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Dear Friends in Canadian Yearly Meeting,

This is your annual appeal letter from the Clerk of Canadian Yearly Meeting (CYM). But before I ask you for money, I want to tell you why I am excited to make the request. In August I became Presiding Clerk of CYM, after learning a lot as Incoming Clerk. In 1986 I started taking my children to our annual CYM gatherings, and they insisted we keep going. In 2003 I joined the CYM Consultation and Renewal Working Group (C'nR) and have since been inspired to work for a strong and sustainable Yearly Meeting. As our world copes with enormous socio-economic, political and environmental challenges, I believe Quakers can offer a light in dark times by sharing our spiritual practices, our testimonies, and our perspective on the Christian message. But to do so we must increase the human energy in our Quaker organizations. Our energy, time, and money will help Canadian Yearly Meeting facilitate our witness for a spiritual renewal for both ourselves and the larger society.

What excites me now is that CYM is revising our structure, functioning, and services so as to:

- make us sustainable
- enable us to attract new and younger members, and
- inform ourselves about the wonderful traditions of Friends.

After completion early this year of wide consultations by our Ad Hoc Committee on Financial Sustainability, CYM established the Change and Sustainable Transformation Working Group (CAST) to bring forward concrete proposals for change. CAST is making some radical suggestions to Canadian Friends. We hope that in 2021 we can begin approving and implementing changes.

After 2007, as we were implementing the recommendations of the C'nR, major deficiencies in our organizational structure became apparent. Steps have been taken to rectify problems. The work of our CYM Secretary has been a huge gift, made possible by a large anonymous donation a few years ago. It has enabled us to:

- meet our ethical and legal obligations more effectively
- give staff support to Canadian Young Friends Yearly Meeting
- begin developing much-needed personnel, financial, and office systems, and
- support volunteer clerks with advice and connections with other Friends.

We have now spent the donation, and the income to our CYM general fund is inadequate to cover what we now realize are essential staff services, especially with respect to organizational systems implementation, youth support, and personnel administration. We cannot find volunteers with the required amounts of time and skills to manage such tasks. Proper management of our employees and contractors is an obligation that CYM must fulfill.

Young Friends are the future of Canadian Friends, and our Canadian Young Friends Yearly Meeting (CYFYM) has renewed itself in recent years. CYFYM has organized gatherings for Young Friends, and during pandemic

restrictions it is offering weekly meetings for worship and opportunities for sharing and fellowship on line. CYFYM also informs Young Friends of ways to participate in Quaker activities outside our yearly meeting, and how to register for and get funding for courses to increase their knowledge of Quaker practices. Funding and staff support to help Young Friends communicate, offer special events, and eventually resume meeting face-to-face is essential to our future.

Some of the services our Yearly Meeting provides to Canadian Friends are:

- meetings where we worship and work together both in person and online
- a website that provides information about Friends and CYM activities (our website design is being overhauled to make it more accessible)
- publications such as *The Canadian Friend* magazine, the Canadian Quaker Learning Series pamphlets, and a new electronic newsletter
- courses about Friends' ways that give us an opportunity to make Quaker friends outside our local Meetings
- access to spiritual support through our Continuing Meeting of Ministry and Counsel
- staff support to facilitate communication across CYM
- committees of volunteers who steward our communications, education, archives, our *Organization and Procedure*, program planning, personnel support, a Quaker camp, Quaker service, and legal and financial management.

These services enable Quakers to exist and thrive in Canada and it is my experience that Friends who volunteer to participate in offering these services can be spiritually and socially enriched.

When our Yearly Meeting could not meet in person this past summer, a group of enthusiastic volunteers successfully planned a virtual CYM2020 online. Over 230 Friends attended and much appreciation was expressed, especially by Friends who have been unable to attend face-to-face CYM gatherings. We have been learning how to connect more online – a silver lining of pandemic times.

Now I am ready to talk about money.

In 2019 CYM's general fund revenue was \$302,000 and expenses were \$373,000 (deficit \$71,000). The deficit was planned because we had the large donation to cover it. This money has now been used, but we still need the increased staff support. The projected deficit in our 2020 budget is \$108,000. CYM cannot sustain deficit finances. An increased monthly donation of \$9 from 1000 Friends could effectively eliminate such deficits. Of course we are working to reduce our expenses but that may mean cutting treasured programs and services.

Monthly Meetings donate toward the costs of Yearly Meeting. Yearly Meeting does not set quotas or make specific requests of the Monthly Meetings but it has been requesting that these donations increase. Yearly Meeting also requests donations from individual Friends. The best way is to sign up for monthly donations, even if it is only a small amount. It is easier for you because then you don't have to think about it and CYM can more easily budget for its income – and, as one of our Young Friends said: "It starts to build the habit and the idea that you contribute regularly." Go to <https://quaker.ca/contact/donate/> or contact the CYM Office at the address above, to find out the many ways that you can donate.

If you, as I do, see value in a viable Canadian Yearly Meeting, I ask you to consider how you might increase your financial support.

In Friendship,



Marilyn Manzer, Presiding Clerk of Canadian Yearly Meeting