

BYM Advancement and Outreach Committee Annual Report 2023

Members: Bobby Trice, Steven Tatum, Damaris Kifude, Laura Goren, Jim Citro, Steve Morse (co-clerk), Maggie Detar-Lavallee (co-clerk)

Introduction: After an extended period of inactivity due to Covid, the A&O Committee began to meet regularly again in April 2022 -- thanks in large part to the organizational skills and energy of Deborah Haines from the Nominating Committee. In addition to holding regular meetings, the work of the committee over the past year falls into three major areas: (1) *Jesus' Friends* ; (2) experimentation with approaches to use materials on *Growing Our Meetings* in local meetings ; and (3) formation of a new working group on how to be welcoming to persons in the trans and non-binary communities.

1. The kick-off meeting for *Jesus' Friends* was held during the Annual Session of 2022. *JF* publishes a monthly calendar of events and opportunities of interest to the *JF* community: worship sharing, Bible study, discussion, youth, and worship. *JF* shares space on the A&O tab of the BYM website. The calendar is updated monthly, and an FAQ describes *JF* and how to join. As of June 2023, there are about 40 people on the *JF* mailing list.
2. When the committee resumed meeting, it was apparent that there already exists a wealth of material on how to do effective outreach within local meetings. The challenge is to organize and “repackage” this material into a form that is suitable for small group discussion. As of June 2023, two “experiments” along these lines have been held. Based on lessons learned from this work, the goal is to develop a “package” for use by local meetings during the Fall of 2023.
3. At the October 2022 meeting, strong interest was expressed in forming a BYM-wide working group aimed at helping local meetings to be welcoming to the trans and non-binary communities. There were several administrative obstacles and dead-ends to overcome, but the culmination of this effort occurred at the June 2023 interim meeting where the working group was approved. A convener has been named, and several persons in BYM have already expressed interest, energy and enthusiasm.

Conclusion. The most significant hindrance to the work of the committee over this period is poor attendance at meetings. Since December of 2022, attendance has been four members (out of nine nominally on the committee). More could have been accomplished with greater participation. We thank the Nominating Committee for its help in filling empty slots and replacing members who have not been participating.

Respectfully submitted: Maggie Detar-Lavallee and Steve Morse, co-clerks
June, 2023