wisdom and deepening our capacity to discern God's will together.

Staffing

FUM's commitment to global partnership is also changing our staffing strategies. Friends United Meeting's office in Richmond was built to accommodate a staff of twenty-five to thirty people. Today we have seven staff members working from that office, a reduction resulting from new economic realities for North American Friends, changing ministry priorities, and our work toward global partnership. In 2004, FUM opened the Africa Ministries Office in Kisumu, Kenya. This office was established to provide administrative oversight and support for FUM's African programs, to coordinate ministry priorities, and to connect Friends in Africa with the global community of Friends. Currently, the Africa Ministries Office employs four staff members who do work

that would previously have been assigned to missionary field staff or to administrative staff members in Richmond. This redistribution of responsibilities is happening in other places, as well.

As FUM embraces the values of global partnership, the faces of our staff members increasingly reflect the faces of our community. When Western missionary field staff leave a position or a new position opens, we no longer assume that the best person for the work is another Westerner. For example, the new director of FUM-Belize comes from Kenya. The principals of Friends Theological College and Ramallah Friends School are alumni of those institutions, and have returned because they are passionate about the institutions and committed to the mission of FUM. Program officers in Belize and Kenya are from the communities they are now serving, and they are doing work previously assigned to field staff.

FUM is becoming a global workspace, which brings both blessings and challenges. One of the greatest joys is the diversity of perspectives and ideas that staff from different cultural backgrounds bring to the table. Managing cultural differences can present frustrations as we work through communication barriers, varying work styles, hidden hierarchies, and potential misunderstandings. Yet the blessings that come from serving on a multicultural team are worth the misunderstandings, for working together gives us a sense of what the Kingdom of God must be like and presents a powerful witness to a deeply divided world.

Missions

Global partnership shapes FUM's approach to missions and outreach. A past FUM general secretary, Colin Saxton, wrote: "FUM is not a 'North American mission agency' doing work around the world for 'them.' No — 'we' are collaborating together. We are learning from one another, relying on one

another, and sharing in the responsibility and opportunity to express and embody Quaker faith within a global context.” The ultimate aim of all missions is to participate in God’s kingdom work, and proclaim and demonstrate the gospel of Christ. However, we do this work as a global missional community.

Friends United Meeting approaches missions with a commitment to fostering partnerships that emphasize mutual respect and collaboration to address the needs of the communities we serve. This commitment shapes FUM’s approach in several key ways. Firstly, it encourages a more inclusive and participatory model of mission work, where local communities are encouraged to identify their own needs and solutions rather than having external agendas imposed upon them. In many ways, FUM’s Global Ministries department is a network of various kinds of partnerships, each defined a little differently. For example, we are in partnership with Lugulu Yearly Meeting to provide support for Lugulu Friends Hospital. We are in partnership with Nairobi Yearly Meeting to support the mission of the Lindi Friends School. Ramallah Friends School is a subsidiary of FUM, and we are fiduciary partners with RFS’s Board of Trustees in providing oversight to the school. Currently, the new African Friends Board of Missions is working closely with the leadership of Tanzania Yearly Meeting to identify strategies and locations to open new mission sites and deploy African missionaries who will be sponsored by FUM-affiliated Yearly Meetings in Kenya.

Secondly, FUM’s commitment to global partnership promotes cultural sensitivity and responsiveness, ensuring that mission efforts are respectful of local customs, traditions, and contexts. This is the characteristic of FUM’s Living Letters (short-term missions) initiatives aimed to facilitate a wide variety of travel in the ministry: for service, for prayer, for learning, for solidarity, for teaching, for discernment, for

encouragement, for witness, and more. Friends visit in order to affirm our oneness as the body of Christ, meeting each other in times of need and in times of joy. We learn from each other and know each other in that which is eternal. Through encountering each other in worship and in service, we are knit together in love. And through the sometimes-surprising encounter with Christ in the “other,” both hosts and guests are profoundly changed.

Grace and Reconciliation

Global partnership not only informs how FUM engages with a global community, but compels us — especially North Americans — to examine our past with humility and honesty. When we recognize the existence of corporate bias and historical injustices, it commits us to establishing new patterns of global relationships based on reconciliation and forgiveness. By acknowledging and seeking forgiveness for past wrongs, FUM endeavors to heal historic wounds and build a more inclusive and equitable Quaker community.

In 2019, I had the opportunity to participate in a conference of Friends leaders in East Africa. Zablon Malenge, longtime Friend and historian, provided a history of the Friends Church in Kenya. He noted historic failures that continue to challenge African Friends today. In his analysis, some of the issues can be attributed to the rapidity with which missionaries vacated Kenya following its national independence, creating a leadership vacuum and opening the door for greed, corruption, and divisions among Friends. He said many missionaries came when the British arrived and departed when they left.

In the worship that followed that presentation, I felt led to stand on behalf of Friends United Meeting and North American Friends — and even my grandparents who served in Kenya from 1923 to 1952 — and ask for forgiveness for the sins of our past. It was a moment of grace and reconciliation.

It was also a moment when FUM took another step toward global partnership.

So, what does global partnership look like? How will we know when we experience it? I am not sure if FUM will fully achieve it, but I think it may look like the fulfillment of Micah's prophetic hopes:

"What does the Lord require of you but to do justice and to love kindness and to walk humbly with your God?"

— Micah 6:8



Leadership and Resource Development

Michael Sherman

“FUM commits itself to energize and equip Friends through the power of the Holy Spirit to gather people into fellowships where Jesus Christ is known, loved, and obeyed as Teacher and Lord.”

— the mission statement of Friends United Meeting



Friends United Meeting* is dedicated to leadership and resource development within the Friends community. Quaker founder George Fox said, “Christ has come to teach his people himself.” Friends also believe there is “that of God in everyone.” These two realities provide opportunity for dynamism and creativity. Because Christ is present to teach us personally, each of us is responsible to answer and give voice to what we are being taught. And because we believe each individual bears the image of God, it is incumbent upon us to diligently be open to and aware of the potential to find the presence of God — wherever we may be and whomever we may encounter.

The multitude of combinations and permutations available to Friends may seem endless, as we individually respond to the present call of Christ. As Isaac Pennington wrote, “It is not the different practice from one another that breaks the Peace and Unity but judging of one another because of differing practices.” Collectively trusting God invites each of us to an uncommon trust: trusting God in our own lives, while

*Previously known, from 1902–1963, as Five Years Meeting, and its affiliate, the American Friends Board of Missions.



simultaneously trusting God in each other's lives — even when those lives diverge in experience and expression.

Ultimately, FUM exists for the benefit of its constituent Yearly Meetings, Associations, and independent Monthly Meetings. Leadership in the Quaker world involves creating safe places where people both feel free to express their sense of God and are able to get constructive feedback and learning support from the experience. Because we believe Christ is our present teacher, it is incumbent upon FUM's leadership to always be prepared to hear the voice of God — which can come from any source.

The manner in which FUM builds up leaders and develops resources will always be consistent with what Friends know as “the testimonies:” *integrity, equality, simplicity, peace, community, and stewardship*.

The Quaker testimony of **integrity** shapes Friends' understanding and informs their conduct. It reflects a

commitment to living lives of honesty, sincerity, and moral uprightness, and being true to oneself and to others in all circumstances. Friends are encouraged to be honest in their dealings with others, avoiding deceit and falsehoods. The call for integrity involves striving for coherence between one's words, actions, and beliefs, while seeking to integrate principles of honesty, justice, and compassion into every aspect of life.

Quakers strive to be people of their word. They follow through on promises and obligations, and earn the trust and respect of others through their consistent behavior. This authentic expression of their true selves and values comes without pretense or hypocrisy. Friends do this by being true to their inner convictions and conscience in the face of opposition or adversity.

The testimony of **equality** guides Friends in promoting justice, inclusivity, and respect for the rights and dignity of every person. Being rooted in the “inner light of Christ” and “that of God in everyone,” the equality testimony informs Friends’ relationships, practices, and actions within their communities and the wider world. It reflects a commitment to recognizing and honoring the inherent worth of each individual, with an ongoing effort towards creating a world where all people are treated with justice, respect, and equality.

This belief in the spiritual equality of all people forms the basis for Quaker worship, decision-making processes, and community life. Quakers strive to create communities that are welcoming and inclusive, where all individuals are valued and respected regardless of differences. Quakers have a long history of involvement in movements for civil rights; advocating for laws and policies which promote equality and justice for all. All Friends have an equal voice in the Quaker decision-making process, ensuring decisions are made in a spirit of mutual respect and cooperation. Quakers strive to extend their witness for equality into the world, speaking out

against oppression and inequality and working to create a more just and inclusive society.

The Quaker testimony of **simplicity** emphasizes a life of clarity and focus. It encourages individuals to examine their lifestyles, possessions, and outward appearances, as it invites the removal of distractions to create space for deeper spiritual connection and more meaningful relationships.

So simplicity is not merely about material possessions, but also encompasses attitudes, behaviors, and relationships. The testimony of simplicity invites living harmoniously with the Divine in a way which brings Friends' deepest values into alignment, fostering a sense of inner peace and harmony with others. It encourages a lifestyle characterized by moderation, mindfulness, and meaning.

The testimony of **peace** is a guiding principle which shapes our identity and informs our actions in the world. It reflects a deep commitment to promoting justice, reconciliation, and nonviolence as pathways to building a more peaceful and humane society. Friends actively promote peace and reconciliation in areas of conflict and violence.

Quakers seek to embody principles of kindness, compassion, and forgiveness in their daily lives, fostering harmony and understanding. Commitment to nonviolence is based on the teachings of Jesus Christ and the belief in the inherent worth and dignity of all human beings. Many Friends uphold their commitment to peace by refusing to participate in armed conflict — they engage in alternative forms of service. Quakers work to address the root causes of conflict, and build relationships of trust and understanding between individuals and communities.

The Quaker testimony of **community** emphasizes the reality of our “interconnectedness,” the need for mutual support, and the importance of shared worship and fellowship. It guides Friends in building and nurturing inclusive, spiritually vibrant communities grounded in



love, compassion, and cooperation. Friends' testimony of community helps shape the Quaker identity, informing relationships, practices, and actions.

Friends are encouraged to participate and contribute regardless of race, gender, ability, or other differences. Quakers come together in worship and fellowship to seek communion with the Divine and to nurture spiritual growth and connection. This collaborative approach to decision-making promotes a sense of ownership and accountability within the community, and helps to build unity around shared goals and values.

The Quaker testimony of **stewardship** emphasizes responsible and ethical management of resources for the common good. Quakers strive to live in harmony with nature, recognizing the interconnectedness of all living beings and the importance of preserving the Earth's resources. Friends advocate for policies and practices which promote social justice, economic equity, and human rights. Quakers seek to build realities which are sustainable, resilient, and fair.



The Quaker testimony of stewardship reflects a commitment to responsible and ethical resource management for the common good and well-being of future generations. Stewardship is not just a practical responsibility, but also a spiritual discipline for Quakers. By caring for the Earth and its inhabitants with reverence and respect, Quakers seek to honor the Divine presence in all of creation and to deepen their spiritual connection with the natural world.

Leadership, for Friends, arises from the ability to listen for the voice of God. As we gather, we find ourselves giving witness to the power of the Holy Spirit among us. It is our willingness to be obedient to Christ as Teacher and Lord which draws us together and forward as a community. FUM's commitment to "energize and equip" prioritizes the needs of others and the benefit of the community over individual wants and desires. It encourages leaders, formed by the Quaker testimonies, to act with humility, empathy, and a commitment to serving the greater good.

Friends United Meeting prioritizes building and maintaining relationships with members, supporters, and the broader community for the purpose of cultivating an environment of trust, open communication, and mutual respect. As FUM operates in an increasingly equitable global reality, leadership within this environment means the people employed within the organization reflect the diversity of its community. That means FUM embraces leadership which represents different backgrounds, experiences, and perspectives.

In order for FUM to continue as an effective, inclusive organization, it must lead the way as it establishes mechanisms for accountability and evaluation of its efforts in developing leadership and resources. FUM must facilitate sustainable practices and responsible management of financial, human, and material resources.

Friends United Meeting encourages its leaders and constituents to engage in continuous learning, self-reflection, and spiritual discernment. Part of FUM's mission is to provide ongoing opportunities for leadership development and training. Continuous growth and learning will allow FUM, both as an institution and within its membership, to be adaptable and flexible for the future. In a rapidly changing world, Friends' leaders will be adaptable and flexible in their approach to resource development, embracing innovation while staying true to Quaker values and principles.

FUM's most precious resource is its constituent members — those who worship, pray, minister, and fellowship in their local Meetings, churches, and spiritual gatherings. They are the ones whose development and growth create the future of Friends United Meeting.



Holistic Evangelism

Karla Jay



For Friends United Meeting, evangelism is the joyful proclamation and demonstration of God's love expressed through Jesus' life, death, and resurrection, and continued through the life and witness of Friends. Though words, evangelism is the invitation to all to love, know, and follow the Living Christ and to find a home in the community of Jesus' friends. Though deeds, evangelism is expressed through the way we consistently seek first the Kingdom of God and faithfully live so that God's will is done on earth, just as it is in heaven. In some places, this means FUM helps train and support church planters and evangelists who are called to embody and share the love of Christ with others in a culturally appropriate way. In other places, evangelism is expressed through clean water projects, medical ministry, and working with Meetings and churches to find new ways to connect with their local communities.

In fact, we can see the different facets and dimensions of holistic evangelism expressed in most of our FUM ministries. Our African ministries provide the best example. We have energetic and passionate church planting going on in Kenya, Uganda, and Tanzania. Our missions in Turkana and Samburu are growing rapidly, while Friends Theological College prepares increasing numbers of leaders for these quickly-expanding churches and ministries.

People come to know Jesus through these ministries, and people's spiritual lives are being powerfully transformed. Yet we know that good news is not only preaching about Jesus, but also embodying Jesus' actions. FUM ministries also



provide venues where people find food and opportunities for empowerment, such as education.

In 2024, the FUM general board decided to expand our Girl Child Education program in Turkana, Samburu, and Mt. Elgon, Kenya, to include boys. One reason for this decision is to address the issue of banditry in these communities, especially among the pastoralist people of Samburu and Turkana. Banditry, which was once a cultural practice revolving around the theft of animals, now includes robbery, extortion, kidnapping, smuggling, arson, and vandalism.



FUM hopes that the mentoring and educational opportunity that comprises the Shepherd Boy's Educational Fund will provide an alternative to banditry for addressing poverty, unemployment, or lack of a livelihood, as well as providing non-violent means for addressing political and social grievances, marginalization, and lack of access to resources and opportunities.

Lugulu Friends Hospital is another means of preaching the gospel. One of the first promotional materials I came across from Lugulu hospital was a brochure that said, "Jesus heals and saves." This is certainly true at Lugulu Friends Hospital. People come to the hospital looking for help. Though FUM's support of the Adopt-a-Bed program, people know that they can receive care at the hospital despite their financial situation.



Another holistic ministry in which we have been involved is advocating for peace and working to prevent violence around elections in Kenya. Our programme officer, Getry Agizah, has been working on a plan to prepare Kenyan Friends, especially in western Kenya, to respond to outbreaks of violence and to monitor voting during Kenyan elections.

Getry's peace work, and the work of our ministry partner, Friends Church Peace Team, also involves training communities in alternatives to violence, as well as working with victims of ethnic and political violence and their perpetrators on trauma healing and reconciliation.

In Turkana, many of the Friends churches host early childhood development programs, where children are able to go to school. These programs also become feeding centers.



If we move our attention from Africa to Belize, we see that we have brought the same Quaker DNA to a different part of the world. Belize Friends Ministries (also known as FUM-Belize) is a three-part operation: church, center, and school. Young families are joining the church and have found leadership and service opportunities. The school empowers students not only through education, but also provides opportunities for spirituality every morning during devotions. Belize Friends School has traditionally been a school of last resort for students who needed special help to master basic reading and math skills. Yet it increasingly serves a growing immigrant Spanish-speaking population by teaching classes in English as a Second Language. Belize Friends Church provides physical resources such as food and

hygiene items to church members and their families. Belize Friends Center has worked with police and community groups to raise awareness about human trafficking, has hosted school preparation events for students throughout the Southside neighborhood, has become a sponsor of Alternatives to Violence training and reading workshops, and, through a new computer lab and podcasting studio, is providing the means for residents of Belize City's Southside neighborhood to connect with the larger world.

Even near the home offices of Friends United Meeting, in Richmond, Indiana, the preliminary work of FUM's new Latino Friends Ministries committee is taking a remarkably similar shape. We have been welcoming the stranger through two projects: classes in English hosted at West Richmond Friends Church, and volunteer work at Indianapolis' Iglesia Amigos new Richmond house. The English classes held at West Richmond, advertised only by word-of-mouth, have at times attracted nearly a hundred participants, who have had to be divided into classes by skill level. The Amigos house, on Richmond's North side, is being re-habbed by local Friends, and is intended to be used for short-term housing for Latino Friends who immigrate to Richmond.

Jesus' good news brings redemption and transformation in all facets of our lives. It is good news for the poor, it feeds the hungry, it quenches the thirst of the thirsty, and it brings peace where there is turmoil. Holistic evangelism is not simply a trendy way to do ministry — it is the gospel itself and lives out Jesus' teaching in Matthew 25: For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me.

Friends believe that the Kingdom of Heaven is here now, that the words "your will be done on earth as it is in heaven" do, in fact, reflect a desire for God's divine will to be fulfilled

both in heaven and on earth, and an intention to carry God's purposes and intentions in all realms of existence. Jesus' kingdom is to be lived out in the present, transforming violent situations into places of peace, providing water where there is thirst, providing food where there is hunger, welcoming the stranger. Holistic evangelism is the promise and the faith that we can live the Kingdom of Heaven here and now.



Communications

Dan Kasztelan



For Friends United Meeting, communication is the ministry of sharing about God's ongoing work through Friends, both within the FUM community, and to a watching and listening world. More broadly, the stories and images we share are meant to encourage Friends' understanding and practice of Christian discipleship, and to provide, in spirit and word, mentors and companions in our worldwide faith family.

Through our communication projects we endeavor to connect, energize, and equip the members of Friends United Meeting: to connect Friends from around the world through stories and images of our shared faith; to energize Friends by sharing stories of the ways that Friends in other places are participating in God's work in the world, and stories of how Friends in the past have listened to God and worked on God's behalf; to equip Friends by telling and showing the tools—intellectual, spiritual, and material—that other Friends are using as they align themselves with God's leadings, God's concerns, and God's purposes.

We use a variety of methods to offer our words and pictures about what God is doing and saying through the community of Friends United Meeting.

Quaker Life

Through our quarterly magazine, *Quaker Life*, we share stories and images from Friends around the world about what it means to live faithfully, following a Quaker pattern, in these times. Written and illustrated by members of Friends



United Meeting, our stories are addressed to both those who are already committed Friends and those still exploring Friends' faith. *Quaker Life* is sold in single copies and by subscription, through our online bookstore (bookstore.friendsunitedmeeting.org/collections/quaker-life). Subscriptions are available for individuals and for groups—group subscriptions are delivered

to individual addresses but at a lower rate than subscriptions for individuals. We offer discounted rates to groups of four to twelve, thirteen to thirty, and thirty-one or more. We also have a subscription for *Quaker Life* in digital ebook form, and a subscription for the digital version and print version combined.

FUM E-news

Our weekly email newsletter, the FUM E-news, exists to share regular, timely news about the work and witness of the global FUM community. Our news coverage ranges from work carried out by FUM staff under the direction of the FUM General Board to programs occurring in Local Meetings and Yearly Meetings, as well as events in the wider Quaker world. Regular features include excerpts from field staff newsletters, a calendar of Quaker events, and job advertisements from Quaker organizations. You may subscribe to the email newsletter by signing up here: <https://bit.ly/FUM-enews-subscribe>.

Internet presence

Our website, friendsunitedmeeting.org, exists for many purposes, among them: to spread information about Quaker

Some of these core experiences include



Christ has come to teach his people himself.

As the Risen Lord, Christ continues to call, lead and teach those who are open to following Him. Through inward revelation and instruction, God offers the necessary guidance, insight and empowerment to discern and mind the Divine Will. Since the Light of Christ has been given to all people (John 1:9), access to God's grace and truth are universally available. As we turn to Christ in faith, the Presence of the Holy Spirit enables and empowers us to know the Truth and discern God's will both individually and corporately. This means we can be led beyond the



The Light of Christ is within each of us.

Sometimes, Quakers say "there is that of God in each person." By recognizing every human being as God's good creation and bearing some aspect of God's image, the awareness of God in others helps shape and direct the way we see ourselves and treat others. If I seek to experience God most fully and personally, I need only to turn inward to seek that Presence and Power. In understanding who I am to become and how I am to live, I find the Indwelling Christ is able to animate and empower me. In learning to treat others with love, justice and compassion, I have only to



We are called and enabled to do the will of God.

Not only are we enabled to know God and God's will, we are empowered by that same Presence to carry it out faithfully, even to "perfection." The spiritual life is a life of transformation if it is, indeed, authentic. The fruit of this transformation becomes evident in both matters of personal and social holiness, as our lives are re-ordered and re-shaped by our life in Christ. Believing that Christ is truly risen and Lord of all, there is a palpable sense that God's will is able to be done on earth just as it is in heaven. As ones whose eyes are open

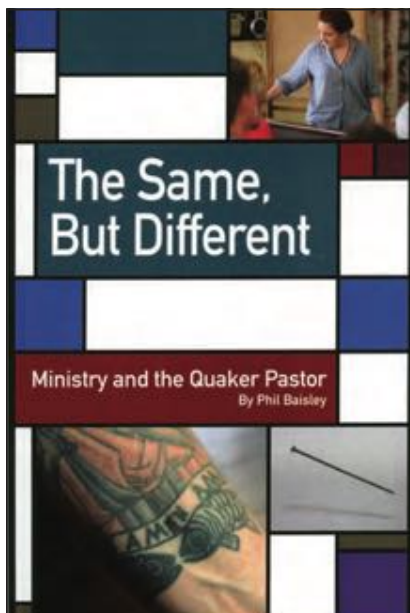
Christian faith to those who want to know more about Friends; to explain Friends United Meeting to Friends and non-Friends alike; as a platform for connecting members of FUM to the programs and work of FUM. For example, on the website you can, among other things, discover what Friends believe; read a description of what you can expect when you visit a Friends Meeting for the first time; find a copy of the mission statement of Friends United Meeting, and the *Richmond Declaration of Faith*; learn how to participate in a *Living Letters* visit to Friends in other places; register for FUM's annual *Stoking the Fire* retreat; or find out about work among Friends in Turkana or Samburu or Belize.

In addition, we use our social media homes on Facebook and Instagram to broaden the reach of our message, posting, in shortened form, stories about what Friends United Meeting has been doing, with links to longer, in-depth versions of the same content. When Friends repost our content to their own accounts, we are able to reach friends of Friends who are not yet connected to Friends United Meeting, but might find themselves interested in Quakers (more broadly) and Friends United Meeting (more

specifically) when information about us fi d its way into their social media feeds.

Brochures and Pamphlets

We publish a number of inexpensive brochures and pamphlets on basic aspects of Friends faith and history. These are meant primarily for Meetings and churches to use in explaining to newcomers and old timers alike what Friends believe, what Friends do, and what Christian faith in the manner of Friends looks like. The topics of these short publications range from early Friends to the principles of Quaker business meeting to the Friends peace testimony to prayer and worship. They can be found in our online bookstore here: <https://bookstore.friendsunitedmeeting.org/collections/pamphlets-and-tracts>.



Friends United Press

Friends United Press publishes books on Quaker topics that would likely not be published by other publishers, especially Quaker spiritual autobiographies and books on Quaker history and beliefs. The Press also publishes devotional literature, Quaker spirituality, curriculum for children and small groups, and, occasionally, Quaker

fiction or poetry. In addition, we are the publisher for most of the works of Howard Thurman, a twentieth-century theologian, spiritual leader, and friend of Friends.

Online bookstore

The purpose of FUM's online bookstore is to provide resources from the whole of the Christian tradition for Friends, Friends' pastors and leaders, Friends communities, and those curious about the Religious Society of Friends. We carry books and other media on topics including Quakerism, religious faith and history, the Bible, peace and nonviolence, spiritual formation, ministry, prayer and inspiration, congregational life, global issues, missions, and leadership. We carry books published by Friends United Press and many other presses, as well as individual copies of *Quaker Life* and individual subscriptions. We stock all of the tracts from the Friends Tract Association. The bookstore is searchable by author, title, or subject. You can find the online bookstore here: <https://bookstore.friendsunitedmeeting.org>.

Video

In the twenty-first century, people increasingly turn to video to find information that earlier Friends would have found in books or tracts. We have a few video offerings on our YouTube channel, <https://www.youtube.com/FUMQuakers> and are committed to developing more video resources.



Learning about FUM

Bill Eagles



I didn't particularly want to learn about FUM. Oh, I knew that some people in my Yearly Meeting of whom I thought highly were heavily involved and I knew that the Yearly Meeting supported FUM. But I was at ease with serving in my Meeting and Yearly Meeting. I knew the names of some ministries, but I didn't really know what they did or how FUM went about it. Yet, when I became Assistant Presiding Clerk of my Yearly Meeting and then Presiding Clerk, I found myself perform on the FUM general board. I really had no choice.

It has, however, been an interesting and meaningful experience. And it has taught me much about Quakerism and Quaker process in a different environment. The Board meets three or four times each year with members generally serving three-year terms (plus committee work in between). So, we get to know one another, perhaps not as intimately as we know people in our Monthly Meetings, but well enough for Quaker practice to generally work. People come to the work with different backgrounds, strengths and weaknesses, levels of familiarity with the tasks at hand, and sometimes theological perspectives. It's what you might imagine for a group made up of folks from different Yearly Meetings and in different places on their own spiritual journeys. What the members usually share is a seriousness about the tasks, a willingness to become enmeshed in FUM, and a belief that, working together, they can find a way forward.

My experience is that Quaker process is enhanced when those who've gathered each keeps an open mind tempered with awareness of their role. Being a representative of a Yearly



Meeting can be different from being a free agent. Yet, a search for Truth using Quaker process seems most effectively to take place among those gathered in the room at the time. When the board gathers, the understanding of these subtleties is seldom universal across the group, the time, and the issue. But I believe it overwhelmingly works. That certainly does not mean that the board always makes the decision that I would make alone; it often doesn't. It does, however, almost always make a decision that is right for the organization in the moment. By which I mean that it makes a decision that is in keeping with the mission and priorities of the organization and that allows the work to continue as hearts and minds continue to seek to accomplish a measure of God's will.

During my tenure, there has been a firm commitment to incorporating Friends from places and cultures other than North America into the decision-making process — moving real power away from a North American center. From my perspective at least, great strides have been made, but the

difficulties in time and distance (and sometimes culture) remain.

Once the Triennial has appointed the General Secretary and the various Yearly Meetings have appointed their representative board members, the board members then have a responsibility to support the General Secretary, to keep the General Secretary focused on FUM's adopted mission and, within the mission, on the adopted priorities. That requires knowing the mission and priorities and knowing the various ministries and how they are performing.

The Mission Statement is on the wall in the room where we meet and is referred to often. I don't believe I've attended a board meeting when it went unmentioned. Ministries evolve. For instance, the renewed focus (and related shifting of resources) on North American ministries comes from expressed interests and concerns from North American Yearly Meetings with recommendations by staff and decisions and direction from the board. Geographical expansions of ministries in East Africa (including more focus on Tanzania, Uganda, and elsewhere) initially come largely from nearby Yearly Meetings. Important work with African and Latin American populations in North America have reflected and supported Yearly Meetings' commitments. The Board has sought to respond to and reflect these Yearly Meeting leadings as the ministries evolve.

Board members' knowledge of FUM's work comes from receiving regular written and oral reports, doing the committee work attendant to Board membership, and a participation, often through the Yearly Meeting, in a ministry "on the ground." Plus, members learn through all the communications efforts that inform the entire FUM community. That knowledge, focus on the mission and priorities, and level of commitment, usually enable the Board to work.

I have found the staff in Richmond and around the world and the partners at the various ministries to be committed, talented people with leadings to serve God through FUM. (The exceptions have been rare and when they arose were generally dealt with by the General Secretary with consultation and reporting to the appropriate board or committee members.) I admit that it is easier for me to support and appreciate people who one knows and likes, especially if that person is also competent. Thankfully, I have found over the last fourteen years that our staff and partners meet those standards, even as they bring their own strengths, weaknesses, leadings, spiritual life, and personalities to their roles.

And, of course, I've learned about and from the other members of the Board — learned of their commitment to FUM, their Yearly Meeting's relationship to the organization, their spiritual journey, their life, work, family, and interests . . . and sometimes what we disagree about. The fact is that I like them.

Each of these relationships is in the context of religious beliefs and commitment. Each decision is another lesson in our Quaker process. Our meetings remind me of what "worship with attention to business" can mean.

So, these fourteen years later, Board members, staff, general secretaries, and even my Yearly Meeting have come and gone. Programs and ministries have begun, evolved, and ended. Practices have changed. But the commitment of the Board to the mission and priorities of FUM seems to remain strong.

I didn't aspire to know more about FUM. Yet, it seems, I do.



We are FUM

Program Staff

Though they have different kinds of titles, our program staff are the people in our North American and African offices who are charged with implementing the vision of the Board for many of our ministries, and guiding the work of our project partners in the geographic areas where our ministries are located.



Getry Agizah

Programme Officer

Getry Agizah works with Friends United Meeting as Programme Officer in the Africa Ministries Office. She coordinates the work of Friends Church Peace Team, as well as overseeing the Girl Child Education Programme and the formation of the new Shepherd Boys Education Fund, and managing FUM's work with Turkana Friends Mission and Samburu Friends Mission.

For many years, Getry has served as the Coordinator of the Friends Church Peace Team. She has participated in many types of peace work, including providing Alternatives to Violence training, trauma healing and reconciliation, mediation, and civic education.

Getry's will and heart are in peace work. She has spent the past fifteen years working for peace around her nation of Kenya, and outside Kenya in countries like Rwanda, Burundi,



Democratic Republic of Congo, South Sudan, Tanzania, Uganda, China, South Africa, Guatemala, and Ireland. She has also traveled within the U.S. to raise support for FCPT, visiting Quaker churches and Meetings in many of the states. Her hobbies are traveling, doing reconciliation work, and helping her society to know real peace.

Getry says: “As darkness gets closer, so worries get stronger and all the time we think about the risks of Peace Ministries. I feel blessed as a person because it has been a testimony and I’ve survived a lot. And this is my motivation to keep on keeping on.”

Getry, married to Joseph Thu ta, is blessed with three children: Dennah Khasiala, Daniel Njuguna, and Esther Khaluhi.

Karla Jay

Global Ministries Coordinator

Karla Jay serves as Friends United Meeting’s Global Ministries Coordinator. She is an active member of FUM’s Global Ministries Team, coordinating schedules and communications and providing administrative support for field staff and ministry partners.

Her husband, Michael Jay, is the pastor of Raysville Friends Church. She has been on the pastoral team at Iglesia Amigos de Indianapolis, where her father, Carlos Moran, is pastor.

Karla was born in Guatemala and raised in the United States. Karla says “I have had the privilege to be in a multicultural setting for most of my life. My passion is seeing unity within the Friends church so that we can be what God has called us to be, to bring the good news of Christ to the poor and oppressed.”

In the Spring of 2024, FUM approved a new ministry among the Latino community. Karla was tasked with guiding the newly formed FUM Latino Ministries Committee, helping Yearly Meetings and Latino Friends groups to make connections, and strengthening the connection between FUM Meetings in Mexico, Cuba, and Guatemala.



Rania Maayeh

Head of School, Ramallah Friends School

Rania is no stranger to Ramallah Friends School. She is a former student, a former teacher, and the parent of three alumni. As a Palestinian Christian and Quaker, Rania considers the RFS community to be the place where her spiritual journey and formation began.

It brings Rania great joy to be able to lead, by serving, the entire RFS community — including more than 1500



students and 180 highly-trained faculty and staff. She is proud of their resilience and tenacity to maintain excellence and uphold their mission despite the many hurdles and challenges presented by their geographic and historical location: the ongoing occupation and the current Israeli war with Gaza chief among them. Rania works hard to support her staff, work with the RFS board and community partners, and take steps to reduce deficits, maintain financial accountability, and find pathways to sustainability to ensure the future of the school.

Athina Major

Program Officer at Belize Friends Center

Athina Major is the Program Officer at Belize Friends Center. She began her relationship with FUM as a teacher at Belize Friends School from 2015–2019. At that time, under the guidance of Dale Graves and Eden Grace, she discovered the power of collaboration and mentorship in shaping meaningful educational experiences. After her tenure as a teacher at Belize Friends School, she earned her certification in school leadership, and is pursuing a bachelor's degree in social work. She says of her teaching experience: "It was the students themselves, with their boundless curiosity and resilience, who truly inspired me. It was an honor to play a part in nurturing such remarkable individuals."

About her hopes for the work she is doing with Belize Friends Center, she says, "Working with youths has always been a calling that resonates with every fiber of my being. Therefore, I am immensely grateful for the opportunity to influence their lives positively and leave a lasting impact through the work we are doing at the Center. The benefits of the community outreach and other programs we're

developing extend far beyond the realms of academia. They serve as catalysts for rebuilding, renewing, and reforming society. By assisting youth to realize their full potential and become better versions of themselves, while building their confidence, we are empowering them to become advocates for positive change within their communities — and, by extension, the country of Belize.”



Oscar and Miriam Mmbali

Field Staff

Oscar, from Western Kenya, is a member of Nairobi Yearly Meeting. In 2004, as a student at Friends Theological College in Kaimosi, Kenya, he felt called to serve in Belize after learning of Friends United Meeting's work there, through articles in *Quaker Life* magazine. That call came to fruition in 2017, when, after receiving higher-level education in pastoral ministry and community development, Oscar joined FUM as Belize's first pastoral minister.



Oscar was charged with bringing transformation and lasting change to Belize Friends Church's startup in Belize City's Southside neighborhood, home to most of the students at Belize Friends School. In 2024, Oscar succeeded Nikki Holland as Director of Friends United Meeting-Belize, overseeing the functioning of Belize Friends School, Belize Friends Church, and Belize Friends Centre.

Miriam was born and raised in southern Sweden. As a teenager, she served as a Sunday School teacher at her local church, where her parents were church leaders. She was a youth leader and preacher for many years. Miriam traveled on missions to China, Finland, India, and New York. Later, she was a long-term missionary to Vietnam.

Oscar and Miriam married on December 5, 2021, at Belize Friends Church, with members of the church presiding. Over seventy witnesses were present, including, via Zoom, friends from Kenya, Sweden, the United States, and Vietnam. In October, 2022, they welcomed daughter Noa into their family. Oscar says, "Noa is walking, talking, teething, and we are looking for places in our house to keep everything out of her reach."

Miriam joined the staff of FUM in 2024 to work particularly with the women and children who make up the largest proportion of Belize Friends Church. As a new mother herself, Miriam has been working with the children and their mothers to build and grow this ministry.

Michael Sherman

*Coordinator of North American
and Caribbean Ministries*

Michael Sherman is FUM's Coordinator of North American and Caribbean Ministries. He has been working in the position since January of 2024. Before joining the Richmond office, Michael served as the Program Director at Quaker Haven Camp, as pastor of Raysville (Indiana) Friends Church, and later served as the pastor of Muncie Friends Church in Muncie, Indiana, where he continues as their Sunday morning speaker.



Michael earned his undergraduate degree from Purdue University in Recreation Management, with a minor in history, as well as a minor in organizational leadership and supervision. After being called to pastoral ministry, he continued his education and training at Earlham School of Religion, receiving an M.Div. with an emphasis in pastoral ministry.

Having grown up in the Quaker church as a PK (pastor's kid), Michael has a love and passion for the inner workings of local Meetings. He hopes to work for a vibrant and vital future for the Friends church in North America, the Caribbean, and beyond.

Michael and his wife Kristen reside in Muncie, Indiana, and have four children. The past few years their family has shared the fun, camaraderie, fellowship, and work that it takes to run a weekly pie-and-baked-goods business at their local farmers market. In his spare time, Michael enjoys the spiritual practice of wood turning, bringing out the beauty embedded in a discarded or disregarded piece of wood.

Robert Wafula

Principal, Friends Theological College

Dr. Robert J. Wafula is the Principal of Friends Theological College. Since 2014, he has provided oversight in the administration and operations of the college, supervises heads of departments in the academic, physical, financial, and overall areas of the college's operations, and facilitates the accreditation process with the Association for Theological Education in Africa (ACTEA), the body which accredits theological schools in Africa. In 2018, FTC secured accreditation from ACTEA, and is now one of sixteen accredited bible colleges on the African continent. Robert also



coordinates and enhances relationships between FTC and Yearly Meetings, donors, and other groups.

Robert is a Friends pastor, a Christian leader, a scholar of religion, a social scientist, and an educator. He is an alumnus of Friends Theological College; St. Paul's United Theological College in Limuru, Kenya; Earlham School of Religion; and Ohio University. He earned his Ph.D. from Ohio University in the field of Cultural Studies in Education, with his research focusing on the intersection of indigenous cultural practices and Christian faith among the Bukusu community of western Kenya. He holds two master's degrees — in International Affairs and in Religious Studies — and has published in the fields of cultural studies, development studies, Quakerism, and comparative religions.

Prior to joining Friends Theological College, Robert taught for over eight years in the fields of comparative religions, anthropology, cultural diversity, and comparative literature at Columbus State College and at Central Ohio Technical College in Ohio. He and his wife, Nancy, have one daughter and two grandchildren.



We are FUM

What We Do

Historically, the Friends of Friends United Meeting have been gathered in, called to, or invited into specific and particular geographic locations. This is how we have become a beloved fellowship of Friends in North America, East Africa, Palestine, the Caribbean, and Central America. In each one of these locations we have endeavored to do the gospel work that called out to be done. In practice, this means that the friends and partners of FUM often do the same kinds of work in very different places. FUM partners have helped provide clean drinking water in both Cuba and Turkana, for instance. The Loltulelei dispensary and the Friends Lugulu Mission Hospital are quite different in their facilities and staffing and the level of care they are able to provide, but both are engaged in trying to care for the health of those in underserved areas.

The kinds of work that we have found ourselves doing in multiple localities includes evangelism and church planting; theological training; children's education; working for health and well-being; working for peace and promoting nonviolent solutions to social and political conflicts; supporting vulnerable communities; supporting the health of Meetings and churches; and welcoming the stranger who has become our neighbor.



Health and Wellbeing

In keeping with our commitment to holistic evangelism and resource development, FUM supports two medical facilities in areas where health care is difficult to obtain, either for economic or geographic reasons.

Friends Lugulu Mission Hospital

Friends Lugulu Mission Hospital was established by Quaker missionaries in 1913 and is now owned and operated by the local Yearly Meeting with support from Friends around the world. A 110-bed general hospital, FLMH provides emergency, medical, and surgical services.

FLMH treats body, mind, and spirit, providing services to all regardless of ability to pay. Chaplaincy services include spiritual and mental health care, daily morning devotions, and prayer and pastoral counselling.

FUM's Adopt-a-Bed program covers hospital expenses for the community's "poorest of the poor." Upon recommendation and screening by a nurse, doctor, and the chaplain, patients receive financial assistance (up to 100%) based on assessment of the family's situation. Without Adopt-a-Bed, FLMH could not provide such care.

Friends Lugulu Mission Hospital pioneered an award-winning Comprehensive Care Center for HIV/AIDS care. Clients receive regular counseling and consistent dispensing of antiretroviral therapy medications. Regional care clinics, home visits, support groups, and nutritional wellness education are free of charge.

Maternity care is also greatly in demand. FLMH delivers over 2,000 infants a year, and recently expanded its maternity ward to provide a larger birthing room, more space for prenatal and postnatal care, and expanded facilities for premature babies.



Loltulelei Friends Dispensary, owned by Samburu Friends Mission, is located in Samburu County, Samburu West, a sparsely populated area. Services offered at Loltulelei Friends Dispensary include consultancy, prenatal care, maternal and child health care, and a pharmacy. Previously, Samburu West residents walked miles to access health care. Loltulelei's dispensary receives more than 500 patients per month from Loltulelei, Lodokejek, and Samburu West.







Theological Training

Friends Theological College

“Friends Theological College equips pastoral ministers who will be thoughtful listeners, effective evangelists, dynamic preachers, informed educators, and models of integrity.”

Friends Theological College is dedicated to the training of Friends pastors, as well as to the academic progress, personal development, and spiritual growth of the students whom God is calling to other ministries.

Founded as Friends Bible Institute in 1942, the college trains both men and women to pastor and to lead. FTC’s principal, Robert J. Wafula, serves at the center of this vibrant, exciting community of learners. Together, the FTC community seeks to integrate faith, scripture, and theology in training the present and future leaders of Quaker churches in East Africa; and to foster in individual hearts and lives the process of maturing in Christ.

In 2018, Friends Theological College was fully accredited by ACTEA (Association for Christian Theological Education in Africa). The College offers academic programs at four levels: a one-year Certificate; a three-year Diploma (the equivalent of a U.S. associate’s degree); a four-year, post-Diploma Degree (the equivalent of a U.S. bachelor’s degree); and, since April of 2024, a Masters in Theology degree.

The main campus of Friends Theological College rests at the top of a wooded slope of land in Kaimosi, where the Friends movement in Kenya first began. The college also operates satellite campuses in Nairobi, Lugulu, Lugari, Samburu, and Chebuyusi. Students are drawn from the east and central African countries where Friends are found: Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda, Rwanda, Burundi, and the Democratic Republic of Congo.

The school has one of the best theological libraries in Western Kenya.

Under Robert Wafula, the college has also taken a number of steps to become more financially and ecologically sustainable. These efforts include a cattle dairy, planting trees for future harvest, installing solar panels to power the campus more reliably than the local electric company is able, and a new biofuel digester to provide cooking gas for the college kitchen.



photo by Kate Gunza



photo by Kate Gunza

Peace and Nonviolence

Ramallah Friends School

For some time, **Ramallah Friends School**, situated under occupation in a region of ongoing political conflict, has offered conflict resolution training as part of its curriculum. Since the onset of the war, RFS has tried to maintain a refuge of peace in a setting in which violence is an ever-present threat. RFS has worked to provide emotional support for students by adding two counselors to the staff and offering therapeutic counseling sessions, including art therapy, for students. In addition, the school has offered physical shelter to staff who are not able to cross roadblocks to travel to and from work, as well as offering shelter to staff children who have been separated from their parents because the children were at school in Ramallah when their parents were trapped on the other side of a roadblock. RFS has also begun raising funds to offer more scholarship aid to families whose livelihoods have been imperiled by the destruction of the Palestinian economy caused by the war, or because of inability to continue working in Israel. This assures that the next leaders of Palestine will continue to be informed by Quaker values, including peacebuilding.

Friends Church Peace Team

Born out of Kenyan Quakers' response to the 2007 Kenyan election violence, **Friends Church Peace Team** (FCPT) works to reduce violence and conflict in Kenya, whatever the causes may be. FCPT volunteers and staff have trained thousands of Kenyans in Alternatives to Violence, Healing and Rebuilding our Communities, trauma healing, non-violent social change, transformative mediation, and more. The Peace Team's efforts were central to the quelling of violence between the 2007 and 2013 elections. They enabled displaced persons



to move back to their homes. They worked to rebuild connections between neighbors of rival communities. The ongoing work done through this ministry literally removes the causes of war.

In preparation for the Kenyan election in 2022, Friends Church Peace Team Coordinator Getry Agizah and the Friends United Meeting Africa Ministries Office, under the banner of Dumisha Amani (“Peace our Heritage”), worked for credible and peaceful elections through several different means. They recruited and trained over 175 election observers from across the country, whose main mandate was to monitor and observe the electoral process during voting. FCPT field staff also attended conferences and rallies

photo by Kate Gunza



to advocate for peace, distributed peace leaflet messages, and held meetings with boda boda operators (who often become involved in election violence). Within Kenyan Yearly Meetings, FCPT and FUM staff conducted trainings on election preparedness for Yearly Meeting peace committees. The trainings were intended to educate the Quaker community, through the Yearly Meetings, on the importance of participating in the election and of preaching peace before, during, and after the election.



photo by Kate Gunza



photo by Kate Gunza

Education

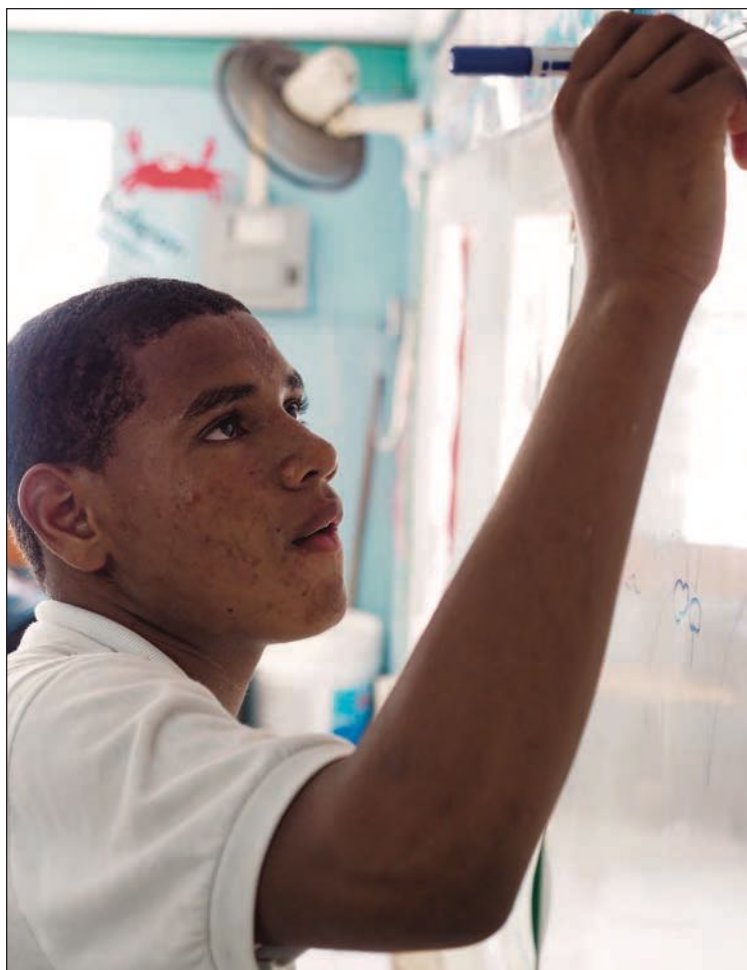
Where there are Friends, there are Friends Schools. Sometimes, as in Ramallah and Belize, the schools have preceded the Friends. In all those regions of the globe where FUM has members, Friends have supported schools that prepare young people to engage in their world.

Belize Friends School

Belize Friends School, founded in 1994 by Sadie Vernon, provides a second-chance education for at-risk youth in Belize City. The school offers a supportive Christian environment, helping students succeed through encouragement, social tools, and educational instruction. With an average enrollment of fifteen to twenty-five students, the school is always transitioning as Belize's educational regulations shift and change. Nonetheless, the school maintains its emphasis on individually focused instruction to improve the outcomes for students who have been left behind by standard classrooms. Former students often return for reading assistance before continuing their high school studies, creating new community interest in the school. And the school is creating scholarships to assist former students in completing secondary education.

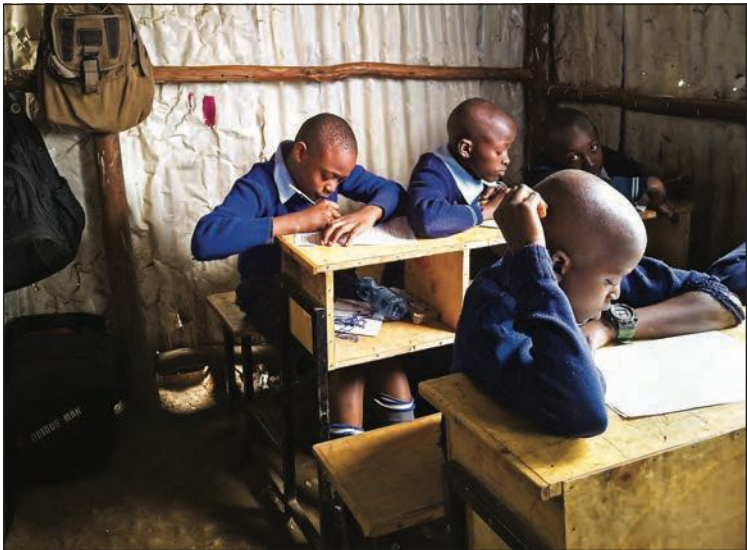
Lindi Friends School

Lindi Friends School, founded in 2005, serves as a beacon of hope for children in Kibera, a densely populated urban slum in Nairobi. Providing faith-based education, a safe environment, and meals for students, the school primarily supports families struggling to afford education. With nearly 200 students in nursery and primary programs, graduates often pass national exams, qualifying them for secondary school. Collaborating with Nairobi Yearly Meeting, FUM helps



fund and support the school, focusing on teacher wages, supplies, scholarships, and the feeding program.

Unfortunately, in 2022, a fire destroyed much of the two-story school building. Classes are currently being offered in temporary structures, and some students are being educated at the nearby Friends School on the Nairobi Yearly Meeting campus. But the school is at a crossroads, since it is not likely the school can be rebuilt in the same location. FUM and NYM



are currently discerning a way forward that will enable us to continue to serve the urban poor and continue to provide the hope, joy, and sense of Christ's love within the community that the Lindi School has provided.

Ramallah Friends School

For over 150 years, Ramallah Friends School has stood as a testament to the power of education and the unwavering pursuit of peace. This beacon of hope in the heart of Palestine



has nurtured generations of students, providing them with a rigorous academic foundation rooted in the Quaker values of simplicity, peace, integrity, community, equality, and stewardship.

RFS prides itself on its rigorous and world-class curricula. RFS is the only school in Palestine considered an International Baccalaureate (IB) World School. It offers the IB Diploma Program for eleventh and twelfth grade students, the IB Middle Years Program for grades six through ten, and the IB Primary Years Program for kindergarten through fifth grades. From kindergarten through twelfth grade, students learn to think critically with global mindsets. RFS uses Quaker principles as a guide in educating its students and the next generation of Palestinian leaders.

In the past year, RFS has faced unprecedented challenges amidst the unfolding genocide in Gaza and escalation of violence in the West Bank. The events of the past few months have been incredibly stressful, testing the school's strength and unity in ways never imagined. Yet the RFS community, while not optimistic, remains hopeful that a just way will open, that the atrocities being committed in Gaza will end, and that the school will survive and build a thriving future for our children. RFS remains undeterred and resolute in its mission to nurture the next generation of spirit-led Palestinian leaders.

Supporting Vulnerable Communities

*“So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed,
for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you;
I will uphold you with my right hand.”*

— Isaiah 41:10

Friends are grounded in faith and deeply connected to each other, both here and across the world. As Friends, we ensure that our most vulnerable communities are cared for and upheld. From pandemic illness to war, from poverty to lack of natural resources, Friends United Meeting is present to offer support and protection.

Ramallah Friends School and Palestine

Ramallah Friends School is chronically impacted by regional political and armed conflicts. Despite challenges, the RFS community remains resilient. As the war affects all Palestinians, FUM is particularly concerned for RFS’





students and staff. Many RFS families have lost loved ones, and violence near campus raises fears among students in classrooms. Economic hardships are also prevalent.

RFS has expanded counseling and financial aid programs to support its community during these challenging times. The school remains committed to nurturing spirit-led Palestinian leaders, as seen through its continuing positive evaluations from the International Baccalaureate organization, its ongoing Model United Nations conference — which gathers

as many as 700 students from across Palestine — and support for students pursuing post-secondary admissions to educational institutions across the globe. Faculty resilience has been instrumental in providing quality education amidst adversity.

Material Relief in Africa

For several years, the northern counties of Kenya have experienced intense drought, affecting FUM's missions in Turkana and Samburu. Friends United Meeting's Africa Ministries Office, together with multiple Kenyan Yearly Meetings, has collected food items to send to Turkana and Samburu's Friends communities — notably to children and the elderly. Some of the food items donated have been dry beans, maize, rice, sugar, and milk. In addition, many of the churches in Turkana provide a site for an Early Childhood Education program, which provides food for young children in addition to lessons.



photo by Peter Loten'gan

photo by Turkana Friends Mission



Living Letters Trips to Cuba

Although Cuba has been economically separated from much of the globe for decades, the Covid pandemic years were especially difficult for the country, shutting down Cuba's access to food, cash, and most material supplies, including medicines. At least once a year, FUM travelers to Cuba brought supplies and an infusion of currency to Cuba Yearly Meeting. When Living Letters trips to Cuba resumed in 2023, after a three-year interruption, the material needs of the Yearly Meeting were great. In addition to designated funds, FUM Living Letters brought over-the-counter medicines, hygiene supplies, paper, notebooks, and writing utensils, coffee and tea, socks, and other essential items unavailable in Cuban stores at the time. Living Letters participants experienced power outages and food shortages in company with Cuban Friends. Despite difficulties, Cuban Friends



photo by Karla Jay



remain steadfast, continuing to repair old structures, and establishing a new church in a new territory.

Girl Child Education/The Shepherd Boys Education Fund

FUM's Girl Child Education program and Shepherd Boys Education Fund address challenges in Kenya's Turkana and Samburu counties, on Mt. Elgon, and in Nairobi's Kibera slum. Children in these areas find it difficult to access education beyond primary school on account of poverty, and, oftentimes, cultural practices related to gender.

photo by Kate Gunza



FUM has been sponsoring girls education, especially in Turkana and Samburu, by paying tuition and other school costs to allow girls to attend secondary schools, which are often boarding schools. Girls' participation in school allows them to avoid early marriage, to gain a better chance at entering Kenyan society and finding income, and improves the welfare of each girl's present and future family.

FUM's new Shepherd Boys Education Fund addresses violence and the recruitment of boys by banditry gangs in Kenya's Turkana and Samburu communities. Modeled after the Girl Child Education program, the Fund will provide education and mentorship for vulnerable boys. FUM is hoping to expand staffing for both programs.





Meeting Health

Through ministry initiatives and standing committees of the Friends United Meeting General Board, FUM is committed to nurture North American Friends Meetings through education, leadership development, developing congregational health, and connecting individuals and congregations to each other and to wider Friends ministries. At present this aim is carried out through the work of the following programs, even as the vision for North American work continues to deepen and grow.

Stoking the Fire

In his essay, “The Quaker Discovery,” Thomas Kelly wrote, “But the blazing discovery which Quakers made, long ago, is rediscovered again and again by individuals, and sometimes by groups. The embers flare up, the light becomes glorious. There is no reason why it cannot break out again, today, with blazing power. The world needs it desperately. It is in the hope that you and I, today, may rediscover this flaming center of religion that those words are written—not in an historical interest in a charming past.”

From its first meeting in 2015, our *Stoking the Fire* weekend retreat has provided an opportunity for Friends across the breadth of FUM in North America to encounter God and engage one another in new and challenging ways. The “fire” that we seek to stoke is that of the early church and the first Friends, by both moving deeper into our own Quaker faith and sampling helpful practices of the broader Christian tradition. Friends from pastoral and unprogrammed Meetings participate, and each year there are components that probably make everyone a bit uncomfortable: for some it might be an extended time of waiting worship in Christ’s presence, while for others it could be an invitation to lay hands on another and pray.



Flourishing Friends

What does it mean to grow or develop in a healthy or vigorous way? As we answer the call of God's Holy Spirit, our flourishing looks different from person to person and from Meeting to Meeting. *Flourishing Friends* is an opportunity for local Meetings to participate in an extended learning community with one another over a span of time, to focus on the question of how each Meeting can move towards a





more flourishing future. The goal is for each participating Meeting to discover a way forward in spiritual formation, fruitful living, and faithfulness to the Spirit that will lead to a congregational environment that nurtures flourishing. We anticipate drawing together a new cohort of Friends annually. In future cohorts, we hope to create virtual learning communities where both pastored and unprogrammed congregations, from different Yearly Meetings, help each other flourish.



Unleashing the Power

Friends have a long tradition of strengthening one another, person to person and community to community, as we walk the path to which we are called. *Unleashing the Power* is designed to teach the practical skills needed in a faith community (financial management, resolving conflicts, children's ministries, serving the neighborhood, etc.), so that lack of knowledge doesn't get in the way. In this way, FUM seeks to liberate and encourage the exercise of the ministry gifts God is actively organizing and developing within the body of North American Friends.



Welcoming the Stranger

African Friends in North America

As Africans, and African Friends, continue to make their way to North America, they have maintained a desire for communion and connection with those who worship in their familiar church, but in a new place. These Friends are simultaneously working to develop, grow, and establish Quaker faith communities in their new locations. FUM is working to strengthen and encourage these relationships by helping to establish and maintain networks of shared ministry and support.

The African Friends in North American (AFNA) committee is slowly forging a ministry network and mutual support community among immigrant fellowships spread throughout Canada and the United States.







Latino Friends Ministries Committee

Increasingly, FUM is being challenged to expand our support for Spanish-speaking Friends in the United States. As a growing number of Friends from Cuba, Central and South America are immigrating to the U.S., FUM is looking for ways to connect these Friends to each other and to serve as a resource for Yearly and Monthly Meetings that want to engage more deeply with Spanish-speaking Friends. In March, 2024, the FUM General Board approved the creation of a Latino Friends Ministries committee.

The purpose of the Latino Friends Ministries Committee is to connect, energize, and equip Latino members of Friends United Meeting by providing education, inspiration, and



motivation. Additionally, the committee will provide support, resources, training, and encouragement for Friends, Monthly Meetings, and Yearly Meetings who are seeking deeper fellowship with Latino Friends.

Evangelism and Church Planting

Building the Friends Church is about building community. As early Friends knew, it is the body of Christ that matters most. For decades, and to the present day, new ministries and church planting efforts have made and are making inroads into new populations.

Kenya's Samburu and Turkana Friends Missions support semi-nomadic communities facing various challenges, including land privatization, conflict, drought, and food insecurity. In addition to reaching new people and planting new churches, these missions also focus on education, adult literacy, access to clean water, health, and peacebuilding.

The Samburu people, who are nomadic pastoralists, face significant challenges due to land privatization, and this has led to conflicts with other people groups. Because only six percent of Samburu adults have a secondary education, education and





adult literacy training are crucial to empower people to make decisions about the future. In addition to its focus on educating girls and boys, on healthcare, and on peacebuilding, Samburu Friends Mission continues to plant new churches.

Turkana Friends Mission supports a people whose way of life has been undermined by drought for many years. Drought has led to food insecurity, and to conflict with nearby people groups over livestock thefts. Only three percent of Turkana adults have a secondary education. In addition to worship, here, as in Samburu, Turkana Friends Mission emphasizes education, water access, and adult literacy. They also provide refugee ministries and peace building programs within the



Kakuma Refugee Camp, which is located in Turkana County, and support the Kakuma Friends Church. And they continue to plant churches in new areas of Turkana.

Tanzania Yearly Meeting has expanded rapidly in the past few years, with church planting assistance from Kenyan Friends. Given the significant size of the Yearly Meeting, three regions have been identified in which to focus our efforts: Lake, Coastal, and Southern Regions. FUM facilitated the travel of Yearly Meeting leaders to visit each of these regions to encourage new pastors and members and to organize regional structures within the Yearly Meeting. In addition, the FUM Africa Friends Board of Missions is working with member Yearly Meetings in Kenya to identify and provide support for three missionary families from Kenya to serve in these regions.

Belize Friends Mission started with Belize Friends School. In 2017, Oscar Mmbali was appointed as Friends pastor, and in 2019, Nikki Holland was appointed as director of Belize Friends Ministries (FUM-Belize). Since that time, Belize

photo courtesy of Nicholas Orieno



photo by Nikki Holland



Friends Church has experienced remarkable growth, evolving from an eight-person worship group to a thriving community of over sixty-five youth and adults. The Sunday School ministry, monthly family services, and prayer initiatives have united church members in faith. Recently, Belizean Chris Luben has been appointed church pastor to succeed Oscar Mmbali, who has become director of FUM-Belize.

Belize Friends Church and Belize Friends Centre work together to address the material and spiritual needs of Belize City's Southside neighborhood, where they are located. Both the church and the centre sometimes provide food aid to the poorest of their neighbors. The Centre provides community outreach programs that address pressing issues such as human trafficking, gang recruitment, education, and poverty.



The Need for a Contextualization of African Quakerism

John Muhanji



Quakerism is a Christian movement that originated in England in the seventeenth century. It is characterized by a belief in an individual's direct and personal experience of God, the equality of all people, the rejection of creeds and rituals, and the commitment to peace and social justice. Quakers, also known as Friends, have spread to many parts of the world, including Africa, where they have a significant presence and influence.

However, Quakerism in Africa faces many challenges and opportunities in the twenty-first century. One of the main issues is contextualizing Quakerism to African culture, history, and realities while maintaining its core values and principles.

Quakerism was introduced to Africa by missionaries from Britain and America in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The Americans established the first Quaker mission in Kenya in 1902, followed by others in Uganda, Tanzania, Rwanda, Burundi, and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Quakerism also spread to other parts of Africa through migration, education, and ecumenical relations. The British established Quakerism in South Africa in 1828.

Various historical and social factors, such as colonialism, nationalism, independence, civil wars, poverty, economic

development, human rights, and interfaith dialogue, have shaped Quakerism in Africa. African Quakers are involved in various service, witness, and advocacy forms, such as education, health, agriculture, peacebuilding, reconciliation, and democracy. African Quakers have also developed their own forms of worship, organization, and theology, reflecting their diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds.

The Need for Contextualization

Contextualization is making something relevant and meaningful to a particular context, culture, or situation. It is an essential task for any religious movement that seeks to communicate its message and values to different people and places. Contextualization is not a compromise or a dilution of the original message, but rather a faithful and creative expression of it in new ways.

Quakerism in Africa needs to be contextualized for several reasons. First, contextualization honors and affirms the African identity, culture, and heritage of Quakers in Africa. It acknowledges that God speaks and works in and through African realities and that Quakers in Africa have something unique and valuable to contribute to the global Quaker family and the wider society. This recognition of their exceptional contributions is a way of celebrating and embracing the diversity and richness of Quakerism in Africa, which includes different languages, ethnicities, traditions, and expressions.

Secondly, contextualization addresses and responds to the challenges and opportunities that Quakers in Africa face in the twenty-first century. These include poverty, inequality, corruption, violence, conflict, disease, environmental degradation, and religious pluralism. Contextualization would consider how to apply the traditional Quaker testimonies of peace, equality, simplicity, integrity, and community to African culture and life, and find means to witness

and serve in relevant and effective ways. The process of contextualization would include engagement and dialogue with other African religious and cultural groups, and find common ground and mutual understanding.

Contextualizing Quakerism in Africa has both benefits and challenges. A contextualized Quakerism would enhance the sense of ownership and Quaker-belonging of African Friends, and strengthen their identity and confidence. It would foster the growth and vitality of Quakerism in Africa, attracting more people to join and participate in the Quaker community and creating a sense of optimism and enthusiasm for the future. It would enrich and deepen the spiritual and theological insights and experiences of Quakers in Africa, inspiring them to live out their faith authentically and meaningfully. It would also contribute to the diversity and unity of the global Quaker family, and enable Quakers in Africa to share their gifts and perspectives with other Quakers worldwide. Finally, contextualizing African Quakerism would empower African Friends to be agents of change and transformation in their societies, inspiring them to witness and serve in the spirit of love and peace and to make a difference in their communities.

Yet contextualizing Quakerism in Africa would also present challenges. It would require a careful and critical evaluation of the cultural and historical influences and assumptions that have shaped Quakerism in Africa, to discern what is essential and what is adaptable. It would demand a creative and faithful interpretation and application of Quaker principles and practices to African culture and society. This would require finding a delicate balance between continuity and transformation, ensuring that while adapting to local needs, the core values of Quakerism remain intact. In turn, this would require respectful and honest dialogue among African Friends, and the recognition and appreciation of Quakerism's diversity and complexity — not only in

Africa, but among Friends worldwide. Open and respectful communication, and a willingness to learn from and support each other, would foster understanding and unity among African Quakers.

Finally, Quakerism contextualized for Africa would challenge African Friends to be faithful and courageous in living out their Quaker testimonies in the face of difficulties and opposition and to be hopeful during challenges and opportunities.

Quakerism in Africa is a vibrant and dynamic movement with a long and rich history and a promising and bright future. Yet there is still a need to develop a contextualized African Quaker church that is relevant and meaningful to African culture, history, and realities while maintaining Quakerism's core values and principles. This task requires vision and passion, wisdom and discernment, creativity and faithfulness, dialogue and collaboration, courage and hope. It is a task that can bring many benefits, challenges, joys, and blessings to Quakers in Africa and beyond.



Looking to the Future

Kelly Kellum



As we look towards the future of Friends United Meeting, one thing remains clear — the core of our Christ-centered mission and ministry priorities will not change. Our steadfast commitment to connect, energize, and equip Friends continues to anchor and inspire our work. Yet, the landscape in which we operate is shifting and it is becoming clearer that the manner in which we fulfill our calling may change as we respond to the growing and diverse needs of our community.

A Vision for Inclusive Global Partnerships

At the heart of our transformation lies our commitment to global partnership. FUM is embracing an inclusive approach to shared ministry work, recognizing the importance of collaboration and mutual respect. This commitment challenges us to rethink how we make decisions, allocate our resources, and report back to our members. As we expand our ministry into Latin America and beyond, becoming a bilingual community is not just an aspiration — it is an essential step towards deeper engagement and understanding among Friends across the globe. By truly listening to and embracing our global family, we can create a richer, more vibrant community.

Financial Sustainability and Local Empowerment

Financial sustainability is also on the horizon as we seek to ensure that all Friends can participate fully in FUM initiatives. By discerning viable business and investment opportunities within the regions we serve, we aim to

empower local members to take part in and contribute to our ministries. A shining example of this is the Ambware Farm in Kenya, which facilitates African Friends' support for FUM's efforts in the continent. By encouraging local participation, we hope to cultivate a self-sustaining network of support that enriches both local and broader FUM ministries.

Focused Support for Vulnerable Communities

Our commitment to vulnerable communities remains unwavering. FUM will continue to provide vital support, education, and spiritual hope in areas such as Belize, East Africa, and the Middle East. We recognize that these communities face unique challenges, and our mission is to stand alongside them, offering aid and solidarity in their journeys. In doing so, we hope to share the transformative hope that comes from Christ.

Supporting Renewal in North American Meetings

In North America, FUM is dedicated to equip local Meetings and churches through practical ministry support and renewal resources. As many congregations face the pressures of a changing societal landscape, it is our goal to help them find their footing and renewed hope. By providing tools, wisdom, and encouragement, we can foster environments where faith can flourish and communities can be revitalized.

Stewarding Our Diverse Community

As a broken and beautiful community, FUM is being called to steward our rich diversity with care. In a world often marked by stress and conflict, we aim to cultivate an atmosphere of mutual respect and love, remaining anchored in our shared calling and commitment as Christ-centered Friends. By centering our efforts on the ministry we are called to, we can foster a united front that not only withstands challenges but also serves as a beacon of hope and love.

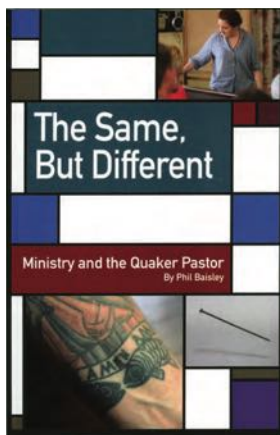
A Hopeful Horizon

As we consider the future of Friends United Meeting, we are filled with hope. Change will come in the form of new individuals who answer the call to fulfill our mission, but our purpose remains unchanged. Together, with open hearts and a willingness to adapt, we can continue to be a Christ-centered community that actively engages with the world around us, inviting others to join us in this journey of faith, love, and service.



NEW from Friends United Press

and available on the FUM Bookstore



NEW e-book now available!

The Same, But Different: Ministry and the Quaker Pastor

By Phil Baisley

Phil Baisley's ideas on the different expectations that Quaker pastors bring to their work isn't just a useful guide for Quaker pastors — it's also an excellent, readable introduction to Quaker practices and beliefs. Valuable to anyone searching for a way to explain who Quakers are to their non-Quaker friends and co-workers.

E-book, \$12.99

Paperback, \$20

Hardcover, \$26

NEW!

Sowing the Seed of Truth: Orthodox Quaker Sermons of Murray Shipley (1873-1876)

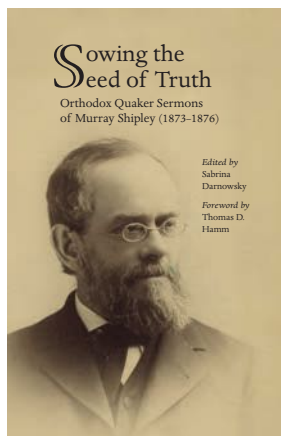
By Sabrina Darnowsky

In the early 1870s, Murray Shipley — already a well-respected minister among Friends — began making notes about his preaching. We don't know if they reflect his thoughts before he went to meeting, or whether they are notes that he made afterwards. But they give us a unique glimpse of the preaching of Gurneyite Friends, who made up the largest of the segments of American Quakerism after 1820.

E-book, \$12.99

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