

## This Momentous Step

*Anne Thomas<sup>1</sup>*

*Musquodoboit Valley Quaker Meeting*

The early twentieth century saw various movements toward church unity. In Canada, the United Church was formed in 1925<sup>2</sup>; among Friends there was a desire to leave some of the divisions of the past behind. World Conferences of Friends were held in 1920 (London) and 1937 (Swarthmore and Haverford) out of which Friends World Committee for Consultation developed. Cross-branch friendships and marriages increased dramatically.<sup>3</sup> There was a considerable influx of people new to Quakerism who wished to be free of the 'schismed', fractured and sometimes rigid structures of existing yearly meetings.<sup>4</sup> Henry J. Cadbury described this as them not wanting "to be adopted into a divorced family."<sup>5</sup> Earlier anger and distrust had died down and the ongoing divisions seemed to many to be based on form of worship rather than doctrine.<sup>6</sup>

In a 1927 letter, John Hobart wrote:

the thing we really need in Canada is a revival of Quakerism. The position of Friends here is very weak, has weakened considerably this past 25 years I am informed on good authority. Friends may be said to be losing their identity . . . in Canada we have no . . . centres of training to serve as nurseries, as it were, for the Society. Sunday schools are obviously hopelessly inadequate. The future of Quakerism here is in the hands of we Young Friends. We are few in number and very scattered and for the most part very ordinary people.<sup>7</sup>

Canadian Friends had been tested on

their testimony against war during the First World War and were concerned about declining numbers. Orthodox Friends became involved in the findings of modern biblical scholarship, moving away from a more fundamentalist view. "The combination of inter-visitation, the increasing liberalism of Friends, the recognition of a common Quaker identity and the desire to heal old differences all created a receptive climate of the reunification of Canadian Friends. Only a catalyst was required to give a definite form to these genial relations between Friends."<sup>8</sup>

New York Friends met in joint session in 1928 on the hundredth anniversary of the Great Separation. That same year Genesee and Canada Orthodox Friends met and the joint epistle from Genesee and Canada Orthodox Yearly Meetings stated, "As we come nearer the close of our truly remarkable joint sessions, we are more fully convinced than ever of our essential unity of spirit. We believe that our paths, which for over one hundred years have been going in the same general direction, for several years have been converging gradually, and that shortly we shall find that they have merged together."<sup>9</sup> Following this joint session of the two yearly meetings, Young Friends decided to form a united organization.

In 1931 Canadian Friends Service Committee (CFSC) was founded with representatives from each of the three Canadian yearly meetings. The minute approving its formation stated its purposes as, "to unify, coordinate and expand the work now being done by the Peace, Social Service and Temperance Committees." Also

in 1931, Albert S. Rogers purchased land on Georgian Bay, for a camp for underprivileged children. Camp NeeKauNis was under the jurisdiction of CFSC. In 1931 Canadian Young Friends Yearly Meeting was formed, and in 1932 Young Friends were asked to provide leadership and carry out development work at the camp. By the outbreak of the Second World War in 1939, Canadian Young Friends were a hardworking and harmonious body.<sup>10</sup>

In 1937 the Meeting of Ministry and Oversight of Canada Orthodox and the Committee on Ministry and Counsel of Genesee combined under the name of Meeting of Ministry, Counsel and Oversight. In 1940 – 1941 there was an attempt to unite Canada Orthodox and Genesee Yearly Meetings, but doctrinal differences prevented this.<sup>11</sup> In 1944, the three yearly meetings met in joint and concurrent sessions and issued a joint epistle, which included the statement, “Our outward unity has come as a result of the Divine Spirit of love moving amongst us, promoting inward discipline.” Following this joint session, Elma Starr recorded in her journal, “We had prayed all through the year to know and be enabled to do the Lord’s will in this matter. Abundantly He has blest us in this step. Yes, blest all of us and we do thank Him and rejoice in deep love for Him and all who serve Him. I am now full of sweet thanksgiving, too full now to think of anything to pray for.”<sup>12</sup>

Following the Second World War, the membership of Friends increased, with losses from rural congregations more than offset by growth in urban areas. Post-war immigration brought experienced Friends to Canada from Europe as well as many Seekers. Arthur Dorland states that the decision for unification “was forced by Young Friends who for a number of years had shown signs of increasing discontent

with the inability of older Friends to shake off the chains of past division which still fettered them...” A Young Conservative Friend (Francis Starr), who was a former member of the Friends Ambulance Unit in China,<sup>13</sup> finally brought the question to a head in 1951 when he addressed a letter to the three yearly meetings assembled in joint session at Pickering College, pointing out the need for organic union and the danger of further delay.<sup>14</sup> This led to the formation of the Joint Committee of the Three Yearly Meetings on Affiliation and the 1954 minute stating “We accept the desire of Canadian Friends to have a united Yearly Meeting.” Elma Starr recorded, “The problems and questions seemed to get amicably solved and answered remarkably well, with much love and unity. Union is not a fact but a foreseen possibility to our mutual satisfaction.”<sup>15</sup>

In 1955, as they had for eleven previous years, Friends from the three yearly meetings –

Genesee, Canada Yearly Meeting of Friends (Conservative) and Canada Yearly Meeting of Friends (Orthodox) – met in joint session at Pickering College. Friends from the three yearly meetings were joined by many visiting Friends from London Yearly Meeting, New York Yearly Meeting, Philadelphia Yearly Meeting, Wilmington Yearly Meeting, Five Years Meeting, Friends General Conference and Pacific Yearly Meeting.

On the evening of Thursday, 23 June 1955, separate sessions of Canada Yearly Meeting (Conservative), Representative Meeting of Canada Yearly Meeting (FUM) and the executive committee of Genesee Yearly Meeting were held. When Yearly Meeting opened on Friday morning, 24 June, three clerks were at the desk: Howard Clayton (Presiding Clerk), Bertha Pollard (Canada Conservative) and Mable Willson

(Genesee). Stirling Nelson (Canada Orthodox) was to arrive later.

We are fortunate to have both the minutes of this Yearly Meeting as well as an anonymous day-by-day account that was published in *The Canadian Friend* in July 1955.<sup>16</sup> Friends meet for worship with a concern for business and it is interesting to see the way in which worship pervaded the sessions and the balance maintained between the concern over Canadian Quaker unity and the need to consider ongoing concerns and responsibilities.

*Notes from The Canadian Friend*<sup>17</sup>

Presiding Clerk: Under a deep sense of expectancy and trust in our Heavenly Father to grant a rich blessing of love and faith, the sessions of the Canadian Yearly Meetings opened the 24<sup>th</sup> day of sixth month, 1955.

*Forty-six delegates and representatives answered the roll-call, representing all the quarterly and half-yearly Meetings of the three Yearly Meetings. Minutes were presented for visiting Friends (5)<sup>18</sup> and letters were read (6).*

V 1: We are nothing; Christ is all. Man has a small place in God's creation.

*Several Friends expressed a welcome to the visitors. The Correspondence Committee (7), the Committee of Care (8), the Epistle Committee (9) and the Exercises Committee (10) were appointed. Friends were named to report to periodicals (11). The epistle from London Yearly Meeting was read (12) and a period of silent waiting followed.*

V 1: When Edward Burroughs, an early Friends' minister visited a family, he noted that "The young woman is light and airy, the old man is settled on his lees, but the young man is reached and may do *well* if he

does not lose it." Are we making light of serious things, are we old and stale and satisfied with things as they are, or are we "reached"?

*Reports were given for the Christian Education Committees (13).*

V 2: I have a concern about our present day Quaker illiteracy, our unfamiliarity with the numerous, wonderful books of today and of the past which Friends have been moved of the Lord to write. Our ancestors were mighty men and would it not be well to know more of what we Quakers are and are not?

A: In First Day School, Bible stories should be presented to the children as they are, not made childlike. Then the children's thoughts will develop in their own understanding.

B: It is important that children get hold of the right basis of life early on. Parents must exemplify in their own lives the truths they want the children to learn. Children learn by precept and rely on God and refer to him about daily activities. Adults should show their real selves to children, their reliance on the Lord and acknowledge their mistakes.

C: Perhaps we should have a report to Yearly Meeting on education in the home? We should look well at that part of our lives.

V 3: Dorothy Lash of Victoria Meeting has given a course to her class of teenagers on the other religions in the world, showing how God has revealed Himself to other peoples.

Presiding Clerk: We will now hear the report of the Affiliation Committee:

D: ...we must bear in mind that the basic or fundamental working unit of the Society of Friends is the monthly meeting... we have had several meetings of the full committee and its subcommittees working toward a tentative draft of a discipline which, we hope, will be acceptable to all Canadian Friends. A general report has been prepared and made available in mimeographed form... the secretary of the committee will read the proposed basis for organizing a united Yearly Meeting.

E: The basic recommendations for the upcoming year are:

- Monthly Meetings to remain as they are and to conduct business according to their existing disciplines.
- Quarterly and Half Yearly Meetings to continue but to report to the one Yearly Meeting.
- One Yearly Meeting to be established on the basis of the tentative draft presented for approval of the Yearly Meeting.
- Funds are requested to cover the cost of this work.
- Canadian Yearly Meeting is to maintain relationship with Five Years Meeting and Friends General Conference.
- Contributions to the Canadian Council of Churches and other bodies be continued.
- Representative Meeting to work out a budget for the Yearly Meeting.
- Joint committees and existing committees to be continued.
- Statistical reports to be revised and made uniform.
- The name of the new organization to be Canadian Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends.

A tentative draft is submitted for the discipline as it applies to the Yearly Meeting. This includes sections on:

1. The membership and purpose of a

Yearly Meeting

2. Delegates
3. Nominating Committee
4. Jurisdiction
5. Appointment of Clerks
6. Duties of Clerks
7. Source of business

Representative Meeting will be structured as follows:

1. Organization
2. Regular sessions
3. Special Meetings
4. Duties
5. Trustees
6. Quota
7. Treasurer

F: The report raises difficulties in giving the Yearly Meeting responsibilities which infringe on the rights of the Monthly Meetings.

G: I do not believe this to be the case.

H: That Friend speaks my mind.

I: There is a need for spiritual unity among Friends.

V 2: That Friend speaks my mind.

J: I hope the report will be accepted as an interim report and that we will work on it.

E: We must recognize our nothingness; our own pet schemes and our own ideas are not important.

F: We should leave the present situation unchanged for another year and give further thought to the matter.

B: I feel a great measure of unity with the report but feel we should not move too

quickly.

*After some discussion the subject was laid over for a later session (14). The meeting adjourned to meet at 2:00 p.m. (15).*

*Friends convened on sixth day afternoon. The meeting was restricted by the Clerk to members of the Society of Friends.*

Presiding Clerk: Minute 27 of the Minutes of the 1954 Yearly Meetings reads:

The general expression voiced was that unity has been a growing power over the years of our meeting together. We now accept the desire of Friends for a United Yearly Meeting in Canada. We are now prepared to proceed with ways and means whereby this may be accomplished. This action was taken feeling that it was the Divine Will.

K: I felt great peace, like a blessing, after hearing the report this morning. Such peace filled my soul that I felt I must hold on to it and not let the pros and cons of further considerations thereon dim it, convinced that 'we should serve in newness of spirit and not in the oldness of the letter' (Romans 7:6) (19).

H: I have been thinking of three things: the prayer of Jesus in John 17, Pentecost when the Spirit came to the group that were all of one accord, and the commencement of the Quaker movement with the discovery of God in everyone, something to which the Spirit can appeal. We should present a united front based on the God in each human soul. It is now 27 years since the two yearly meetings began meeting together and several years since Conservative Friends joined in joint and concurrent sessions. I am in my 24<sup>th</sup> year of work with CFSC, a joint venture of the three yearly meetings.

Any of the things which divide us are things of the letter, things about which the Spirit of God in each of us can converse with the Spirit of God in every other. Life is a matter of growth and we should proceed in faith in the integrity of each Friend, faith in the work of each Friend for the Kingdom of God. A garden is a variety of blooms, colors, sizes, heights, blended into a harmonious whole, variety not uniformity. There is nothing about us or in us to which the Spirit of God cannot find a solution.

Clerk 2: The words "as becomes our Christian confession" are one of the noblest standards. The spirit of Christ will lead us.

L: It is a joy to attend Yearly Meeting after an absence of ten years. It is a wonder to be part of a Quaker movement that is moving. In the last few years, the little Friends group in Ottawa has had contact with 35 seekers. The Ottawa group has been anticipating Yearly Meeting, hoping for the merger into one Yearly Meeting, anxious to avoid having to choose one Yearly Meeting out of the three.

M: This may be a historic occasion and it will be a memorable one. We should take the simple step of becoming one Yearly Meeting.

C: Some small changes will be necessary in the finalized Discipline section dealing with the Yearly Meeting, but I am in essential agreement with the interim report.

F: I wish to hand to the Clerks a written proposal to defer action for one year while Monthly Meetings give the matters further study and the Committee does further work on its report.

G: The attendance and work of the Committee shows the desire of the committee members to bring something concrete to Yearly Meeting as they were charged to do. The Society of Friends is a fellowship of seekers, not an organization bound together by common dogma. If we are true seekers, we will be finders. If we are finders, we should advance. I recall the plaque on Firbank Fell with the words "Let your lives speak."

F: The report presented was only a partial report and the Yearly Meeting is being asked to approve a report in full which has not yet been submitted. I feel that the recommendation for an immediate merger into one Yearly Meeting exceeds the frame of reference given to the Committee.

N: We should not tangle means with ends. One of my young daughters asked me "What color of overalls does God wear?" Our spirits are close to God, we sprang from Him, but sometimes we make God like us, dress Him in our clothes, when we should be like Him.

I: The section of the new Discipline on Faith and Practice should be complete and approved before the Meetings merge. Common belief should come first.

Presiding Clerk: I feel that the sense of the Meeting is to unite under the recommendations of the report into one Yearly Meeting. The Friend who presented objections is a member of the Committee which worked on the report, was present at the committee meetings and did not object to forwarding the report to Yearly Meeting. The report is not intended to be the final or full report of the Committee. Are the Friends who object willing to take the great

responsibility of holding back action felt to be right by most of the group?

B: Unity comes with living out complete dedication to the Lord. When we lack the Spirit we fall back on the rules. We can not have union without a basic understanding of our common faith.

O: We will not be moving into a new house which someone else has built for us but will all work together to build the kind of house we want.

V 1: I am the vine, ye are the branches.

P: Our discussion might seem to some to be playing the fiddle while the city burns. The Society of Friends has a rich tradition of diversity. Friends should each do that which is given to them. Our very strength lies in the fact that we are not a doctrinal or creedal body. We cannot have a reconciling witness to the world if we ourselves are irreconcilable.

Q: The only foundation is the Lord Jesus Christ.

V 2: We are a people of dreams, a people of visions, a people of hope, a people of faith and a people of love. We are gathered into the light that is over all darkness. Friends have come far in 300 years. In the Society scattered all over the world Friends feel that they belong together. We must keep to our first love, our hope that the Lord has come to teach His people Himself. The spirit still gathers us. Let us not look at the arrow which points to the substance but to the substance in which we abide. He will lead us to where we are to go. 'What is all this to thee? Follow thou me.'

C: 'And where there is no vision the people perish.'

D: We need to consider the direction in which the Society of Friends in Canada has been going: Meetings have closed down; one of the Yearly Meetings in former years had several times the number of people now in the three. Much has already been accomplished in the spirit in which Friends gathered to work on the committee. Union might clear the way for a more positive ministry in the Society. We stand at the crossroads. Have we the vision?

R: We need the fervour of George Fox, the founder of the Society.

E: Friends, no one has objected to union itself. We should declare ourselves to be one Yearly Meeting as of today, continue the Committee on Closer Affiliation, and implement the recommendations regarding Yearly Meeting procedure in the report.

S: I hope we will join hands and go forward in the Spirit.

C: Who serves my Father as His Son is surely kin to me.'

Clerk 2: Can we not depend on the Spirit of God to lead us into all truth? If we can not depend on God to lead us, we are not worthy to be members of the Society of Friends.

V 1: The fault we see in others may be in ourselves.

V 3: *The Imitation of Christ* says 'Wherein, O Lord, does true peace of heart consist? In giving thyself over unto the Divine Will; not seeking thine own interest either in great matters or in small; either in time or in eternity.'

*There was further discussion concerning two minutes drafted, one embodying the suggestion that we become one Yearly Meeting immediately, the other that the work of the Closer Affiliation Committee continue in an attempt to produce a more nearly complete Discipline.*

L: It has never been the practice of the Society of Friends to require unanimity in a decision.

H: I suggest that a small committee be appointed to work on re-wording the suggested Minute, as it is a historic Minute. An outward fact will not change us as individuals but in many ways we have been a united Yearly Meeting for years. There are two groups of Friends who will benefit greatly by a united Yearly Meeting: the new Meetings, and those Friends, especially from the continent of Europe, who transfer their membership to Canada and who prefer not to belong to only one group of three.

T: I hope that no Friends will be 'wrongly right.'

V 4: What Canadian Friends are wrestling with is not for Canada alone. There is a great company of people whose view of the Society of Friends should not be clouded. There is a great crowd all over the world seeking for the deep heart and core of what I believe you have in the three Yearly Meetings in Canada. It was my experience with the Friends Meeting in Geneva which has Friends from many different backgrounds and where the breath of God is felt, that led me to join the Society of Friends.

*Three Friends were named to reword a proposed minute and withdrew to begin their work. A traveling minute was read and other visiting Friends*

*were welcomed. The summary of Epistles received from American Meetings was read (18, 19).*

Presiding Clerk: Careful consideration was given to the interim report of the Committee on Affiliation and Friends approved of the establishment of one Yearly Meeting as of today, composed of the present Canada Yearly Meeting (Conservative) Canada Yearly Meeting (Five Years Meeting) and Genesee Yearly Meeting (General Conference). The report was accepted and approved in spirit, as a preliminary working basis for the Canadian Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends. We unite in seeking together the way forward under Divine Guidance. (17)

F: I feel that Pelham Quarterly Meeting will have to take such action as they see fit.

V 2: Dear Friends, you are being gathered together for what purpose the Lord knows. Those who oppose the will of God will be like chaff which the wind driveth away.

*The delegates and representatives recommended the names of Clerks to serve for the following year (20). The report of The Canadian Friend was given by the Editor (21).*

G: I think that Friends should think more seriously about paying Sustaining Subscriptions which would cover the cost of the magazine.

U: At \$3.50 a year per subscription, plus the editor's salary, *The Canadian Friend* is an expensive form of outreach.

*The report of the Home Mission Committee was presented and approved (22). The Meeting adjourned to meet Seventh Day afternoon at 2 p.m. (23)*

*The Meeting convened on Saturday afternoon and when the Minutes of the previous session were read, discussion was reopened about the Minute of Unity.*

F: I was not a member of the subcommittee which worked on the report presented to the Yearly Meeting. I feel that the proposal accepted is contrary to the Discipline of Canada Yearly Meeting (Five Years Meeting).

H: There is a feeling generally that we should go forward in this matter of the spirit. I ask our Friends to go forward with us. The Spirit of God can guide us as we go forward. It is a very grave responsibility for any member of the Yearly Meeting to hold back the forward-moving Spirit.

V 5: Is it intended that Friends work out together a basis of faith and practice or is there a tendency to side-step that responsibility?

Presiding Clerk: Work on the Discipline is going forward but there is at least another year's work to be done. So far the Committee has not met any impasse.

Clerk 3: When I heard news of the merger into the Canadian Yearly Meeting, upon my arrival yesterday evening, I recalled the spirit growing in the Closer Affiliation Committee. The membership of the committee is very much united in the work of drafting the new Discipline.

V 1: The Lord is Lord even of the Sabbath. The Spirit in which the rule was adopted yesterday was that of the Master.

Presiding Clerk: The minutes of the previous sessions were read. Some discussion ensued regarding whether the



report of the Committee of Affiliation was accepted according to the Discipline of Canada Yearly Meeting, Chapter X, section 1, no. 7. General approval, however, was given to this item of the minutes and although some disapproval was voiced, the minutes were accepted as read. (25)

*A telegram of regrettable absence was read (26) and visiting Friends were welcomed (27, 28).*

*The work of Five Years Meeting was reported upon by its representatives on the various boards (29).*

*The report of the General Conference was given (30).*

*The report on the activities of the Friends World Committee American Section and Fellowship Council was given (31).*

*Reference was made to the fact that Friends should be more conscious of simplicity in living (32). The report of Young Friends Yearly Meeting was presented (33).*

In the spirit of the living Christ we have a well of refreshing water. The Society of Friends will go forward in the spirit of its Young Friends.

*The report of the American Friends Service Committee was given (34).*

*The report of the Canadian Friends Service Committee was given (35).*

W: The Society of Friends should exercise more religious supervision over the Canadian Friends Service Committee.

K: I appreciate Fred Haslam's devoted and capable work as secretary of the CFSC.

X: All of us in the Canadian Yearly Meeting will have to support Fred's successor in the CFSC secretaryship. Fred plays a lot of tunes by ear that a new man or woman will have to play by careful note; some of the rest of us will have to turn the pages and strike some of the keys for a while.

*The CFSC report was approved. Appreciation for the efforts of Fred Haslam was wholeheartedly expressed (35).*

*The report of the delegates on nominations for the Yearly Meeting was presented and approved. These committees were encouraged to meet for organization at an early date (36).*

*Friends approved of the notification of nominees of their appointments at the earliest possible convenience. This notification to be the responsibility of the clerks (37).*

*Clerks were also requested to notify the Monthly Meetings of the action taken by Yearly Meeting as recorded in minute 17 (38).*

*Friends were named as delegates to the Friends World Committee (40).*

*The Committee on Affiliation was reappointed. This committee is to continue its encouraging study to facilitate the increasing unity of friends (41)*

*Greetings were brought from New England Yearly Meeting (42) and more visitors were welcomed (43). Friends adjourned (44).*

*On Sunday morning Friends met for First-day worship-fellowship in the old Meeting House on Yonge Street which was so full that the shutters were let down to accommodate some Friends on the women's side of the Meeting Room. The Newmarket Friends Church was also filled to capacity for the 11 a.m. Meeting for Worship. Friends reconvened First Day afternoon (45).*

Presiding Clerk: The minutes of the previous meeting were read and approved (46).

The summary of the Overseas Epistles was read (47).

The meeting adjourned to meet second day morning at 10 a.m. (48)

*The cup of tea, provided by Newmarket Friends, with the assistance of others, nightly in one of the parlors of Pickering College found Friends gathered on First-day evening, reluctant to begin to part for another year, as they had gathered on the three preceding evenings at the close of the evening meeting.*

*Monday morning, June 27.*

Presiding Clerk: The minutes of the previous session were read and approved (50).

*The Trustees report for Canada Yearly Meeting (Five Years Meeting) was presented and approved (51 F).*

*The Treasurer's report for Canada Yearly Meeting (Five Years Meeting) was given and approved (52 F).*

*The Auditors report of Canada Yearly Meeting (Five Years Meeting) was read and approved (53 F).*

*Names were approved for service to Five Years Meeting (54).*

*The report of the Committee of Ministry, Counsel and Oversight was presented and approved (55).*

C: Not only is the Ministry, Counsel and Oversight Committee responsible, but every Friend should be open to concern to write to the new Friends groups.

Presiding Clerk: The report of the Representative Meeting of Canada Yearly Meeting (Five Years Meeting) was presented and the business items were approved (56 F).

The Executive Meeting report of Genesee Yearly Meeting was presented and approved (57).

The minutes of Canada Yearly Meeting (Conservative) were presented (58C to 74C).

The Correspondence Committee reported (75).

A Friend was named to thank local newspapers for publicizing the sessions of this Yearly Meeting (76).

V 1: I hope that a close rapport will exist between *The Canadian Friend* and the new *Friends Journal* which merges *The Friend* of Philadelphia and *The Friends Intelligencer*. It will be a weekly journal which will make its first appearance early in Seventh month.

Clerk: The report of the Exercises Committee was presented and accepted (78).

The Printing Committee for the minutes was named (79).

The Program Committee for 1956 was named (80).

Yearly Meeting will meet at Pickering College in 1956 (81).

The Yearly Meeting recorded its thanks to the visiting Friends who contributed so much to the Yearly Meeting by messages; by sharing of contacts and activities of their lives and by their loving fellowship (82).

V 3: I have had in this gathering a lovely sense of being a member of the great family of Friends all over the world, of being close not only to those dear to us but to those of different views. I pray that they

and we may be servants and tools of God.

Presiding Clerk: **The Epistle:**

Dear Friends Everywhere:

In our last epistle we were happy to share with you the hope that the three Yearly Meetings in Canada might become united. During the intervening time a committee has been at work on the primary changes in procedure involved in such a union. At this Yearly Meeting, the decision was reached to take this momentous step and to become the Canadian Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends. "The Lord our God be with us as He was with our fathers that He may incline our hearts unto Him. . . to walk in all His ways." For He is our peace who is breaking down the middle wall of partition between us. In this reconciliation our Canadian youth have led the way. May we all become one in Christ Jesus!

A memorial regarding one of our older Friends useful in many fields of service pointed up the concern we feel that our Young Friends seek God's plan for their lives and go forward in His guidance.

We unite with the expressed desire of friends everywhere for the elimination of tensions and the adoption of peaceful means for ending international disputes.

With a salutation of love, we are your friends.

*Signed in and on behalf of Canadian Yearly Meeting,*  
Howard W. Clayton,  
*Clerk*

**Epistle to Canadian Young Friends:**

Dear Friends:

We love you and appreciate that you have helped lead the way for the formation at this time of 'The Canadian Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends,' of which, in a few years, you will be the active members.

We are thankful for your concern to, individually and collectively, become deeper spiritually and grow in usefulness in the church and in the world.

As you worship, work and play together at Camp NeeKauNis we hope that you may be refreshed and inspired for the services in God's plan for you.

Your older brothers and sisters  
The Senior Yearly Meeting  
Howard W. Clayton  
*Clerk*

The Epistles were read and accepted (83).

The minutes of this session were read and approved (84).

**Closing minute:**

With a sense of great thankfulness for the message of faith given to us and the strength to follow the leading of the Spirit through our session, we come to the time of adjournment with the prayer that each one of us continue to seek and follow the guiding light of the risen Christ which alone can lead us into the oneness we seek. We now adjourn to meet at Pickering College, Ontario in 1956 (85).

## Endnotes:

<sup>1</sup> In 2005, the fiftieth anniversary of the creation of Canadian Yearly Meeting, the author was invited to present Quaker study. Its five sessions examined the creation of Quaker books of discipline from the earliest days of the Society up to the present time. The fourth session consisted of the above paper with Friends reading the contributions made fifty years earlier. Some Friends were present at both sessions.

<sup>2</sup> Congregationalists, Presbyterians and Methodists had been considering this from 1908.

<sup>3</sup> Elizabeth Cazden, “‘Wicked hard to herd up’: Independent Meetings and the Friends Fellowship Council,” *Quaker History* 90, no. 2 (Fall 2001): 2.

<sup>4</sup> Cazden, “‘Wicked hard to herd up’,” 3.

<sup>5</sup> Quoted in Daisy Newman, *A Procession of Friends: Quakers in America* (Garden City: NJ: Doubleday, 1972), 130.

<sup>6</sup> Allan Kohrman, *New England Yearly Meeting of Friends 1945-1995* (Worcester: New England Yearly Meeting, Worcester, 1995), 4.

<sup>7</sup> John Hobart to Elizabeth Marsh, 22 August 1927, Board of Young Friends of America Papers.

<sup>8</sup> Kyle Jolliffe, *Seeking the Blessed Community: a history of Canadian Young Friends 1875-1996* (Guelph, ON: TASC, 1997), 34.

<sup>9</sup> Minute #69 of Canadian Yearly Meeting (Orthodox, Genesee) 1928.

<sup>10</sup> Jolliffe, *Seeking the Blessed Community*, 40 – 7.

<sup>11</sup> Minutes #53 and #54 of Canadian Yearly Meeting (Orthodox, Genesee) 1941.

<sup>12</sup> “Growth toward Unity,” *The Canadian Friend* (June 1956), 2.

<sup>13</sup> In 1944, twenty Canadians sponsored by CFSC went to India to work with the British Friends Ambulance Unit operating in India and China.

<sup>14</sup> Arthur Garratt Dorland, *The Quakers in Canada: a history* (Toronto: Ryerson Press, 1968), 344.

<sup>15</sup> “Growth toward Unity,” 2.

<sup>16</sup> The account in *The Canadian Friend*, July 1955 is anonymous. Friends named to report to Friends Periodicals were Enid R. Hobart, C. Harold Zavitz, Dorothy Muma (who did not write the account) and Dorothy S. Starr (the likely writer).

## <sup>17</sup> Clerks:

Howard Clayton (Presiding Clerk)

Bertha Pollard (Clerk 1)

Mable Willson (Clerk 2)

later in the week Stirling Nelson (Clerk 3)

## Members:

A: Edith Bowerman

B: Joshua Wake

C: Elmer Starr

D: Burton Hill

E: LeRoy Cody

F: Stanley VanEvery

G: Harold Zavitz

H: Fred Haslam

I: Claire VanEvery

J: Conran Hay

K: Elma Starr

L: Deborah Haight

M: Lloyd Williams

N: Jane Zavitz

O: James Yates

P: Cecil Evans

Q: Danton Ryan

R: Marion Nelson Hill

S: Edith Zavitz

T: Grace Mekeel

U: Conran Henry

W: Andre Rossinger

X: LeRoy Jones

## Visitors:

V1: William Bacon Evans, Philadelphia Yearly Meeting

V2: Edmund Goerke, New York Yearly Meeting

V3: Martha Vallance, Victoria Monthly Meeting, Pacific Yearly Meeting

V4: Colin Bell, London Yearly Meeting and Geneva Group of Friends

V5: Canby Jones, Wilmington Yearly Meeting

<sup>18</sup> Numerals in brackets are the minute numbers from the 1995 minutes of Canadian Yearly Meeting.